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TO THE LEFT

Arnav Sahu, Vivek Santayana and Arjun Badal interviewed Prof. Vijay Prashad (ex-346 T '85)

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): How do you think life has changed at Doon, since you were last here?

Vijay Prashad (VJP): When I joined school, the two things I learnt immediately were having fun in, and out, of the rules. I really enjoyed theatre, and individual sports. Like always, I thought that rules and hierarchy and student governments were absurd and redundant. In fact, I founded the *Circle* and declined the offer to join the *Weekly*. In the *Circle*, I wrote about moral incongruity. But, after coming back after so many years, I am baffled to see all these buildings. I remember, in my times, a couple of boys used to go out every day, as early as four in the morning and collect the *chotta hazri* from the CDH. Boys used to cut the grass every day with tools which resembled *talwars*. I guess, now, school is more modernized.

DSW: How do you think a Doon education has been conducive to your career?

VJP: I grew up in a very privileged family where I took everything for granted. But school taught me to appreciate labour and self-catering. Our culture in India treats children like infants, unlike abroad where children do substantial chores. So for me it was a great experience of understanding and valuing labour which I never would have done outside. Secondly, the thoughts of intellectual extremism came to me in school itself, due to the fact that I loved reading.



DSW: If you weren't an academic, what else would you have liked to be?

VJP: My father always wanted me to be a lawyer. Personally, I would have loved to be a full-time politician. But, I haven't found the type of politics I would like to be a part of and I do not want to pursue politics while my children are with me. But, I would like to start full-time journalism once again. I want to follow my dreams and be able to organise and live my day the way I like to. I feel that one must follow one's heart and not allow the money to live your life.

DSW: Do you think an average Dosco lives in mediocrity?

VJP: I think it's wrong for someone to consider themselves knowledgeable just because they have the lamp of knowledge on their chests, even though Doscos do have an advantage. At Doon, I feel the want for immediate results has vanquished complex thinking. As an institution, we should not pat ourselves on the back. But, it is a feeling of entitlement to be a part of such a special place. Wearing the school uniform is a privilege. However, I haven't stayed here long enough to give my opinion.

DSW: Do you think that the advancement of technology is killing intellectualism?

VJP: No. As a society, we have allowed the decline of complicated thinking. This is due to the compression of time and things are wanted faster. It is impossible to have complicated solutions in a short period of time. Technology is not the cause of our problems, we are. We have to harness technology for our own needs. This is due to the fact that people have become more money-minded.

DSW: What took you to the Left?

VJP: I was influenced after reading Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, which talks about inequalities. I was always against inequalities and questioned the system's irrationality. In fact, I was involved in a church movement, where I was beaten up in LA for protesting against the government in favour of refugees who were about to be prosecuted. The nature of the Left parties is to ponder. They prevented the pension reforms which could have caused a major farming crisis. The Left plays a very vital role in putting things on the table. The Left even controlled inflation to a great extent.

DSW: Are you against the nuclear deal?

VJP: Definitely. I feel that the nuclear deal is not viable since there are cheaper options like the Indo-Iran deal. In fact, by 2020, the civilian nuclear deal will only be able to provide 6% of electricity to the population of India. It is a mere political game from Washington as they want to shatter regionalism. There are better options like ethanol to provide electricity instead of joining hands with the US. I feel that a Congress and Left alliance is now virtually impossible and with the RJD drying up, this deal is too dangerous for India. If Bush's foreign policy is in the ancient world, then Obama will take it to the 17th century. The US unnecessarily dominates everywhere and attempts to break relations between countries sharing the same borders.

News-in-Brief

THE LOST WORLD

Aruj Shukla has been appointed boy-in-charge of the **Lost Property Office SUPW**.

REPARTEE

In the **Inter-House Junior English Debates** held on July 26, Kashmir House beat Hyderabad House and Oberoi House beat Jaipur House. Angad Singh and Kanishka Malik were adjudged **Second-Best Speakers** while Vatsal Khandelwal and Shaurya Sinha were adjudged **Best Speakers**.

Well done!

TURNING TABLES

The School Table Tennis Team participated in the **4th Manorite Table Tennis Tournament** held at St. George's College, Mussoorie from July 25th-27th, 2008. The team reached the semi-finals in the Doubles category. The following boys were awarded for their performance:

Amit Gupta
Ashutosh Kejriwal
Yash Jalan
Ujjwal Singhal
Congratulations!

