T was a drab, drizzly evening

mother) with an inset photo of

it!" I jumped up and screamed.

choose to spend in the wilder-

years but my heart was full. Bet

mother. I would have loved to

celebrate this special moment

now in Oxford with a Reuters

Foundation Fellowship; Nan-

dana, the younger one, is in

Montreal, working in an Indo-

Canadian film project. Neither

of them is in New York near

their father, or in Calcutta to

for a memorial lecture for an

old friend, I congratulated his

wife, Emma (Rothschild), in

Trinity. Emma, the wonderful

woman that she is, said they

were missing me and wished I

was there. I came back from

Gadiara to be faced with more

than a 100 messages from our

friends from all over the world

Since AKS is in New York

share this moment of glory.

Antara, the elder one, is

with my two lovely daughters.

Amartya Sen: An Economist with a Difference

Jayanta Sarkar writes from Calcutta

ANY of the things Economics Nobel Prize ▲winner Amartya Sen has discussed in his 18 books are not what is normally taught in classrooms of economics students. Poverty, hunger, famine, deprivation - these are, by textbook criteria, not subjects that belong to hardcore economics. Till only a few years ago, they were supposed to be somewhere in the twilight zone between arts and science, humanitarianism and ethics, public policy and personal

Sen has always been an economist who wanted to break out of the accepted, traditional mould. One of his first major works on choice of technique. where he raked up the debate on the 'charkha' (the hand-driven' spinning wheel) versus modern machines, caused a flutter in the dovecotes of India's Planning Commission for some of its unorthodox views in the early 1960s.

When he took up the subject of poverty, population pressure, famine, hunger - based on the experiences of countries like India, Bangladesh and a few sub-Saharan states — it was asked in some circles how this could be of importance to economic theory.

Some of the theories Sen currently Master of his alma mater Trinity College, Cambridge University - propounded raised hackles in academic circles. He questioned the somewhat facile proposition that the size of a population has a bearing on the living standards of the people. Along with Mahbub-ul-Haq, the reputed

UST recently when we were

watching the football

matches of World Cup '98

one name was frequently

recollected by our family

members, presumably equally

with many others in the world,

when the playing team was

Brazil. It was no surprise to us

because in the football arena

his name always goes with

Brazil. He is Pele the great!

Virtually the name of Pele has

become synonymous with

Brazil because the game

football is most popular in the

world and as a player of Brazil

his performance is counted as

ever best in the football history.

But-do we know that there exists

another name which is also

synonymous with Brazil, and to

many people, in the field of edu-

cation, possibly he is much

more important and revered

than Pele? His name is Paulo

known in those countries where

people-oriented education re-

ceives highest priority and

where education is the key in-

strument of the least privileged

people for changing their lot as

per their wish and will. In

Bangladesh the name Paulo

Freire is still unfamiliar be-

cause we have not yet succeeded

in introducing an education

system that speaks for the peo-

ple at the grassroots. Till today

we are in the labyrinth of top

down education approach

where there is no welcome for a

personality like Freire. But for

a country being ignorant of

Paulo Freire and his philoso-

phies of education is undoubt-

Paulo Freire is popularly

Freire.

late Pakistani economist who developed the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), he queried the very basis of measuring human devel-

Ever since he secured a First Class Tripos in Cambridge University in the mid-1950s, there grew in this eastern Indian city a band of admirers of the budding economist. And every time there was a new feather in his cap, the admiration would correspondingly jump. As he crossed one milepost after another, the level would move up

another notch. When Sen was invited to speak on eastern and western values and their implications for economic development by the government of the eastern state of West Bengal last year, the authorities put up bill-boards at several prominent places in Calcutta announcing the event. This kind of honour in India is normally reserved for performing artistes and

politicians. The rush for admission cards for the programme was quite like the demand for tickets to see a pop singer perform and the audience that evening had a fair sprinkling of hardboiled businessmen and senior executives, besides students and

The persuasive speaker that he is, much of what he said on that occasion — and much of what he says and writes in general - had an underflow of compulsive but easy logic that didn't require any special training to understand. At one time some of his peers and even for-

Precision has always been the essence of his style. When he was doing a study on the differential treatment of the female child vis-a-vis the male in many poor Indian households, he would go along with some assistants to the villages around Santiniketan, the town founded in West Bengal state by India's first Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Then Sen would painstakingly weigh each child, record their age and

stopped midway on that road.

