Obituary, Ken Cathan.

The St. Andrews Church in Quatre Bornes was packed to capacity and in the crowd I could distinguish quite a few faces of the late 1970s, nearly all belonging to the Social Studies department of the MIE. We had gathered for the funeral services of Ken Cathan who died in his mid sixties following complications from his thyroid disease.

Ken was a great fan of domino to which he dedicated a large part of his retired life. In fact, he felt a pain in his left hand during a domino game. His health deteriorated so fast that he died before having an opportunity to receive any medical treatment. He has left behind him a daughter and a son.

Ken was a jovial character, pretty tall, his upper shirt nearly always unbuttoned and delivering his Sociology lectures in impeccable English. He was part of the team led by Devi Venkatasamy and made up of, among others, Prem Saddul, Cader Calla and Rex Fanchette. Ken was a team player and had a knack for conveying and igniting enthusiasm and hope among the students.

In late 70s, Reduit was an exciting campus, leaving hardly time for ambitious learners to feel bored. It was a hotbed of all sorts of revolutionary ideologies…… Mao Tse Tung, Karl Marx, Paolo Frere, Frantz Fanon et al. All those firebrand ideologies disseminated during lunch breaks by visiting speakers found their way in the Sociology classes……………. Heated discussions took place about classless society and an end to the bourgeois cult. Ken had no difficulty in speaking the language of the youths. The order of the day was to inculcate critical thinking into the upcoming generation.

The idea of the nine year schooling was sown during those same years and Junior Secondary Schools shot up in all Mauritian districts but the project never saw the light of the day. Alas, after full circle, when it is being implemented, Ken has chosen to leave us and our dream. I suppose that if I were to ask Ken why he is in such hurry for the afterlife, he would answer in perfect sociological language: it’s the failure of social control, stupid.

Goodbye Ken. May the Almighty accept you among his chosen ones.

Dawood Auleear

2nd March 2017.