Unquotable Quotes

Do you know Tamilian?

Saksham Sharda, bilingual.

My watch is the heights of un-water resistance.

Jayant Mukhopadhaya, plumbs the depths.

My throat is hurting like a dog.

Mohit Seth, barks up the wrong tree.

The wooden plank is electrically gadget.

AKM gets high-tech.

I will tear your pencil!

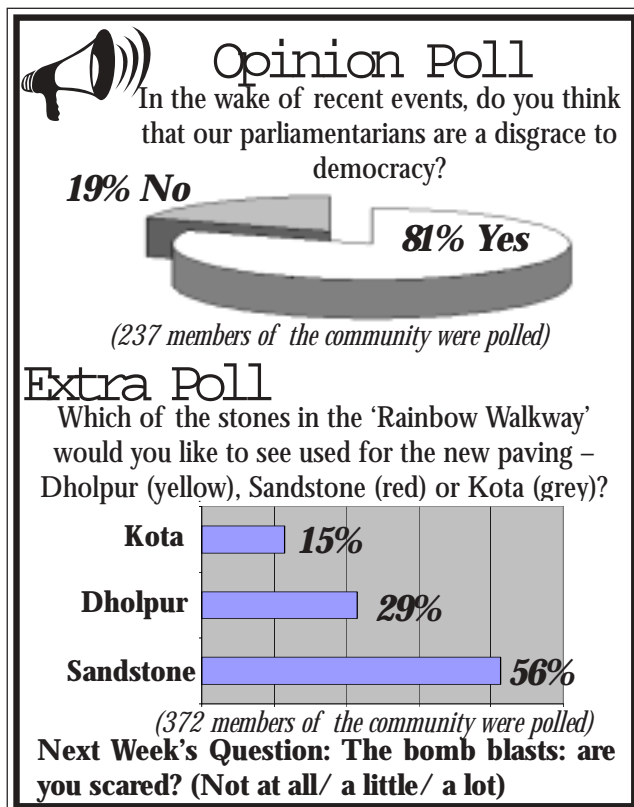
Shantanu Seth, out for revenge.

At the ninth of morning, the soldiers were drunk with guns.

RSF misaims.

Learn to behave your manners!

PKN, disciplinarian.



Something Different

Chetan Kaul

I wouldn't dream of saving you from a truck,
I don't agree with anything you say,
I don't like your style of dressing,
But I love you.

We come from different backgrounds,
Different religions.
We have no common taste,
But I love you.

You're nearly a foot too short,
I don't like the colour of your hair.
You hang around with a different sort,
But I love you.

Your nose is rather pointed,
Your eyes a little big.
Your lips are an inch too thick,
And your eyebrows resemble a Nike tick,
But I love you.

I loved your company,
I even dreamt about you,
And cherished every moment spent with you,
Till the day you and I got married.
Now, I don't love you anymore.

We eat the same food,
Share the same home.
Sleep on the same bed,
But I don't love you.

We sleep at the same time,
Even get up at the same time.
We've spent the last fifteen years together,
But I don't love you.

I'd save you from a truck,
I'd force myself to listen to your music.
I'd agree with everything you say,
But I don't love you.

I like the colour of your hair,
And I think your nose is well-shaped.
Your lips are soft and yielding,
But I don't love you.

I admire your style of dressing,
I take interest in your faith.
Your eyebrows are well-plucked,
But I don't love you.

I still care for you,
I work hard to keep you wealthy.
I'd help you whenever you ask,
But it's not love any more.
It's something different.

A 'Particular' Experience

RMR recounts his experience at CERN, Geneva, which has the largest particle accelerator in the world

CERN: Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire at Geneva, a place where every physicist desires to visit at least once in his lifetime. Be it for research in particle physics, to attend teacher or student programmes or to see the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) tunnel, the coldest place in the universe at 1.9 kelvin! The organisation is into frontier research work in particle physics and cosmology with 20 European member states, 37 non-member states and several other institutes or countries, like India, with observer status. The 1954 convention which established CERN states “*The Organization shall provide for collaboration among European States in nuclear research of a pure scientific and fundamental character. The Organization shall have no concern with work for military requirements and the results of its experimental and theoretical work shall not be published or otherwise made generally available*”.

One of the primary missions of CERN is to train future scientists. Some 8000 visiting scientists, half of the world's particle physicists, come to CERN for their research, representing 580 universities and 85 nationalities.

