



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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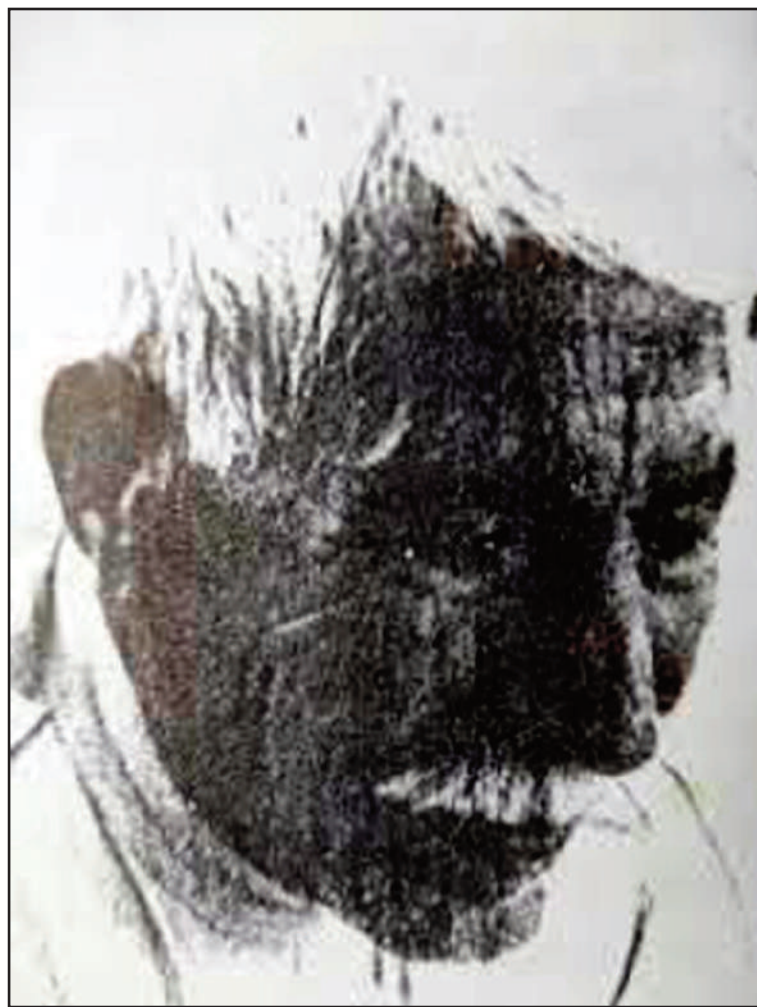
Invited Article on the Death Anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia: Founder of the Ad Dharm Movement

April is a significant month for Schedules Caste Communities. Birth and death anniversaries of many of their icons who devoted their lives for the emancipation and empowerment of lower castes fall within this very month. The New Democratic Party government, in its historic move, on March 31, 2022, has recognized April 2022 as "Dalit History Month" in British Columbia province of Canada. Followers of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a Dalit icon and the architect of the Constitution of India, globally observe the month of April every year to remember the contribution of reputed Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) personalities and events in the history of their communities. The anniversaries of Jyotirao Phule, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi also fall in the month of April and thereof referred to in the proclamation by the British Columbia government. The government of British Columbia underlined that the decision to observe the month of April is to acknowledge and fight against discrimination spurred by discrimination and racism against people of colour and indigenous people, and to bring about justice and equality for all. The British Columbia proclamation not only recognizes the great Dalit personalities but also acknowledges the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (June 14, 1886 - April 22, 1980) founded the famous Ad Dharm movement in Punjab in the first quarter of the 1920s. It was the only movement of its kind in the north-western region of the country that aimed at securing a respectable place for the Scheduled Castes through cultural transformation, spiritual regeneration and political assertion, rather than seeking patronage from above. Comprising all the lower castes people of the state, the Ad Dharm built its headquarter named 'Ad Dharm Mandal' in Jalandhar. Seth Kishan Das of Bootan Mandi - leather business center in the vicinity of the British military cantonment at Jalandhar - provided major financial support to this movement of the lower castes people of Punjab. Babu Mangu Ram literally took the movement to the doorsteps of the Untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits in Punjab. Like the *Satyashodak Samaj* movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm soon became a household name among the SCs of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes people of Punjab that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on their own common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow-travelers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to assert their claims for their long overdue shares

in the local structures of power. In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919, unleashed by the British Government for the institutionalization of the electoral system, every community was busy in organizing its respective members into well-organized socio-political forces (political parties/organizations). The US returned young man and meticulously chiseled in the superb companionship of the proud Ghadarite Babas, Babu Mangu Ram also successfully gathered many of his fellow community members to build their separate social and political organization at par with that of the other upper caste communities like Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas of the Sikhs. This limited election-based



legislature-forming-process had also led to the formation of similar Adi-movements in other parts of the country like Adi-Andhras, Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Karnataka in South India and Adi-Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of North India. Though these different Adi-movements emerged almost at the same time in different regions of the country, there is no evidence to prove that they were instrumental in the rise of one and another. Each Adi-movement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given state.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra. If Maharashtra Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is indebted, in almost similar man-

ners, to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. If Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, the famous English-born American political activist, theorist, philosopher and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia learnt his lessons of equality and freedom from the democratic land and liberal society of the United States of America wherein he came into contact, during his sojourn, with the revolutionary freedom fighters, popularly known as Ghadari Babas, of the historic Ghadar Lehar, which further cemented his resolve to fight for the dignified life by liberating India from the clutches of the British Empire and to establish in its place democratic and egalitarian home rule with equality and

freedom for all irrespective of caste, class, creed, language, gender and regional differentiations. Like this nineteenth century social revolutionary thinker of the so-called lower caste in Maharashtra, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia - one of the lowest castes people in Punjab - established first school of its kind in his native village of Mugowal for the children of the socially excluded sections of the society what later on came to be designated as Scheduled Castes (SCs) under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936, which contained a list (or schedule) of castes throughout the British-administered provinces.

