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Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber

Contact: 001-916-947-8920

Fax: 916-238-1393

E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

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Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Ad Dharm and Dalit Identity in Punjab

(Invited Editorial and Article Combined on the 41st Anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia)

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra, and just as the Maharashtra Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted 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 proclaimed democratic and liberal values 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. This further cemented his resolve to fight for a dignified life for the masses 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 his nineteenth century Maharashtrian counterpart who was also a revolutionary social thinker of the so-called lower castes, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia – from one of the lowest castes in Punjab - established the first school of its kind in his native village of Mugowal for the children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated 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. He also faced stiff opposition, like his predecessor in Maharashtra, from the so-called upper/dominant castes of Punjab in his fierce struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability - the most egregious one among them. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadarite leadership in the United States of America, he aspired to both fight against the caste-based social evil of untouchability and to replace it with an all-encompassing social freedom, as well as to join the fight to free the subjugated India and return to it its political freedom.

On return to his native village after spending 16 years abroad and discovering the pervasiveness of untouchability, Babu Mangu Ram decided to dedicate rest of his life for the emancipation and empowerment of the so-called low-caste people. In his own words: "While living abroad I had for-

gotten 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. Hence, 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* 1986: 23-24).

To give a practical shape to his above-mentioned resolve, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia founded the famous Ad Dharm movement 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 lower 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 centre in the vicinity of the British military cantonment at Jalandhar – provided major financial support to the Ad Dharm movement. 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 (lower castes) in Punjab. Like the Satyashodak Samaj movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm soon became a household name among the Dalits of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes in the state that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on a common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow-travellers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to collectively press their long-pending

claim for a share in the local structures of power.

In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919 prised from 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); and as a young man freshly-returned from the US, and meticulously chiselled in the superb companionship of the proud Ghadarite Babas, Babu Mangu Ram



Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980
Founder of the Ad Dharm Movement Punjab

successfully gathered many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with that of the upper caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas of the Sikhs. This limited election-based legislature-forming-process also led to the formation of similar Adimovements 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 Adimovements 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 Adimovement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given state.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia formed the Ad Dharm movement in Punjab to fight for land rights of his people who were legally denied to purchase agriculture land by the Land Alienation Act of 1900, which prohibited the lowest castes along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agricultural land. Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammās', the so-called untouchable peoples were even denied the ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in the segregated neighbourhoods of the mainstream vil-

lages and neither were they allowed to build 'pucca' houses. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to per-

form some begar (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of 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 lower castes under the state affirmative action.

Apart from the material upliftment of the lower castes, what made Ad Dharm the most politically noticeable and powerful movement of its time was the foresight of its visionary leader in setting the goal of bringing the divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform 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 Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the master strategist, who intervened at a critical period when limited direct elections were scheduled 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 nor Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, were the original inhabitants - Moolnivasis (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them, and finally enslaved them. In the posterannouncing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the Moolnivasis at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the Moolnivasis 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



Prof. (Dr.) Ronki Ram
Fellow & Dean (Faculty of Arts),
Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor,
Panjab University, Chandigarh (India)
E-mail: <ronkiram@yahoo.co.in>
Mob: +91-9878682160

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Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Ad Dharm and Dalit Identity in Punjab

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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 callous. 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 Udarian* 1986: 21-22). Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia have observed that he was conflicted on the issue of the British Raj - on the one hand he feared even greater oppression under Hindu majoritarian rule than under the British - whom he also viewed as possible partners in facilitating a more equal Indian society - but on the other hand he aspired for the dignity of national inde-

pendence, which necessitated the removal of the British. This remained a recurring paradox in his political approach till the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. In his brilliant article entitled *Achhut da Swaal* (Untouchability Question), Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system, but at the same time had cautioned them to keep their distance from the British.

The leaders of Ad Dharm thus chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-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 *Moolnivasis* 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 *Moolnivasis* 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 based on 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 Untouch-

able 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 separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, rich cultural heritage. He strengthened their resolve 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 took 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. An eminent American social scientist, Mark Juergensmeyer, had also noted in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab,' the tremendous contribution of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia towards Dalit upliftment in Punjab, by his founding of the 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.