Precision has always been the essence of his style. When he was doing a study on the differential treatment of the female child vis-a-vis the male in many poor Indian households, he would go along with some assistants to the villages

founded in West Bengal state by India's first Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Then Sen would painstakingly weigh each child, record their age and other details.

Sen is the fourth personality

- India Abroad News Ser-

Note from Amartya Sen's First Wife

Reunion in a Bright Knot of Joy

by Nabanita Dev Sen

in Gadiara. Due to a power Lcut, one single bulb was When I was going to America to study, Amartya met struggling to light up the room, the boat-train and we got engaged in Cambridge, UK, the fan was lethargic, the airconditioner had totally in 1959 ... Next summer, on our return, my mother-inresigned and I wondered what law blessed me with a gold chain from her neck. Two the TV was up to. A hazy picture appeared on the screen. It was weeks later, we got married. Amita Sen! (Amartya Sen's

apart from endless enquiries

from the media. "He's got it, didibhai, he's got It has been like a reunion. Lots of old friends and relatives The sound wasn't there. But I and colleagues and classmates was sure what the message with whom I have not been in could be. The sound followed touch for so many years have soon enough. And I wished I all remembered me today. (And were in Calcutta, to share the you can see that nothing sucjoy and the excitement with all ceeds like success). It has our friends. What a day to brought back lost friends and ness! Well, this has come to us forgotten relatives and tied us all in a bright knot of joy. Alpretty late --- I wasn't as excited though I am not an economist. as I should have been as we had there are very few established been expecting it for nearly 30 economists I don't know — both the elderly ones and the ter late than never! I am happy for his children and for his younger ones.

The elderly ones were his teachers or colleagues and the younger his students. Starting from Piero Sraffa and Joan Robinson and Maurice Dobb to his colleagues like Ken Arrow -I remember many faces but forget names - Samuelson, Solow, Gary Runciman, I.G. Patel, Manmohan Singh, Sukhamoy Chakraborty, Jagdish Bhagwati ... among his teachers Bhabatosh Dutta and others. among his colleagues Bimal Jalan, Arjun Sengupta. Amiya Bagchi and many others among

his students. How did I meet him? Ja- \ davpur University had just been born in 1956. It was Amartya's first year as a university professor and the head of the department of economics. It was

my first year as a university student in the department of comparative literature.

I read a report today in an English daily that has quite an interesting story about how we met. I didn't know it. It says I could not help falling in love with him at Presidency College and that we kept looking longingly into each other's eyes. licking Magnolia icecream and spending hours in the Coffee House. It is reported that this story is from Nostalgia (the Presidency College 175th year commemorative volume). I'd like to know which page. I wish this oh-so-romantic story were

Unfortunately, it is all wrong. When I went to Presidency, Amartya was already in Cambridge. I never stepped into the Coffee House before I finished my MA exams and I never met him there.

What actually happened was that we met in Jadavpur University. Me as a debater, while he was the president of the debating society. This was our only common interest at that moment. We developed many more like good coffee and jazz

When I was going to America to study, Amartya met the boattrain and we got engaged in Cambridge, UK, in 1959. We went for a holiday to Wales and

only has to ignite the leaning

process by asking 'do you think

I sent postcards to everyone, I was so excited. When we came back, there was a telegram from my mother saying: "Enjoy yourselves, do not send postcards." Such things were not done in 1959. Next summer, on our return, my mother-in-law blessed me with a gold chain from her neck. Two weeks later. we got married.