Like his predecessor in Maharashtra, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia also faced stiff opposition from the so-called upper/dominant castes of Punjab in his fierce struggle against the oppressive structures of dominations including the Untouchability - the most sinister one among them. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadarite leadership, he resolved to fight against caste-based social evil of Untouchability and to put in its place the much-desired social freedom before the subjugated India could reclaim its lost political freedom. On return to his native village after spending 16 years abroad, he decided to dedicate the rest of his life for the eman-

and empowerment of his so-called fellow low-caste people after learning that no change had taken place in the society at home so far. In his own words: "While living abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low,

and untouchability; and under this delusion returned home in December 1925. The same disease from which I had escaped started tormenting me again. I wrote about all this to my leader Lala Hardyal Ji, saying that until and unless this disease is cured, Hindustan could not be liberated. In accordance with his orders, a programme was formulated in 1926 for the awakening and upliftment of the Achhut qaum (untouchable community) of India" (*Kaumi Udarian*, C.L. Chumber, ed, Jalandhar, vol. 1, no. 2, January 1986, pp. 23-24).

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia formed the Ad Dharm movement in Punjab to fight for land rights of his people who were denied land ownership rights in the state under the Land Alienation Act of 1900, which prohibited all the lowest castes along with other non-agriculture castes to own agricultural land. Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammas', the so-called Untouchable peoples were even denied the ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses and were also not allowed to build concrete houses. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to perform some *begar* (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of the land underneath their residential plots. Another important task towards the material empowerment of the lower castes that this versatile leader of the Ad Dharm movement included in its mandate was the official provision of education and government employment for the SCs.

Apart from the material upliftment of the SCs, what made Ad Dharm the most politically noticeable and powerful movement of its time was the far-sightedness of its visionary leader in setting the goal of bringing the divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform all of them into a distinct single Qaum at par with other separate Qaums of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians etc. This was the most crucial political move on the part of Babu



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(Contd. on next page)

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Founder of the Ad Dharm Movement

(Continue from page 1)

Mangu Ram, the master strategist, who intervened at an appropriate time of the critically emerging scenarios in the background of limited direct election to be held in the state. He pressed for a separate religion for the lower castes of Punjab to be recorded in the 1931 Census, who in his opinion were neither Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans or Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, were the original inhabitants - Moolnivas (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them to the finish and finally enslaved them. In the post-announcing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the Moolnivas at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the Moolnivas to come together to chalk out a programme for their liberation and upliftment. Addressing them as brothers, he said: "We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings, Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us nomadic. They razed our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. ... Our

seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be calous. Centuries ago, Hindus suppressed us; sever all ties with them. What justice can we expect from those who are the butchers of the Adi race. The time has come; be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals.

With the support of a sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our Qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider ourselves as Hindus at all; remember that our religion is Ad Dharm" (*Kaumi Udar-ian*, C.L. Chumber, ed, Jalandhar, vol. 1, no. 2, January 1986, pp. 21-22).

The leaders of Ad Dharm thus chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and consolidating them into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). The long domination by the Aryans, they alleged, made them oblivious of their native religion. In fact, the task of reviving their ancient religion was not an easy one for the Moolnivas who had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during their long period of persecution under the rule of the outsiders. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theology. In order to establish their hegemony and legitimacy over the enslaved Moolnivas of Bharat, the Aryan invaders eventually metamorphosed themselves into upper castes of the first three

Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) of their imposed fourfold social order of the Chatur-Varnavyavastha. The natives of the conquered land were pushed into the fourth Varna of Shudras - consisting of artisan castes and still other further reduced into lowest of the low castes, contemptuously dubbed as Untouchable peoples.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia strongly put forth the demand of a separate religion for his low caste peoples in order to forge them together into a distinct Qaum. To revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the native lower castes people. Babu Mangu Ram's claim that the Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on them. It provided a theological podium to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. The British Government granted them, as demanded, distinct status of a separate religion - Ad Dharm.

The Ad Dharm was based on the teachings and inspiration from the spiritual figures of North India Bhakti movement, particularly Guru Ravidass, Bhagwan Valmik, Sant Kabir and Sant Namdev. In fact, the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement placed the spiritual figure of Guru Ravidass in the centre of their discourse around which the entire socio-political and spiritual paraphernalia of the movement and the separate Dalit religion of Ad Dharm was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of the distinct Dalit identity in Punjab. He restored them their lost heroes, Gurus, rich cultural heritage and

brought forth an urge to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million SCs in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion - Ad Dharm. Thenceforth, the followers of Ad Dharm used to take pride in being addressed as Ad Dharmis. Another equally great achievement of the Ad Dharm movement was that it swept the Punjab Provincial assembly elections in 1937 & 1946, which made it an equally important stakeholder in the Punjab legislature, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab. During Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the separate electoral status for the Depressed Classes at the London Round Table conferences, Babu Mangu Ram supported him by sending many telegrams in his favour in a tie with Mahatma Gandhi over the question of the leadership of the Depressed Classes in India.