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Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum Pay Floral Tribute to Mr. Parkash Chand Jassal

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum share its deep grief with the bereaved family, friends, and fellow-missionaries of Mr. Parkash Chand Jassal Ji who suddenly left us. He was among the pioneers of the Republican Party of India in Punjab. He was an untiring follower of Ambedkar mission, a sincere devotee of Buddhism and a fearless soldier of the Rights of Scheduled Castes. In his sudden demise, Mr Jassal has left us with irreparable loss. Throughout his missionary life he never ever compromised with wrong values. He began the tradition of cele-



brating the martyrdom day of martyr Sh. Ram Prakash Abad Pura (Jalandhar) of 1964 RPI agitations. He actively participated in the agitation for declaring holiday on the Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He played constructive role in organizing Plumbers' Union. He was also in the forefront of Talhan agitation and had been very active in Chetna March Committee.

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba pay floral tribute to the departed noble soul.

Prem Kumar Chumber Editor-In-Chief



Historic picture of Sanghol with Late Mr. Parkash Chand Jassal (Picture credit: P. K. Chumber)

Increasing Poverty and Declining Proportion of the Middle Class in India

According to a report released in March 2021 by the Pew Research Center, Washington D.C., the number of people living below the poverty line in India is projected to increase by 75 million during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which is about 60 per cent of the increase in the population living below the poverty line in the world. The impact of the pandemic on the economy is expected to reduce the number of middle-income people in India by 32 million which is 60 per cent of the decline in the number of middle-income people in the world. The Pew Research Center has estimated the number of people living below the poverty line as poor, with US \$ 2 or less per capita income, per day. To estimate the decline in the number of middle-income people, the center has considered those people in this group whose per capita, per day income is between US \$ 10.01 and \$ 20.

Governments from time to time provide definitions of the poverty

purchasing power parity to calculate the Indian rupee equivalent to one US \$ for 2020, one US \$ equals 21.35 Indian rupees. Thus, US \$ 2 would be equivalent to just 42.70 Indian rupees. How can one get rid of poverty with only Rs. 42.70 per capita income per day? One critique-free definition of the poverty line may be people living below the poverty line are the ones unable to meet their basic needs — food, clothing, housing, education, health care, clean environment, and social security. The corporate world propagates corporate social responsibility on a large scale, but its main purpose is to maximize its profits. The extreme increase in the wealth of the extremely rich and the increase in the number of the poor in India and most of the countries of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic are tearing apart the tune of corporate social responsibility.

During Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister, one of the country's leading economists, Dr. Bagicha

any opportunity to sing the praises of the country's high economic growth rate in the hope of fulfilling their petty meaningless selfish interests. In addition, emphasizing beyond their normal capacity, these economists fabricate data and go for conclusions-oriented studies to show their 'sympathy' for the common man. They leave no stone unturned in making and preaching nonsensical statements. The country's middle-income group continues to be the victim of many misconceptions. One of their biggest misconceptions is that they are bearing the brunt of taxes and concessions / subsidies being given to the poor people at the middle-income group's cost. A student with even basic knowledge of economics is well aware that most of the government's revenue comes from indirect taxes and the biggest burden of these taxes is on the poor. Another big misconception of the middle-income group is that they have to rise up to get in the upper-income group soon. In fact, very few people from the mid-

people are hungry due to lack of bread. The queen asked her officials in amazement that if these people do not get bread then why these people don't eat cakes / pastries? The same is true of our scholars, planners, and rulers. The country's marginal and small farmers, farm labourers, rural small artisans and informally employed labourers continue to be burdened by poverty and debt. While the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problems of these classes, it has also led to a tremendous increase in the wealth of the extremely