This year, I was selected for the High School Teachers' Programme (HST) organised by CERN, after a rigorous application process. It was a pleasant surprise as it was beyond my expectation. I even got free scientific visas from both Switzerland and France since the campus lies on the Franco-Swiss border. It was a three week programme from June 29 to July 19, 2008 and there were 38 teachers from 30 different countries representing every continent. CERN is about 7 km from Geneva city and its campus extends from Switzerland to France. One can have a breathtaking view of the Alps, with ice-capped Mont Blanc and the Jura hills, from the campus. Inside the campus one is free to move between the two countries without a visa. It was quite exciting for me to walk to the training centre in France and return to the hostel in Switzerland every day, without bothering about the official procedures! Within the campus there are innumerable laboratories, an anti-matter factory (Mukund and Revant, are you paying attention?), administrative blocks, and storage facilities for equipment, a fire station, hostels and restaurants.

The aim of the programme was to let us have a taste of the latest research work in particle physics, cosmology and revolutionary technology of computation. CERN believes that school teachers have an enormous responsibility to orient young minds towards fundamental research. We also encountered about 350 summer programme students wandering around the campus, wonderstruck by the euphoria of particle proximity.

The first week started with lectures on objectives of CERN teacher cooperation and then we were introduced to the computing environment. We felt important to acquire a CERN email account. There were detailed lectures on particle physics by Prof. Frank Close of Oxford University and Research Physicist Rolf Landua of CERN. Lectures on cosmology and black holes were delivered by Prof. Marek Demianski, University of Warsaw. The lectures were quite interesting but exhausting. Every lecture was reviewed later and our inane queries aptly answered. We had the grand opportunity to at-



tend a few lectures in the amphitheatre, a shrine graced by many Nobel Laureates from time to time. On one of my rambles around the campus I spotted Prof. Jack Steinberger, 1988 Nobel Prize winner, sipping coffee at the restaurant. He is 92, but fit to come to CERN on a bicycle!

The following two weeks were dedicated to campus visits and working groups. We went to see the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment which is a general purpose particle detector to investigate a wide range of physics, including the search for the *Higgs boson* (named after Prof. Peter Higgs, University of Edinburgh, which is a fundamental particle responsible for determination of mass by other particles), extra dimensions of space, and particles that could make up dark matter. Later we visited A Toroidal LHC Apparatus (ATLAS), another particle detector, which records similar data but is radically different from CMS in its technicality and design. ATLAS is the largest detector in the world. Both detectors are at a depth of 100m below the ground and are huge – weighing a few thousand tons. Each experiment has more than 1600 scientists from thirty-seven countries working on it. Many Indians are also working in these projects. The LHC control room at Preveessin site is a physicist's paradise, where they remain glued to monitors, recording every bit of data capable of heralding a new era of knowledge. The computing centre of CERN has a PC farm which can record data at 1GB per second. The amount of relevant data is 15million GB per year as a result of data analysis and simulations. We saw 700GB palm size memory disks used at the centre.

And then, behold! Rolf took us to the anti-matter factory (for all those who are not so typically physics-oriented – if you ever meet your long lost anti-self at the 'Kumbh Mela' and unfortunately embrace it, then both of 'you' evaporate into oblivion!). We gazed at the frightening crockery where anti-hydrogen is cooked. Rolf told us that it was simple. A few positrons and anti-protons are invited from the colliders, slowed down, so that they 'see each other' and 'marry' (yeah, an arranged one!) to make anti-hydrogen. CERN studies the effect of gravity on those antis. You will be amazed to know that our universe is 96% dark matter plus dark energy and only 4% matter, but then this way we are truly extraordinary in the universe and so celebrate being significant!

It was not about 'particles' always. We had many socials - a Belgian beer evening, an international evening, pool and pizza get togethers, a picnic near the Jura Mountains and a very interesting Geneva treasure hunt which ended with an unpalatable (for me, at least) cheese fondue for dinner. Fortunately, the weather was really nice all through our stay. I had the opportunity to visit Lausanne (the famous Olympic Museum is here), Montreux (we enjoyed the annual Jazz Festival there) and Vevey (Nestle HQ) during the first weekend, and Paris on the other. It was undoubtedly a lifetime experience and a dream come true.