As elaborated by Mark Jurgensmeyer, an eminent American social scientist, in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab,' Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia founded Ad Dharm movement to generate social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discriminatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of *Begampura* of Guru Ravidass.

Babu Mangu Ran Mugowalia and Ad Dharm Movement



(Late) Ishwar Das Pawar
District & Sessions Judge (Retd.)

While recalling the significance of the role of the Ad-Dharma movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram of Muggowal in the year 1926, for espousing the cause of the untouchables of the pre-partition Punjab,

we must remind ourselves of the circumstances prevailing in those times. For, since then tremendous changes have taken place in the social, political and administrative fields, and not many of the present times may have a precise idea of the harrowing conditions and environments in which our people found themselves.

Till about the mid-twenties there was social and political awakening among the untouchables. People had been fed on the deceptive and demoralizing Brahminical philosophy that the untouchable were born as such not by any coincidence but because of their accumulated bad deeds committed in the past lives. As a consequence, they were disentitled to get education, to own and possess property, to take to professions and avocations of their own liking and choice and to a place of equality, honor and dignity in society. This was

the divine dispensation. It was dinned into their ears day in and day out that this was not due either to their own fault in this life or to the fault of society that they were born in the lowest and wretched castes, and therefore, they were made to suffer untold hardships and punishments under the edict of the almighty for their past sins. Out of sheer ignorance these misguided and gullible people tacitly accepted their cursed fate foisted on them by the clever sort. For their woeful sufferings they would best their foreheads in utter helplessness and say pathetically fate and destiny. It never occurred to them, and there was none to tell them, that they were being duped and cheated by the uppermost strata of society who were interested in keeping them under their feet. They could not understand why others who were leading most sinful lives before their very eyes were enjoying all comforts of life both good and bad. The good deeds of the ignorant and unsophisticated people of this life were of no consequences for them in this life; they were being stored and preserved for consideration in the life to come. It was a very cunning ruse played on the ignorant and deprived people.

There was none among the untouchables to raise the banner of revolt against the aggression, oppression, tyranny, deception and exploitation of the poor and the ignorant committed behind the face of religious philosophy. There however, appeared on the scene an inspired soul

in the person of Babu Mangu Ram of Muggowal, who came back from America after a decade's sojourn there. There he was a member of the Ghadar Party formed by the Indians living there to supplement the struggle for freedom launched by the nationalists here.

On reaching home Babu Mangu Ram founded an organization under the name- Ad-Dharma Mandal. Soon a band of enthusiastic and devoted workers gathered around him. The message brought by Babu Mangu Ram was new and inspiring. It was aimed at awakening the untouchables. The message called upon them to know and relies true selves due to the hostile influence of years. It caught the imaginations and hearts of the oppressed and down-trodden people and soon Babu Mangu Ram's name became a household word. He succeeded remarkably well in creating awareness and awakening the people. His path was beset with difficulties and he had to work against odds any trying circumstances. Financial difficulties apart, he and his co-workers were chased everywhere and hounded out of bound out of bounds of towns and villages by Hindus, and quite often they had to hold their meeting and conferences in open fields. One such incident also took place at Una.

A weekly 'Adi-Danka' in Punjabi was also started to carry the message to every nook and corner of the province. This was the beginning of the struggle for getting back the

human rights of which they had been deprived of for centuries. Wherever Babu Mangu Ram went, the people were eager to have a glimpse of their beloved leader and benefactor. He did the pioneering work to awaken the people. My own relations with him had been very close and cordial. From my college days I had been attending meetings of the Ad-Dharma Mandal and also occasionally contributing small articles to the *Adi-Danka*. In the crucial days of the Round Table Conferences held in London in the early thirties for the purpose of hammering out a new political set up for our country, Babu Mangu Ram worked enthusiastically shoulder to shoulder with the greatest leader of the underdog, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was representing the untouchables of the country at the conference, to strengthen his hands in his historic struggle for securing political rights for his people on the basic for their being a separate and distinct political entity.

Babu Mangu Ram will be long remembered as the devoted pioneer in the crusade against social and political injustice.

He fought relentlessly even in the face of crippling heavy odds for the achievement of the goal. Whatever rights we have been able to look back lest we should forget our benefactors- the brave soldiers who fought our battles.

Courtesy: Babu Mangu Ram
Mugowalia Souvenir 1985
by Mr. C. L. Chumber

Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar and the Revival of the Egalitarian Social Order as Envisioned by Tathagat Buddha

Buddha challenged the old Brahminical social setup based on hierarchies and established a parallel

their fellow beings. Nonetheless, Buddha's Era is known as the Golden Era of Indian history.

dhism by Pushyamitra can be realized from the proclamation he issued against the Buddhist monks in which

cult to kill ideas. Dr Ambedkar revived Buddha's philosophy through another bloodless revolution by using the power of his intellectual honesty and the mastery of his pen. He used his pen fearlessly like a sword.