We started a life together in Cambridge, Massachussetts, I was going to Harvard and he was a young assistant professor in MIT. Then we moved to Cambridge, England. I went to Newnham College and Amartya became a proper Fellow at Trinity. We lived on Trinity Street opposite Trinity College on top of a bookstore and I had probably the loveliest time in my life.

We also lived in Stanford. Berkeley, Harvard, Delhi, back and forth from one university to another.

Before and after, I always hung on to a fellowship after earning my Ph.D and my motherhood at 25. Our daughters were conceived and brought up in England, but for each birth I rushed back to India to gift them Indian citizenship, so that they would own the land they belonged to.

Amartya is an affectionate father and a very affectionate teacher but he is clumsy with children and doesn't know how to communicate with them. But as soon as they grew old enough to be his students, there is perfect communication and a relationship of love and trust between them.

The writer is a scholar and litterateur. Courtesy: Tathagata Das-

mer teachers noted his growing around Santiniketan, the town inclination towards building mathematical models, which not long ago obsessed many academic economists. But Sen

other details.

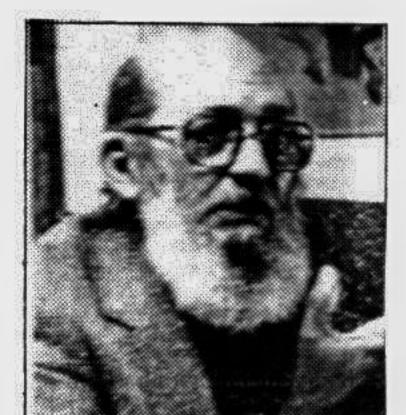
from this city to have won the Nobel after Tagore, scientist C.V. Raman, and Mother

vice (IANS)

Paulo Freire, Participatory Education and Social Change Freire suggested, an educator

by M Habibur Rahman and Shazzad Khan

He talked about feeling of love, hope and attachment for liberation and humanisation. He pointed out that love is instrumental in humanising the self and humanising the world which could be achieved through a participatory, modest and empowering learning process. This articulation of Freire was, is and will continue to be a source of inspiration to human beings across the world.



ous for the country. As for

Freire he had never been an or-

thodox communist or Marxist,

who, unlike Marx, believed that

social transformation should

occur both at the top and at the

bottom of the society - how-

ever, on the question of people's

liberation both Marx and

Freire were out and out on the

matic quality of Paulo Freire

the military junta kept him in

jail for 75 days, falsely declar-

ing him a traitor to Christ

(although he was a devoted

Christian) and to the people of

Brazil. Then he was forced into

exile to Bolivia and then to

Chile where he was warmly re-

ceived. Once again he found the

political reality of education.

So he accepted the event of his

imprisonment and the forced

exile. He pronounced that

'education process can no way

be neutral – either it is liberat-

ing or domesticating'. By this

he wanted to mean that educa-

tion has two specific natures -

either it is designed to maintain

the status quo by holding the

existing situation and imposing

on the people the values and

culture of the dominant class

aiming at domesticating them,

as a master does to his tame

animal, or it is designed to em-

power people aiming at liberat-

ing them to become critical,

creative, free, active and re-

sponsible members of the soci-

ety. In Freire's words: "Educa-

tion for domestication is an act

of transferring knowledge,

whereas education for freedom

is an act of knowledge and a

process of transforming action

that should be exercised on re-

ality. The domesticating pro-

cess is in itself prescriptive; the

liberating on the other hand, is

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

- a Voice of the Poor

not stop carrying on what he initiated in Brazil. In the later

years he involved himself with

various educational pro-

grammes, especially with UN-

ESCO's Institute of Research

and Training in Agrarian Re-

form in Chile, which consoli-

dated his concepts of education

to a greater degree. Allied with

his endeavour for propagating

his concepts and philosophies

he started putting down his

ideas and thoughts on people's

liberation through education

which eventually developed

into a classical work in the do-

main of education. The work is

'one and unique' titled

'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. It is

in this book he asserted the be-

lief that the oppressed and the

ordinary people have infinite

unexplored potential and ca-

pacity which, if bloomed, can

contribute to development of

the society as well as of them-

selves. Only thing required to materialise this belief is respect

and trust in their potential and

capacity. However, many of us

talk about this belief but when

we take the task of blooming

their potentiality we retreat.

losing our confidence in them.