Dr. Gian Singh

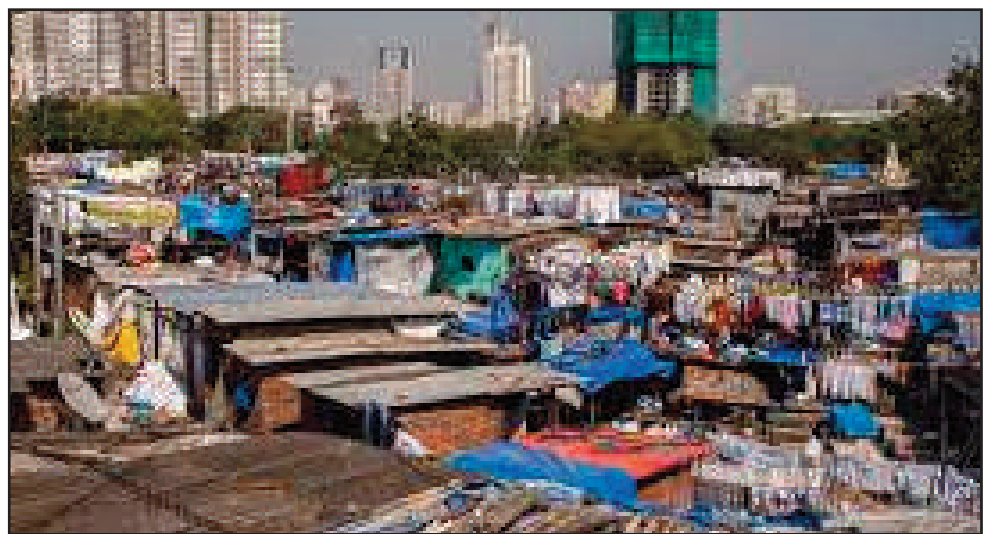
Former Professor, Department of Economics,
Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab.

+1 (424) 422-7025



line to determine the number of people living below the poverty line and raise their living standards by initiating welfare schemes for these people. The definitions of the poverty line given by various governments in India have been the subject of criticism. The definitions suggested by the Tendulkar Committee (2005), the Rangarajan Committee (2012), the Panagarhiya Committee (2015) and a few other committees have been sharply criticized and to date no such definition has been given which has been accepted without criticism. At the international level too, many given definitions of the poverty line are not flawless. The definition of poverty line given by the World Bank is used in many countries. One of the aims of this bank is to eradicate poverty from the world. One of the criticisms of the poverty line given by this bank is that in this definition, the per capita income, per day has been deliberately kept low in order to reflect that the corporate economic growth model is helpful in eliminating poverty from the world. This criticism seems plausible because how can a person live above the poverty line with an income of US \$ 2 per capita, per day? Purchasing power parity is used to calculate the country's currency equivalent to US \$ 2 when calculating income. Using the

Singh Minhas had resigned as a member of the Planning Commission of India. Indira Gandhi was known for her hot-tempered nature but regarding Dr. Minhas' resignation, she had said that the Planning Commission had lost a top economist. After resigning, Dr. Minhas wrote a book, "Planning and the Poor", in which he made it clear that plans for the well-being of the poor could not be made in air-conditioned rooms. Government of India and state government institutions are full of economists. These economists are deliberately giving foolish arguments, they are trying to equate the high economic growth rate with the development of the common man and while they know that this eventually goes in favour of the corporate world and against the common man. They are not ashamed in propagating that the high economic growth rate of the country inevitably lifts the common man out of poverty and raises his standard of living. These economists deliberately ignore the problems that arise from the current corporate economic model of the country, such as unequal distribution of resources and income, inequality, poverty, debt, and hunger, and the resulting social problems and unethical acts such as suicide, looting, murder, hooliganism, drugs, theft, robbery, corruption. They do not miss



dle-income group are allowed to enter the upper-income group and more people are pushed into the lower-income group. They are seen playing a snake-ladder game.

The policies of liberalization, privatization, and globalization have been implemented by the Government of India since 1991 under the policy guidelines of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These policies have been dubbed 'New Economic Policies'. The agenda of these policies is to strengthen the grip of the capitalist/corporate world on the country's economy. The hidden agenda behind the definitions of the poverty line given by 'scholars' at different times is to reduce/eliminate not only the economic concessions/subsidies already given by the government to the poor, various research studies conducted in the country have made it clear that the 'New Economic Policies' adopted in the country since 1991 are to take over the agricultural, industrial, and services sectors by the corporate world.

In capitalist regimes, rulers often become insensitive to understanding and solving people's problems. At one point, people were protesting outside the palace of the Queen of France. When the queen asked her officials why these people are protesting, they said that these

rich. The recent wave of the COVID-19 pandemic will further weaken these working classes.

Poverty in India's working class people will not go away on its own. This requires pressure and intervention from the working people as well as strong political will-power. The solution to this problem is to get rid of the corporate economic development model and adopt a people-friendly and pro-nature economic development model that ensures expansion and growth of the public sector and monitoring and regulation of the private sector. Capital-intensive production techniques must be replaced by labour-intensive production techniques. The scope of MGNREGA needs to be widened and other similar schemes need to be implemented in villages and cities. Grass growing on the graves of the poor warns capitalists and governments that growing poverty anywhere among the working class people is a serious threat to the well-to-do people everywhere. To address the problem of poverty, financing can be done by raising the existing tax rates and imposing new taxes on the capitalist/corporate world, imposing and ensuring their collection. In this regard, it is important to define and implement 'the poverty line' as well as 'the prosperity line'.

