



I focus

andrew azzopardi

Prof Andrew Azzopardi
Dean Faculty for Social
Wellbeing, University of
Malta & Broadcaster –
Ghandi xi Nghid
www.andrewazzopardi.org

Ghandi xi Nghid

We are going to hell in a handcart

'We don't seem to give a damn anymore!'

Much as this might sound like despondent and defeatist, I feel that as a nation we have developed this heedlessness to take certain matters seriously enough.

It could be that our new found economic stability, wealth and continued GDP growth is turning us into a self-centered, smug and conceited society.

It could be that the wave of neo-liberalism has consumed our sense of others and social justice has become a slogan of the past. We have crooked the *Maltese Dream* into simply giving value to one's bank account and estate before anything else.

It could be that we do not have enough social champions or we are not replenishing quickly enough the people who have been leaders in the sector. Anti-poverty activists like Charles Miceli, Joe Bartolo known as *Sloopy* and others who have passed away are obviously irreplaceable. People like Peppi Azzopardi, a social activist per excellence, Nora Macelli, dedicated to community development, Mons Victor Grech, whom we all know what a great deal of work he has accomplished, and many others are at the tail-end of their careers. I cannot see too many people like them ready to take the issues by the scruff of the neck.

This is why I believe our society is quickly morphing into an *'I'm all right Jack, pull up the ladder'*; Because;

When a house collapses, we not only quickly forget the victim (it takes us possibly less than a week), not only do the magnates and developers and all others involved get on with their projects, as if nothing had happened, but to add insult to injury, we commission an inquiry, we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When people die in prison, we don't even bother – anyway, they are 'lesser beings' but we commission an inquiry, we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When a 'lot' of corrupt police officers are caught playing around with public funds instead of keeping our roads safe we commission an inquiry, we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When so many people keep dying on our streets, especially those driving their motorbikes and people run over, we commission an inquiry, we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know, through hard



facts that loneliness is one of the biggest killers we have in our society, we might just about commission an inquiry, possibly will promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When so many elected politicians and party loyalists are corrupt, we occasionally commission an inquiry, we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When police evidence not only now but also in the past, disappears from the Court vaults or more so there are claims that it has been 'misplaced', we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When Daphne Caruana Galizia was butchered, murdered and we all knew her murder could happen any time when she was still alive, we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know so, but so many women who are being abused (some cases leading to gruesome deaths) we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we abuse our role and manage to take commissions from state funds instead of doing the right thing and getting the

best possible deal for the country, we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When experts clearly indicate that our educational system is 'wasting' a great deal of students and international indicators show we are not doing well, we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know that drug addiction is a massive issue that is obliterating so many people, destroying so many families, we might consider commissioning an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know of a dicey contract like the Stewart/Vitals one, we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When so many people, are subjected to white slavery and made to work never ending hours especially in the care-work industry, or doing it all (yes at times really 'all') working in unacceptable conditions we might someday decide to investigate, commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When so many journalists in their line of duty are regularly subjected to maltreatment we will not even bother commissioning an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know that women in our community are still dominated by a misogynist society, patriarchal to the hilt and we know that women are best placed to lead our institutions, we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know so many children are still being bullied at school, so many young people and adults are being harassed at their place of work we don't even bother to commission an inquiry, not even promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know as a fact that solitary confinement breaches fundamental human rights we don't even consider commissioning an inquiry, obviously not even bothering to promise reform – and anyway it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When there are so many issues that need to be discussed like euthanasia, suicide, surrogacy, abortion, living will - we

don't even consider commissioning an inquiry, obviously not even bothering to promise reform because they are taboo subjects not even worth discussing – and anyway it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When so many people and not the odd exception don't turn up to work, or take unjustified amounts of sick leave we commission an inquiry, probably we promise reform – and it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

When we know so many people working in factories producing like machines and their dignity thrown out of the window, we don't even consider commissioning an inquiry, obviously not even bothering to promise reform – and anyway it all remains the same, hoping against all hope.

I am up to my nose.

I long for the day when misbehavior and waywardness are really addressed.

I long for the day when inquiries lead to action rather than simply be part of a delaying tactic.

I long for a society that cherishes conversation.

It can be done. We need strong politicians and there are some good ones around, they have to step up their game, and quickly.