In his exiled life Freire did

dialogical."

Out of fear from the charis-

same platform.

tive Education Programme In 1959 with the patronage of the progressive mayor of Re-

ing their critical consciousness. For making the programme a success Freire lived by the Recife slum area with the intention of getting close to the target population. He was deeply moved to behold that a lot many adult men and women were illiterate. This appeared to him as an utter social deprivation and injustice to them. He started to feel that these illiterate adults, who were mostly poor, should be literate in such a manner that they might unravel the existential causal factors for their being illiterate and deprived. With this view the poor people were organised in cultural circles so that the adult education became a form of cultural action for freedom

edly a misfortune and deprivation for itself. Paulo Freire was born in the For his successive achieveearly part of this century. The ments in several education pro-19th September 1921 would ever go as a historic day for Brazil as well as in the world. On this day in the north-eastern town of Recife, Paulo Freire was born. Freire's catholic family was not very rich with his father doing the job of a petty officer in the military service. Although not rich, his father had great interest in his children's education which practically paved the way for Freire to go for education.

Realisation through. Work

To begin his desirable career Freire joined as a Portuguese language teacher in a school. Also to show respect to his mother's inspiration he started doing social service for some time through local churches. Subsequently he got involved with Catholic Action Movement, which was later known as the liberation theology movement. During this time he met the dichotomies between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, just and unjust. He particularly unearthed how the society was oppressing the poor and the women, especially the blacks. To him this was a clear sign of class and racial discrimination. He gradually went deep into the process of understanding life and reality. Thus he could reveal the limitation in the social service and concluded that 'we **should not work for the** people, rather we should work with the people as per their aspiration and needs'. And this is only possible, he observed, by drawing on the strengths and

ability to learn and develop. From 1946 to 1954 Freire worked with an organisation called Servico Social da Industria (SESI) under the department of education and culture as director and teacher. He was responsible for planning and implementing education programmes for the rural poor and industrial labours of Angicos town in the state of Pernambuco. His involvement with the poor and distressed gave him the opportunity of taking a close look at their reality of life, from political perspective. He could explore why the poor

potentials of the have-nots and

the oppressed, with sincere be-

lief in mind that they have the

and labour section were illiterate and from it deduced how literacy and education are social and structural questions, which are fundamentally linked to unjust social relationships. This fundamental thought led him to believe that the poor and the oppressed should have a pedagogy of their own. In 1954 he joined the University of Recife under the department of Cultural Community Service to teach history and philosophy. Involvement with Innova-

cife. Freire became the head of Popular Cultural Movement, an active adult education programme, aimed at bringing education to the poor and developthrough empowerment of the

grammes with innovative approach Freire came into limelight as a progressive educationist. In June 1963 he became the head of National Literacy Programme of the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture. This programme was meant to teach five million Brazilians to read and write in two years through what was called the 'Paulo Freire's Method'. Freire's approach sought not to impart literacy mechanically, but to politicise the persons for learning to read and write. For successfully implementing the programme Freire played dual roles as a philosopher of this innovative adult education and as an operational coordinator. He planned to form 20,000 cultural circles where the adults would read their reality and write the stories of their lives. That time Brazil was suffering from the curse of illiteracy but Paulo Freire's method of education started taking the shape of a revolution. The teachers of the whole country got fresh energy and vigour to teach their students. The working class and the rural people who were so long deprived of and least interested in education, gradually became enthusiastic for education and conscious of political influence on the reality of their lives. Within very short time, based on this education system, different types of training and skill development programmes spread throughout the country. There was conspicuous indications that people were getting aware of social justice and they wanted to establish it.