Laura's Law in Sacramento County



Sue Frost
Sacramento County Supervisor

This summer the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will have a big decision to make regarding whether or not to implement "Laura's Law." I want to take this opportunity in my monthly article to explain to you what this law is, why this is coming before the Board of Supervisors, and why it is such a big deal.

Laura's Law is named for 19-year-old Laura Wilcox, who was a college student working in a Nevada County mental-health clinic in 2001, when she and two others were shot and killed by a man with untreated severe mental illness. After the incident Laura's parents chose to advocate for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) for individuals who meet strict legal criteria and who, as a result of their mental illness, are unable to voluntarily access community mental health services.

Since then, California counties have the option to "opt in" to the program, and that has been done so far in most of the larger counties. To date, Sacramento County has been one of the few larger counties who has not opted in and has never held a public hearing at the Board of Supervisors regarding whether or not to implement the program.

This process changed however with the passage last year of AB 1976, which requires counties like Sacramento to hold public hearings at the Board of Supervisors about whether we will "opt in" or "opt out", and if we choose to "opt out" we have to provide specific reasons for this to the State.

The deadline for Sacramento County to have this hearing and formally decide will be July 1st of this year.

Earlier this month a mentally ill homeless man assaulted a child on Freeport Blvd. in Sacramento, only to be released back into the public in less than 24 hours – and this was after he had been captured and released previously for assault and battery of another woman. As a former emergency room nurse, I understand firsthand that there are people living in our community who cannot take care of themselves, and they desperately need help.

People like this should be able to get help before more crimes are perpetuated in our communities – it's the compassionate and safe way to move forward.

I do not know how I will vote on this issue when it comes before me as I want to have an open ear to both sides as well as be able to fully comprehend the fiscal impacts, but I

do know this is a growing problem and we should be handling this problem better than we are right now. 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@sacounty.net.

Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murieta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Change of Name

I, Jashanpreet Singh S/O Iqbal Singh
Residing at: 1504 United Street,
Manteca, CA-95337, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name
From: Jashanpreet Singh Baryar
To: Jashanpreet Singh.
All concerned kindly note it.

I, Manpreet Singh S/O Davinder Singh
Residing at:
1543 Silver Creek Cir, Stockton,
CA-95207, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name
From: Manpreet Singh Parmar
To: Manpreet Singh
All concerned kindly note it.

I, Deepak Singh S/O Suminder Singh
Residing at: 5260 N Valentine Ave, Apt 103,
Fresno, CA-93711, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name
From: Deepak
To: Deepak Singh
All concerned kindly note it.

I, Mahavir Singh S/O Darbara Singh
Residing at:
588 Bramblewood Ave.,
Lathrop, CA-95330, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name
From: Mahavir Singh Sidhu
To: Mahavir Singh
All concerned kindly note it.



D. C. Ahir

The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi youth, who

had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.



Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education. With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he, however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,

however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written

for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his



ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion. Both believed in self-

help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Jueregensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir

BABU MANGU RAM MUGOWALIA - A PROFILE

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia combined in his personage the qualities of a fierce revolutionary, a staunch patriot, a devoted crusader against social evils and above all a true humanitarian through. Born among the lowliest of the low, he crossed all social barriers dauntlessly and suffered all sorts of indignities of life and made his way to reach the pinnacle of greatness.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia represents a rare example among the revolutionaries Ghadarite philosophy. In those dark days, it was rare for an untouchable to understand the essence of revolution against imperialism. But he rose to the occasion and proved his mettle. He joined the Ghadar Party when he went to California (U.S.A.) in 1909 A.D. as its active member. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, it appears desired an establishment of society which must be based on Equality. And he saw one being fought for by the Ghadarites as they had abolished all social distinctions among themselves first which, perhaps, is not the practice with the modern community or who profess change of the sort. As Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia spoke of the Ghadar Party, "It was a new society, we were all treated as equals".