Dr Amritpal Kaur

(Dental Surgeon)

Writer on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism
Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders



civilization based on social equality and justice. He brought this revolution without shedding a drop of blood through compassion, wisdom and ethical living which prepared people to change their dispositions towards

Buddha's revolution was lethally challenged by the sword of Pushyamitra-Sungha, a Samvedi Brahmin, who took up the charge of destroying the Buddhism as a State Religion. How pitiless was the persecution of Bud-

he set a price of 100 gold pieces on the head of every Buddhist monk. A bloodless revolution was crushed by a bloody revolution.

Bhagat Singh once said that it is easy to crush people but it is diffi-

Dr Ambedkar's message for us is not hard to decipher but hard to follow. He wanted his people to build an anti-Caste revolution through ideological shift and without any bloodshed (democratic revolution) for which he chose Buddha's Dhamma, the guiding light of human mind which eventually became the light of the Asia and the World.

There is no dearth of people who admire Babasaheb, but the people who follow Babasaheb's words are needed more. Let us all try to make a collective effort to reduce this gap. This would be our biggest tribute to him.



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Ambedkar Jayanti at Phagwara

It is a matter of gratification to note that, of late, Ambedkar Jayanti, April 14, is increasingly becoming a national holiday in India and beyond. The fact of the matter is that the lofty ideals of 'Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity' which is core of Ambedkar's legacy is slowly but steadily taking roots in the Indian society which is generally afflicted with an undercurrent of 'caste based

missionary singer, Dharminder, an apparently educated and trained presenter, made the audience spell bound and fully charged the atmosphere. Ghansham ji welcoming the guests briefed the audience about the activities of the Sabha and Center and said that it was a matter of satisfaction for them that over the last more than two decades they had been able to create good facilities - cultural, ed-

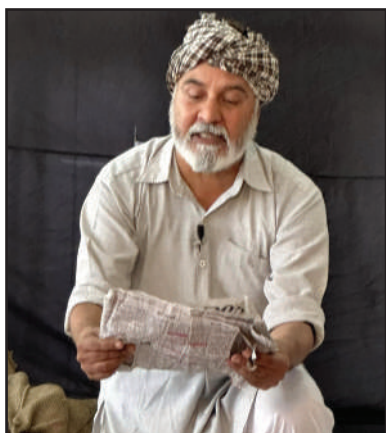
discerning audience.

Though I was designated as the lead speaker yet I decided to speak briefly as the audience was comprised of well informed and highly placed professionals and intelligentsia of the community. There was no need to burden them with routine and trivial details. While paying my humble tributes to Babasaheb and greeting my fellow citizens on

bly in his last speech on November 25, 1949. The said situation might lead to a revolution; hopefully a



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
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graded inequalities' over the centuries. The world at large aspires to establish an 'Equitable World Order' for global peace and harmony. Many prominent cities, states and provinces of many developed countries like Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia among others have, taking cue from the proposal of April 14 as International Day of Equality under the aegis of the UN, have declared the day as 'Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality in their respective areas. With every passing day, more and more people and organizations are joining the caravan and rightly so.

I live in Jalandhar where Ambedkar Jayanti is traditionally celebrated with all solemnity and dedication to pay respects and tributes to one of the greatest sons of India in the contemporary times, Babasaheb Ambedkar. But this year, I went to Phagwara to join celebrations on April 14. Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha and Dr. Ambedkar Cultural and Literary Activities Center of Urban Estate of Phagwara kindly invited me to the function as the Chief Guest and Lead Speaker which I accepted with pleasure. It was a rewarding visit. Thanks to my hosts; Jagan Nath Bansal, Ghansham, Sarwan Ram Birha and their associates at Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha. It was a befitting function to remember Babasaheb Ambedkar. The



educational, recreational and spiritual, for the community in and around Phagwara as an agenda to 'pay back to the society'. A social and community activist, Jagdish Dalia in his brief remarks appreciated the educational and training facilities to the young students and aspiring job seekers being arranged by Guru Ravidass Sabha and Ambedkar Center besides their various other activities. A stage presentation as a Natak - Lacchu Kabadia - by talented professionals from Desh Bhagat Yaadgar of Jalandhar was engaging and relevant to the prevailing socio-economic scenario in the country and the society at large and was much appreciative by the

the Ambedkar Jyanti I said that it was a matter of satisfaction that amidst the turbulent times in the last 75 years since our independence in 1947, India that is Bharat could remain India because of the constitution of India given by our forefathers under the stewardship of Babasaheb Ambedkar and added that we need not bother and worry about the often raised boggy of changing the constitution by some vested interests. I don't think any such misadventure is likely to be undertaken by anyone. But if it happened so, it would clearly usher India into "Grammar of Anarchy" as warned by Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Constituent Assem-

'velvet' one and not a 'bloody' one. Ambedkar stood for a peaceful and harmonious transformation of the polity and the society. The second issue I mentioned was the increasing international profile of Babasaheb Ambedkar with reference to April 14 as the International Day of Equality and solicited the much needed support of the organizations like Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha and others. I assured the audience that, though the Government of India was blissfully sleeping on the proposal as yet, we would not leave any stone unturned to see that the International Day of Equality becomes a reality; sooner than later. My latest blog on the subject may be seen at: <http://diplomat-ictitbits.blogspot.com/2023/04/international-day-of-equality-when-will.html>

The function was concluded with yet another praiseworthy and appreciable activity of the Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha - recognizing and encouraging the school students from the local and peripheral schools by giving them mementoes and cash prizes for doing well in their studies as a befitting tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar. I could feel that Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha was one of well run organizations in the area and wish that others learn from them to strengthen the resolve to 'pay back to the society.