> The Turning Point It is historically a proven

fact that every process of people's emancipation faced resistance from the oppressing class, and Freire's radical philosophy of education was no exception. In April 1964 a military coup took place which was a turning point for both Paulo Freire and Brazil. The movement of progressive reforms and popular education was quashed immediately. Freire and more than 100 key national figures involved with this national construction endeavour were thrown into prison. The military junta viewed him as a communist and highly danger-

Freire's version regarding this aspect in 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed gives us a strong guideline: "They talk about the people but do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indis-

pensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour, without that

A Blow to Existing **Education Approach**

With this trust as a beacon Freire preached for an education system where people will learn not merely by decoding the written words or languages but by recognising and unveiling the realities, problems and contradictions of life and existential situation so that they become aware of their selfhoods and begin to look at their reality critically for social transformation. With regret Freire experienced the absence of this approach in education system in many countries where dichotomy between oppressor and oppressed is reigning. He criticised the existential education system as 'banking method' where the education planners and educators consider themselves as the all-knowing persons prescribing lessons what they feel better, generating from their own reality and wish, which is virtually completely contrary to the reality of the learners' life. With their education menus the educators attempt to fill in the heads of the learners treating the latter as empty vessels: "Narration (with the teacher as the narrator) leads the students to memorise mechanically the narrated content. Worse still, it turns them into 'containers', into receptacles to be filled by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are."

Thus the learners become programmed to think and act the way their educators have prescribed them to do. Ultimately this phenomenon establishes a controlling mechanism for the handful of socalled posh learned class to dictate and control the majority of population of different levels down to earth, who are poor and not to say, oppressed. This robotic phenomenon develops lethargy and listlessness among this vast majority resulting in the gradual growth of what Freire termed as 'culture of silence': "In the culture of silence, to exist is only to live. The body carries out orders from above. Thinking is difficult. Speaking is forbidden".

Liberation through Education

In contrast, with banking method he philosophised a revolutionary education system which turned out to be a 'liberatory struggle through education' - a struggle unlike that creates armed conflict or belligerent action. But he did not rule out the absence of political process in this struggle. His message was very clear to us. Through politics the oppressoroppressed relation develops, and again through politics the oppressed can overthrow the oppressors. So if education is a part of politics, which really is, then it may be an instrument for the oppressing class to subjugate others or it may help the oppressed to strike out the oppressors and to choose the education that they really need. To expound on the liberatory education he proposed for 'problem posing approach based on dialogue to develop language of critique of the existing oppressoroppressed relations with the view to generating language of possibility for creating a new and just society. To ensure education through

problem posing approach the learners need to gain a distance from their everyday lives so that they could visualise their common situation or problem in a distinct way. To see a reality in such a manner relating to the existential situations of the learners, which may be in the form of anxieties, fears, demands, dreams, aspirations, or hopes, is called 'codification' Codification means a separate or combined display in pictorial, graphical, tactile and auditive form intended to represent an existential situation before the learners or to stimulate the learners to link the display to an existential situation, for ini tiating dialogue. As the learners start codifying their existential situation they get involved in a dialogical encounter among themselves to probe into the causes of that existential situation. This lead them to start a cognitive operation for critically interpreting from different perspectives the root causes behind their being staying in that situation; they then very naturally become keen to transform that situation, if they feel

Freire termed this process as 'de-codification'. And this whole operation is called 'conscientisation' in which learners, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the socio-cultural, political and economic reality which shape their lives, and at the same time, of their capacity to transform that reality. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter, people can gradually perceive their personal and social realities as well as the contradictions in them, become conscious of their own perception of those realities, and deal critically with them. Freire earnestly believed that a farmer can facilitate this process for his neighbours more effectively than a guide brought in from outside. It may be worth mentioning in this context that many PRA practitioners do not know that Freire's codification de-codification concept is the basic principle of the widely used PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) method for involving rural people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act for a change.