As a Ghadarite, he took part in the organizational activities at first but in 1915 A.D. an occasion came when he volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites in a dangerous mission involving smuggled weapons shipped from California to the Punjab. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was chosen by the leader of the Ghadar Party at that time. Mr. Sohan Singh Bhakna, the Secretary of Ghadar Party, whom Babu M.R. Mugowalia remembered as "Godha" sent the five to Los Angeles, where they boarded an intermediary boat, after depositing all of their personal identifications with "Godha", for the rest of the journey's saga. Mangu Ram would be known by a pseudonym, "Nizamuddin".

Putting his life into danger and travelling through Secorro Islands and halting at Mexico, Caladonia Islands, Manila, Singapore and again to Manila where he stayed for sometime and finally to India where he reached in 1925 A.D.

It is after 1925, that his career as a crusader against untouchability and casteism began. As he travelled from Ceylon to Punjab through Madurai, Madras, Bombay, Poona, Sitara, Nagpur and Delhi, he observed the condition of the untouchables on route and was dismayed to see these people being treated so badly. In Madurai, when Babu Mangu Ram visited the Meenakshi Temple, he was told to be careful not to touch Achhut (Untouchables) since they assumed by his dress that he was of a decent caste. By the time Babu M.R. Mugowalia had reached the Punjab, he was convinced that there was need for social change.

Babu M.R. Mugowalia wrote to the Ghadar Party headquarters in

San Francisco about the difficult conditions of the Untouchables in India. He wrote them that their freedom was more important to him than Indian freedom. According to Babu Mugowalia, leaders of the Ghadar Party then disengaged him to work with Scheduled Castes (Untouchables), and wrote him that they would support him in his tasks. Thus, in a new context, the old revolutionary from Fresno continued the Ghadar spirit. This clearly shows that even Ghadarites had realized the need to awaken these slaves of Indian Society - the then Untouchables.

When he started his task of social reform i.e. establishing schools for untouchables poors, he began to

look for an alternative which may provide a lever for the unity of the untouchable poors and then to demonstrate through that alternative the political presence of the untouchables in the politics of Punjab of those days. It must be remembered that Punjab was already witnessing political upheaval and each class was trying to reap at

political harvesting. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with other conscious men from his class, then founded on June 11-12, 1926 A.D. at his village Mugowal Ad-Dharma as the alternative.

Ad-Dharma's main aim was to create a feeling of identity among the untouchable class which numbered at that time about one fourth of the entire population of India. Babu M.R. Mugowalia and the early leaders of the Ad-Dharma perceived their first task to be the creation of a new religion. In their initial meetings, even before they developed an organisational structure, they labored over a basic ideological theme upon which they could build a system of religious ideas and symbols. Its central motive was novel: the idea that untouchables constitute a quaum, a distinct religious community similar to those of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and that the quaum had existed from time immemorial. It was a myth of power addressed to the people without power. It was intended to communicate the sense of strength that Babu M.R. Mugowalia felt belonged to his caste fellows by right. As he explained, "The untouchables have their powers: communal pride (qaumiat), religion (mazhab), and organisation (mazlis)". The hope was that these powers could be fostered and splintered

through force of ideology.

Ad-Dharma was almost Babu M.R. Mugowalia's show. It inspired the lowliest of the low to fight for equality, economic, social and political in a converted way. The Ad-Dharma, under the dynamic leadership of a true revolutionary like Babu Mugowalia, was an aggressive and autonomous movement or compared to similar movements that took birth in other parts of the country. Within a short span of time, it jolted the 'haves-not' through its rallies, publications, deputations and demonstrations to demand new government policies or to protest upper caste discriminations. The most influential political action of the movement that



can be listed as one of its great achievements, was to get Scheduled Castes registered as a followers of new religion. In 1931 A.D. census, almost half a million of them registered as "Ad-Dharmi" rather than Hindus or Muslim or Sikh. Mr. Mark Juergensmeyer writes as, "Later in the 1930, their political influence turned towards electoral politics, in alliance first with the predominantly Muslim Unionist Party and then with the Congress. It was the logical consequence of the political awakening created among them by Ad-Dharma Movement in Punjab, whose undisputable leader was Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia.

Thus through several means, then, the Ad-Dharmis presented to its followers a vision of a world which both confirmed and transformed the rude experience of untouchables. And in doing so it implied that a different sort of world was coming into being, for the separate identity so defined signaled hope for a society in which social groups carried no inherent mark of judgment and in which the benefits of progress could be shared by all.