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Bill Passes Committee

On Wednesday, the Assembly Education Committee unanimously passed AB 1071, my bill that would authorize and encourage schools to provide teen dating violence prevention education.

According to the CDC, 1 in 12 high school students experience teen dating violence. In the world of social media and advancing technology the signs and risks of teen dating violence are ever present.

I believe that working with local school districts and stakeholders to develop early intervention education is critical to ensure they are best addressing the needs for each unique community, and I look forward to doing everything I can to get this bill signed into law later this year.

Assembly Adjourns in Memory of Steve Miller

This week I asked the State



Assembly to adjourn our floor session in the memory of Steve Miller who passed away unexpectedly on March 25, 2023.

Steve served on the Citrus Heights City Council for 17 years where he worked tirelessly to make his city a better place. In November he was elected to the San Juan Unified School Board, further demonstrating his commitment to the students in our community.

Steve embodied the characteristics of a true public servant. His love for our region was inspiring and he will be greatly missed.

Bill to Limit Early Release for Child Abuse Convicts Fails in Committee



This week I presented AB 1746, or Ryla's Law, in the Public Safety Committee. This bill would limit early release for those convicted of child abuse that results in the death of the child. I was joined by Ryan Strange, a father from Rancho Cordova who tragically lost his one year old daughter Ryla to abuse at the hands of a daycare worker in 2019. After being sentenced to 10 years in prison, the daycare worker is expected to get out in less than three due to California laws that fail to hold criminals accountable and respect the rights of victims.

Unfortunately this bill failed to get enough votes to pass, but I am committed to continue working on this issue moving forward in next year's legislative cycle.

Bill to Prevent Healthy Animals in Shelters From Euthanasia Moves Forward

On Tuesday, AB 595, also known as Bowie's Law, passed its first legislative hurdle in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. This bill will save pets from euthanasia by requiring 72-hour public notice before a pet can be euthanized. It will also commission



a statewide study to provide data on our overcrowding at animal shelters to develop comprehensive strategies to help stop unnecessary euthanasia.

I look forward to supporting this bill when it comes before me on the Assembly Floor, as I strongly believe that every adoptable pet deserves the chance to find a loving home.

Update on Capitol Renovation Project

Recently there was a wonderful news piece featured on Capitol Public Radio about the status of the capitol annex project. If you aren't familiar with what is happening, there are currently plans to build an underground visitor's center on the west side of the Capitol, which will cost taxpayers millions of dollars and limit the ability for large groups to gather and petition their government.

I was featured in the article expressing my concern about the project's impacts. Over the years, we've had small business owners, union leaders, law enforcement, social justice advocates, civil rights leaders, environmentalists, Democrats and Republicans come to these steps and make their voices heard. That goes away under the current version of the project.

* If you want to express your opinion on this project, here are some upcoming opportunities to do so:

* An informational workshop will be held on the Draft REIR on April 16, 2023, between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, located at 828 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814 in the East Room.

A public hearing will be held on the Draft REIR on May 16, 2023, between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, lo-



While law enforcement worked to seize over 28,000 pounds of fentanyl in our state last year, we still have a lot of work to do to get this drug off our streets and out of our schools.

Next week the California State Assembly Public Safety Committee is holding their last hearing for the year on Tuesday to pass fentanyl-related legislation, and many solutions to end this crisis have yet to be heard by this committee, or worse, have died in committee.

Let your voice be heard and demand that the Committee take action to consider real solutions to end-Tour of Intel Folsom Campus

Intel Folsom Campus

Last week I got the opportunity to tour the Intel Folsom campus along with other local elected officials and leaders. Intel has over 5,000 employees in Folsom, making it the Sacramento area's largest technology company. Intel's Folsom site is a research and development campus that has sales, administration and other divisions - and it was a pleasure to get to see the campus in person. This sweeping crisis afflicting our communities.

Grand Opening of "Curry Pizza House"

Curry Pizza House

This week my team gave a certificate to Curry Pizza House in Folsom for their business opening ribbon cutting event. Opening up a new business in California is difficult, and I applaud the bravery and incredible sense of entrepreneurship of those who go down this path. I would like to congratulate them on this wonderful occasion, and I wish them the best of luck with their business.

cated at 828 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814 in the East Room.

Fentanyl Crisis Event

I wanted to provide you with an update regarding the fentanyl crisis in our state and ask you for your help!

If you are able and willing, please join legislative leaders, April 18th at 9:00AM at the Firefighters Memorial near the State Capitol, to demand action on California's fentanyl crisis.

Every month, 500 Californians are dying of fentanyl overdose.



You are free to live however you want. You aren't free to impose your choices on others.

Last week I was the lone no vote on a Sacramento County Board Resolution recognizing "Transgender Visibility Week." The resolution describes how the transgender community has suffered disproportionately with rejection and discrimination. It acknowledges the transgender, gender nonconforming and gender diverse residents' contributions to society and the importance of them living authentically and visibly.

I unequivocally oppose discrimination and I fully recognize and appreciate the human and societal value of those who identify as transgender. But I opposed the resolution because it contributes to a political movement that is forcing gender politics on the rest of society, advocates separating children from their families, and encourages experimental medical procedures on children who are suffering from psychological problems.

