

Excerpts from interview

...by Mr. Veerendra Kumar.cdr

Excerpts from interview with V Pradeep Kumar about how he met Venkatram and his impressions of Venkatram:

I had just returned from America in 1962 and had come to meet Sri Gopala Gowda. Before I went to America, I was influenced by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and was in the Socialist party, Kerala. I met Venkatram who was with Sri Gopala Gowda in Legislatures House. The very first day, we could strike a note of camaraderie. Later, I went with Venkatram to Thirthahalli to campaign for Sri Gopala Gowda. Thereafter, we used to meet whenever I used to be in Bangalore.

He was a voracious reader and he read a variety of subjects including literature. He was very perceptive and analytical. Venkatram was one man who could talk on various ideological formulations. In one sense he was a pragmatic rationalist.

Later he shifted his activities to Delhi and moved with other leaders like Sri Karpuri Thakur, Sri George Fernandes, Sri Tiwari and Sri Madhu Limaye. They all had stuck a relationship-intellectual and also emotional. We were also together in the same office in Delhi, where we were both secretaries of the party. And we were all part of an intellectual association –may be from Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Kerala, Karnataka and acted as a collective group. He was analytical and shrewd but not vindictive and always made his point clear. He was also a great organizer and took particular interest in trade union movement. He was dependable and a great strength to Sri George Fernandes for advise and for leading the movements. He was an invisible force.

Then in 1974, we had a massive socialist party conference in Calicut and that was the time when all of us were together. Venkatram played a very important role in the conference. Then in June 1975, emergency was declared and we all went underground. We still remained in touch and knew what was happening.

After emergency was lifted we all met to dissolve the party which led to the formation of the Janata Party. Then he became the all India president of HMS, and then an MLC and we both had shifted our base to respective states. I used to come to Bangalore frequently and we used to meet. Apart from all these political connections, we had a lot of understanding in discussing our own problems including family problems.

After the formation of Janata party, he took more interest in trade union movement and I was more in the organization. But we always used to meet especially as we had many common friends. And Venkatram was a man of lot of interests and he was very much at home discussing on English literature, French literature, the Dalit Movement and various other subjects and could draw inferences from one to another. No body could make out Venkatram was a politician. And for a politician it is very essential to know all this and have a holistic perception.

He was also a great human being with whom I could talk in my moments of great agony. He was the only man I could come and talk to, my personal sorrows. He was a total man, very understanding and could rationalize and send me back with some better convictions. He was totally effective. He might look detached, but he was very involved, sentimental and emotional. He was simple and philosophical and emotionally intelligent He was a political man, a trade union man, a man in public life and a man with whom one could talk on literature, films etc. I wish he had lived longer.

— Sri MP Veerendra Kumar
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