And for all the netizens - Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau of CERN invented the World Wide Web and gifted it to the world.

| Short Story |
The Unholy Trinity

Saurav Sethia

John grew up wondering how he was born. It was a simple enough question to pose: “Daddy, how was I born?”, or “Did I really fall from the skies?”. John was inclined to believe that he did, in fact, descend from the heavens, for it would explain the claim of various moral science textbooks to the effect that children were gifts of God. An unfathomable inner sensibility, however, prevented him from asking Dad the question. As he grew older, he gained a vague idea of what sex might be, without really fully understanding its meaning. In time, he noticed that while discussing sex, boys his age giggled and whispered excitedly. He did not quite understand why. For his own part, he too was fascinated by clandestine literature that was often circulated in the classrooms. When a boy was caught with articles of ‘questionable morality’, as they called it, he was caned mercilessly. Yet John continued to indulge in the crime, for he did not know his sin. Besides, it gave him a sense of pleasure. As a twelve-year-old boy, he did not see why these circulations had to be so surreptitious, but accepted that there was no other way. He found it amusing that the Sisters and Fathers in his Catholic school always evaded discussions that could lead, in any way, to the subject. He had heard that when a senior boy asked Father Wavriel about Goya’s painting, *The Naked Maja*, he received a slap in reply. To John, Father Wavriel was always kind and gentle. He could never imagine Father slapping anyone. Yet, word had it, he did. He was learning slowly that sex and sin were strangely connected. When he read Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, he discovered that human beings had a problem with sex. For some reason, divinity and sex could never be mentioned in the same breath. He later labelled this as an orthodox view. Sex was everywhere in literature, he realized. It was a popular literary theme. God condones sex, he read in commentaries on biblical scriptures. Sex, he acknowledged, was inherent in human nature. He viewed it as a physical confirmation of love. This, however, afforded only a myopic vision of reality to him.

They were smoking in the park: John and his friend. When Stephen saw them, he told his parents, who told their parents. The first unwritten law of friendship is never ‘peach’. Stephen had broken this code. When John returned home that day, his father whipped him. Mummy saved John. She could not bear the sight of him being lashed. Mummy smelt nicer than Dad did, she was even more affectionate. It was unfortunate for John that on matters of importance or urgency, Dad passed the final verdict. He hated patriarchal society. John was not, in truth, blue about the beatings he received from his father. He was gloomy about Stephen’s

betrayal, a gloominess that slowly transformed into bitterness and left his eyes brimming with hatred. Stephen bore a ‘lean, hungry look’, like Cassius. It was a betrayal, a breach of trust that could not be forgiven. When they met Stephen, they beat him up till he was black and blue, cringing on his knees for pardon. Gregor Samsa turned into a beetle and was shunned by his family. Conversely, his family was betrayed by his transformation. Macbeth killed Duncan; Othello murdered Desdemona; Brutus stabbed Caesar. Molly delionized Leopold Bloom. It is the way of the world.

He met Neary on his way back home from school. Neary was a chain-smoker. One might almost think John got the habit from him. Neary was an intelligent and erudite man. Of all the people John was acquainted with, only Neary could understand him. He was the one person who could empathize with his student’s dilemma. Then, one day, when the honey-coloured blossoms erupted and it looked like the laburnum could hardly bear the burden of its flame-like beauty, Neary died of pulmonary emphysema, and John lost his inspirational father, and, quite unlike Dedalus, he would never find him again. All of literature, he had read once, had two faces: the continuity of life and the inevitability of death. The hero dies, the story lives on forever; that, he was told, was the nature of all tragedies.

John had been exposed to sex, experienced betrayal and seen death. Had Neary been alive he would have said the ‘unholy trinity’ was complete. He would have said it was the only education worth having.

* * *

Wordsearch

Yash Mall

Hidden below are the names of eight famous international cricketers.

G	F	W	A	R	N	E	O	K
M	Z	A	D	A	G	S	M	A
S	Y	U	I	N	A	H	A	L
D	W	G	V	B	N	O	D	L
Q	V	H	A	Q	G	G	F	I
O	M	X	R	C	U	A	H	S
T	E	N	D	U	L	K	A	R
M	E	Z	Y	D	Y	R	Z	M
O	G	T	S	E	W	A	D	D
M	Q	D	R	Y	X	M	E	Z
C	W	V	Z	B	N	Z	Q	F
A	V	E	T	O	R	I	H	G

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