I have some experience with transgender and gender dysphoria during my work as a Registered Nurse. Gender Identity Disorder (GID) is a psychiatric disorder where a person experiences distress related to their gender and/or sex characteristics at birth. The diagnosis was created to help people with gender dysphoria gain access to necessary health care and effective treatment. This diagnosis is included in the American Psychiatric Association's published Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) and it focuses on Gender Dysphoria discomfort as the problem, rather than identity.

The American College of Physicians describes Gender Dysphoria as a psychological concept and sociological term, not a biological one.

Their website states, "GD resolves in the vast majority of patients by late adolescence." Studies show that many children express some level of gender-dysphoria, but 80% grow out of it before they are 25. Subjecting these children to permanent changes due to adolescent confusion isn't supporting adolescents suffering from depression or other psychological disorders - it's pushing an agenda that actually harms children.

In September 2022, SB107 made California a sanctuary state for children seeking gender transition therapies. This violates the parent's fundamental rights to direct their child's mental and physical health care. It mandates that Doctors conceal a child's medical information from parents if it is related to "gender identity" drugs and procedures, even if that information is sought under a court-issued subpoena. This bill removed parents from their child's healthcare conversation while they are still responsible for the costs and care of the child.

On April 10, 2023, AB665 passed the Assembly (and will go to Senate) in California. This law would allow a minor 12 years or older to obtain "gender-affirming" interventions without parental knowledge or consent. And, since California is already a "gender-affirming sanctuary state," if a child runs away from home to obtain gender-affirming care, parents will not be notified and could be barred from taking custody of their own children.

Puberty is a difficult time when children experience social and hormonal changes, grapple with self-identity, and struggle with peer acceptance. Rather than encouraging supportive families and guiding chil-

dren through this struggle, activists are taking advantage of children to promote their political agenda.

We have seen a wave of lawsuits from families and from children who felt pressured by school and public officials into gender transition, leading to permanent, life-altering decisions including radical surgery, often without even notifying parents.

For example, 18-year-old Chloe Cole filed a lawsuit against Kaiser Permanente for a transgender surgery performed on her when she was just 13. Similarly, Layla Jane is suing Kaiser for pressuring her to transition when she was barely a teenager. Both girls were treated chemically with puberty blockers and endured complete mastectomies while still in puberty. Both girls are now trying to de-transition and state that they felt pressured to undergo transition while their contributing mental health problems were ignored.

Even more alarming, we're now seeing activists, school employees, and counselors encouraging pre-teens, who aren't even in puberty yet, to undergo similar radical and often irreversible gender-changing procedures.

In Salinas, CA two middle school teachers who ran the school's Equality Club were caught pressuring students to secretly transition while hiding their problems from their families. In a leaked recording the teachers were quoted discussing how they kept meetings private and "stalked" students online for recruits. One of the teachers confirmed to the San Francisco Chronicle that the quotes were accurate but claimed the stalking comment was a joke.

Two examples came to light recently. In the first, a school district employee

secretly counseled an 11-year-old child through a gender transition, prompting the mother to file a lawsuit. In another district, a family has

filed a lawsuit against school officials who were actively transitioning their 11-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son. All people have a right to medical freedom and access to care, including children who are struggling with depression or gender dysphoria, however, It is dangerous to politicize a psychological condition and encourage children to undergo irreversible medical procedures.

It's even more dangerous to tear down parental rights and the family unit that has proven to be the most significant source of support for struggling children and young adults. Long after the activists have moved on, the family is there to help pick up the pieces. In keeping with my oath, I'll continue to try to protect and uphold the rights of all people in my service to the community.

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.net. Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta.



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor

Sikhlens Hosts a Successful Cultural Event Celebrating Vaisakhi



On Tuesday, April 11th, Sikhlens, in partnership with Dean Gail Stearns of the Fish Interfaith Center at Chapman University, hosted a vibrant and enlightening cultural event celebrating Sikh heritage.

The event took place at the Fish Interfaith Center in Orange, California, and was well-attended by community members, local politicians and Chapman University faculty and students. A beautiful display of Sikh heritage books and artwork in the lobby provided the attendees a unique opportunity to explore the rich

history and culture of the Sikh community.

The evening began with several local politicians presenting resolutions and proclamations recognizing the contributions of the Sikh Community to the prosperity of Orange County and declared April as Sikh Awareness Month. They also declared April 14th as Sikh Day every year in Yorba Linda. Dr. Gail Stearns of Chapman University, Bicky and Gurpreet Singh, and Dr. Ginny Kaur were also recognized for their dedication and presented Certificates of Ap-

preciation for their commitment to promoting interfaith harmony. The event featured insightful talks by esteemed guest speakers Dr. Jasbir S. Kang; Shivpreet Singh; Dr. Gurpreet Ahuja; and Dr. Jasjit Ahuja.

Dr. Kang shared his vast knowledge with a presentation on **Becoming American: The Journey of Sikhs to America**. Shivpreet Singh, a 10th direct descendant of the 17th-century Sikh poet Bhai Nandlal Goya, led a **Meditative Kirtan** and discussed the significance of spring, flowers, Vaisakhi, Khalsa, and their connec-

tion to Guru Nanak's teachings. Dr. Gurpreet Ahuja and Dr. Jasjit Ahuja presented their experiences from the Sikhlens Heritage Tour to Pakistan in February 2023.

The event concluded with words of thanks from Gurpreet Singh who expressed gratitude to Chapman University, Dr. Ginny Kaur, Head of Public Relations and Outreach, Sikhlens patrons, and the audience for their valuable time and support. Following the program, guests were treated to a buffet-style Indian vegetarian dinner, dessert, and chai.