Action-Reflection-Action or Praxis

Freire recommended that this conscientisation is a means for the oppressed and deprived people to act as subjects which helps them to transform their world, and in doing so move towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life for better future, individually and collectively. This 'world' that they live in is not a static and closed order, rather it is a given reality and problem which is to be first de-constructed and then re-constructed. This does not mean that absolute success will come overnight - actually, de-constructing and re-constructing their world, in other words, the social order is a continuous action. In this action there always are problems and prospects. So, as the action for change goes on, reflection should be made rather continually to see what are the inevitable impediments for its smooth operation. This will ensure the celebration of success and at the same time the critical analysis for identifying and shooting mistakes and failures which paves the way for further action. This actionreflection-action, in fine, is

Praxis — the Best Choice for Education Process

called 'praxis'.

Freire observed that there is no alternative to praxis for ensuring pragmatic education. Through action-reflection-action, learners discover many significant words from their vocabulary universe which Freire denoted as 'generative words'. In a learning session,

we can create something out of these words?' and thus begins dialogue and action-reflectionaction for generating more words from their language, and then putting them together in a variety of combinations, they form sentences which create language of possibility. This gives the learners a sense of purpose so that they would really be able to 'know' the world through the words of their language. Virtually this is not an abstraction or magic but a means by which learners discover themselves and their potentials as they give names to the things around them. For Freire: "If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorising and repeating given syllables, words and phrases, but rather, of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself and on the profound significance of language"

So the pivotal role of a progressive educator is not to teach answers' but to become a colearner and co-investigator for creating an environment for proper reflection in which learners can share and analyse their experience altogether in a participatory way and draw new learnings. This gives them the real vision of social, cultural, economic and political reality they are living in through participatory educa-**Authentic Voice of the**

Third World This concept of Freire's edu-

cation for liberation has been reflected throughout his classical book the 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. This book was originally published in Portuguese in 1970, but by that time Freire was already acclaimed worldwide as the 'authentic voice of the third world'. Before his retuen to Brazil in the early 80's he visited many African, European and Latin American countries to share his philosophies and learnings, and also encouraged the people struggling for freedom from oppressive force. He was a visiting professor of Harvard University and later a special consultant to the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Back home he actively involved with politics with Workers' Party and became Secretary for Education

as 25 renowned publications to his credit, many of which have 34 language versions. This greatly reverent educationist and philosopher passed away on 2nd May 1997. Conclusion . Although Freire is no more with us he is still an inspira-

in Sao Paulo. He had as many

tion to the practitioners and academics world-wide, not only those involved in literacy, but also those working with wider education, community work, development work, cultural movement and even with politics. He is adored because all through his life he lived with those realities existing with the oppressed class. He preached for a subject to subject relationship' so that the oppressed could break the culture of silence renouncing the oppressors' worldview and establish their own worldview from their own perceptive, for a democratic culture for all people living free. He inspired to generate firm hope which is indispensable for acquiring democratic culture, liberating education and for social change: "Without hope there is little we can do. Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. To attempt to do without hope, which is based on the need for truth as an ethical quality of the struggle, is tantamount to denying that struggle one of its mainstays".

He talked about feeling of love, hope and attachment for liberation and humanisation. He pointed out that love is instrumental in humanising the self and humanising the world which could be achieved through a participatory, modest and empowering learning process. This articulation of Freire was, is and will continue to be a source of inspiration to human beings across the world.

honorary doctoral degrees and many awards and prizes for his immense contribution to education and participatory development, but having such mammoth honour Paulo Freire remained to the end a man of great humility. He will ever remain as a long lasting voice of commitment, love, hope and aspiration for the oppressed and deprived people around the globe.

Until 1994 he received 24

The writers M Habibur Rahman and Shazzad Khan are, respectively, Head and Action Research Coordinator of RE-FLECT Unit of ActionAid Bangladesh.

Garfield ®

James Bond

BY IAN FLEMING

DRAWING BY HORAK