The untold raga of the Last Queen

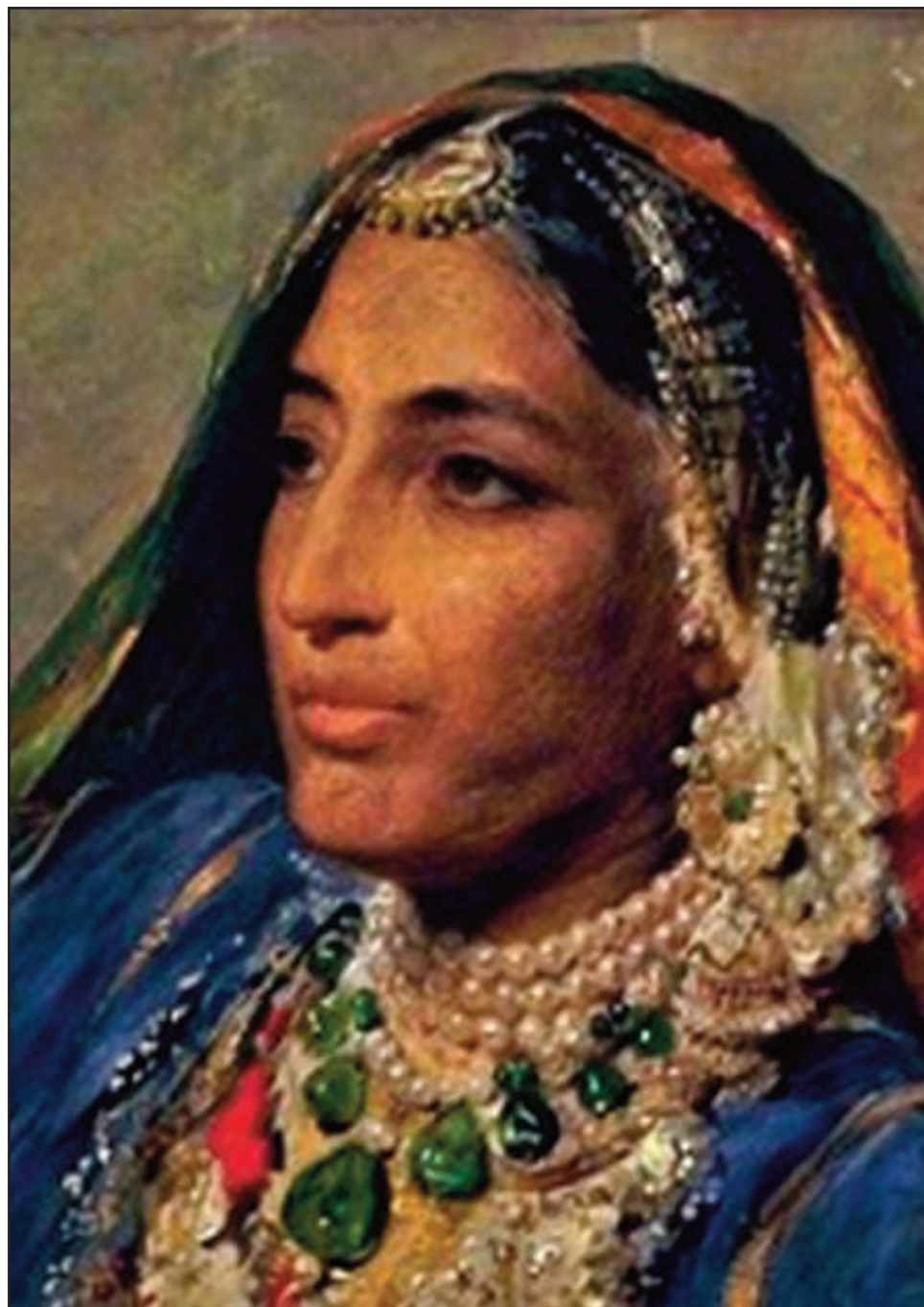
Rani Jindan of Punjab, the last and favourite wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Born in Gujranwala (present-day Pakistan), she was the daughter of a dog trainer who resided in the Badshahi Qilla, in charge of Ranjit Singh's dogs. Light-skinned, with glossy hair and impeccable features, she possessed the beauty of a Queen, and the intelligence too. From an early age, she loved education and continued her studies even when most of her female classmates dropped out. Her first visit to Lahore, with her father, proved to be a boon, as she met and soon fell in love with the Sher e Punjab. While most of Ranjit Singh's marriages were out of political alliances, his last one was for love.

The couple welcomed their son, in the year 1838, and named him Duleep after the Sant of Thanesar. But soon enough, Ranjit Singh's health deteriorated, as he suffered strokes one after the other, ultimately leading to his demise. Widowing the beautiful Jindan at the age of 21, seemed like a cruel joke of destiny but what was crueller was how she was forced to flee Lahore, to protect her life and the life of the future King from the politics of Zenana. The youngest son of Ranjit Singh was the last in the line of accession yet a series of unfortunate events, mainly the deaths and exiles of the heirs, made Duleep become the king of Punjab at the age of 5, with Mai Jindan as the regent queen. At the age where Duleep should have been playing with toys, he was sitting in the lap of his mother and presiding over the council of Ministers. Punjab had many enemies, the most powerful of them were the British who were eyeing Punjab even when Ranjit Singh was healthy and alive. The neighboring rulers did not make it easier either, with their constant battles at the borders.

Sooner or later, Punjab found itself fighting the first Anglo-Sikh war, and the results were devastating. Not only did the Khalsa army, lose because its opponent was stronger in terms of weapons and manpower but also lost the war because of treacherous leaders who abandoned the army at the peak of the attack such as Lal and Tej Singh. The treaty of Lahore was conducted, in which the dynasty had to surrender Jullundur Doab (a strategic position) and pay an indemnity of 15 million rupees. War-torn Punjab could not readily raise this sum, and so, Britishers ceded Kashmir. Maharaja Duleep Singh remained the ruler of Punjab and at first, his mother, Maharani Jindan Kaur, remained as Regent. But soon things began to change, as the Treaty of Bhyroval was signed, which gave the Britishers the license to lurk around the Punjab dynasty until the Maharaja attained the age of 16. The situation further deteriorated when in August 1847 Duleep Singh refused to invest Tej Singh as Raja of Sialkot.

The Britishers thought of Jindan Kaur as a negative influence on

the child King and thus imprisoned her, separating the 9-year-old from his mother. The Queen of Punjab was now a prisoner in a ruined fort left with nothing. Her protests made it to the headlines and became one of the many reasons why the second Anglo-Sikh war was fought. As a result of the defeat, Punjab was annexed and the child king lost everything before he even turned 12. With the help of a former loyal servant Avtar, the Mahrani managed to escape the dreadful jail and made her way to the kingdom of Nepal via Patna.



The Rana of Nepal, Jung Bahadur, a former comrade of the late King, welcomed Rani Jindan and granted her asylum in his kingdom. On the other hand, the former child king was removed from the country and placed in a British foster family to narrow the threat of another war by the Sikhs. The British too caught up with the whereabouts of Rani Jindan and asked the Rana to hand her back. Being refused to their faces the brits used another strategy of luring the Rana. They Englishsized the otherwise Indophile King, to the point that he had a great role to play in subsiding the revolt of 1857 by sending his Gurka army not to the aid of the revolutionaries but to the Enemies. Rani Jindan despite being an asylee herself, saved up whatever money she could procure and donated it to

the cause of 1857. She even went to the lengths of fighting for the asylum of the regent queen of Awadh, Begum Hazrat Mahal.

Her good deeds turned her only wish of meeting her long lost son into true as she received a letter from Duleep in 1860 requesting her presence in Calcutta, the heart of a mother filled with joy dismissed the cries of her maid warning her that this could be a ruse by the British wanting to capture her. Bags packed with very little she owned, she made her way to Spence's Hotel in Cal-

cutta, where the reunion was scheduled. The former child king was now agrown adult, but Rani Jindan soon cringed at the sight of her son in full-blown British attire. But it was not only his clothes which had changed, his accent changed too. He no longer sounded like an Indian royal but merely like a British clerk.

Keeping aside all the differences and disappointments, the mother-son duo sat down in an embraced position and took a walk down memory lane. The Maharani educated Duleep Singh about his Sikh heritage, his great father's legacy, the boundless glory of his kingdom, and the unbreakable spirit of the Khalsa Sikhs, who served as the foundation of his rule. His perspective on his past, family, and religion improved under Maharani's guidance. Gradually,

the child king's memories came back to him, seeming as if it was from his last life. He slowly and carefully remembered everything from the foods he loves to the games he played all day long. Over the period, as Duleep started coming closer to his mother, he decided to stay with her in India to make up for the lost time but the British fearing that it would unite the people of Punjab denied his request. With a heavy heart, Rani Jindan made a heart-wrenching choice as a Sikh to go to Britain with her son, knowing that she may die in a foreign land, far away from her beloved Ganga.

The England Duleep so fondly talked about seemed gloomy to Jindan as she reached the shore, after all, it was not as colourful and diverse as her own country. Living in this foreign land reminded her of everything she lost in life from the love of her life to her dignity and her empire. But it is nothing compared to the time Duleep and Jindan were getting to make up for the long separation. Duleep even commissioned a well-known artist, George Richmond to paint a portrait of his mother, so her aura does not get lost in time.

Duleep's newfound relationship with his mother changed his perspective on his past, family, and religion. She is thought to have had a big influence on Duleep Singh's decision to go back to Sikhi. But for the British, it certainly was a negative influence, and tried their best to break apart the mother-son duo. Jindan remained with her son resisting all efforts of his friends and the authorities to make them stay in a separate accommodation, until June, 1862, when she was placed under the charge of an English lady in a different house.

Two years after entering the Kensington Gardens in 1861, on August 1, 1863, Jind Kaur passed away. The amazing, brave, and daring life of a Maharani, who never gave up on her quest for sovereignty and self-rule even during the most trying times for an extended period under the most tragic and hopeless conditions, came to an end with her passing. But her struggles did not end with her death, it took almost 12 months for the British to process her body back to her home country for the funeral she always wanted.

Fearing another rebellion, the British also did not allow Duleep to perform the rites in Punjab, but somewhere close to Bombay. He was also not allowed to be accompanied by any of Rani Jindan's loyal servants, rather he stood there alone on the ghats of Godavari, holding the earthen pot filled with the still-hot ashes of his mother, softly chanting *Jo Bole So Nihal. Sat Sri Akal.*



Saman Rais Siddiqui

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