Cultural and humanistic aspects of the personality of Babu M.R. Mugowalia were even more glaring. As a humanist his vision of the world was near to rationalist view of the universe (we can even say materialistic as well though in rudimentary form), he believed in the inherent equality of all human-beings; he was against all sorts of exploitations of man against man; and he earnestly devoted his bodily energy and financial resources in founding a new society based upon the gospel of equality. His ideas about the universe and equality of all men are echoed in

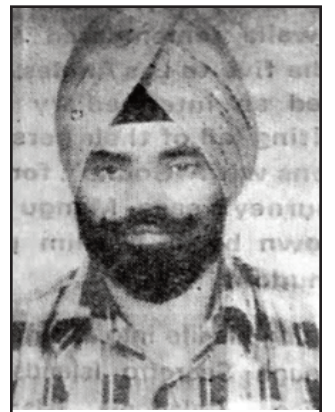
the Ad-Dharma (1926-1931) report in the preparation of which Babu Mugowalia had played a big role. It reads as follows:

"Nature (Qudrat Ka Mela) created human beings from original source (Adi) at the time that it created all beings in the earth. The knowledge of moral behaviour (karm-dharm) was also given to them at that time by Nature. Nature made humans superior to animals, but among humans all were equal.

In the beginning, when Nature created human beings, there was no discrimination. There were no differences and no quarrels. In particular, there were no such concepts as high or low caste. God (Ishwar) was meditating; all was in harmony. Everyone believed in one dharma which Nature had given then through intellect and knowledge". Babu M.R. Mugowalia did not mean by the word 'God' as something supernatural beings who is said to have created the world and since then regulating it as is believed in theology. Mark Juergensmeyer makes it quite clear in his work, Religion As Social Vision, thus: "Occasionally there is mention of God in a more formal sense". "God (Ishwar) was meditating; all was in harmony". And Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia made a practice of using the name Adi-Purkh for the divine - literally "the originator", or the "Original Being". All these designations, although they are theistic terms, are impersonal in intent.

He, all his life, stood like a rock against social evils such as untouchability, caste-system, women slavery, exploitation etc. His life in cultural side symbolized with the creation of new social virtues such as women's rights, the value of education, abstinence from alcohol and drugs - which were 'nothing less than a new concept of moral order'. Thus Babu M.R. Mugowalia, a Ghadarite revolutionary, social crusader, political activist and strategist and as a humanitarian fought for the establishment of an ideal society till he breathed last. The noble way of commemorating celebrating the 99th Birth Anniversary (for that matter every birth anniversary) of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia - who desired his movement to coincide with Ambedkarite Movement to give the movement of depressed classes a country-wide stature, is to emulate him. Therefore, let us resolve to emulate the great Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia - patriot, social revolutionary, a successful strategist and, above all, a humanist.

Courtesy: Souvenir Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia 99th Birth Anniversary published by MR. C. L. Chumber



Prof. G.S. BALL (Late)
M.A., M.Phil.
President, Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab (Regd)

Bhimam Sharnam Gacchami

Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's 130th jayanti is being celebrated all over the world today with usual fervor despite vicious pandemic threat. Despite the restrictions and advisories from the Government owing to alarming second surge of Covid-19 in the country, the enthusiasm of Babasaheb's followers continues to be sky high in paying tributes to their messiah and pacing up the march to achieve his avowed mission with renewed resolve. It is also the day to take stock of the progress made by the country and the marginalized sections under the Constitution fathered by him which is based on the principles of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice. It is over seven decades that the country has been free from the foreign yoke and the marginalized sections constitutionally liberated from the age old thralldom. Viewed in terms of the overall progress made by the country, it goes without saying that the Constitution has stood the test of times notwithstanding the multiple socio-political hurdles being created in its smooth functioning by the people of orthodox fossilized mindset. It promises bright prospects for the country if followed sincerely in its letter and spirit by all those responsible to work it. As regards the deprived sections, it has a long way to go mainly because of the lackadaisical approach of the people of Brahmanical mindset at the helms of affairs, and the age old prejudices of the selfish Hindu orthodoxy. Being strong opponents of the Constitution, such elements seem to be hell bent to reinforce Manu Smriti considered as the holy law book of the Hindus which was set ablaze by Babasaheb on 25 December 1927 as a black book of unparalleled inhuman laws on earth. The Brahmanical forces are latently and patently at work against the interest of the marginalized people at all levels in the country. The unfortunate downtrodden sections are, therefore, always at the receiving end due to the Government machinery being predominantly controlled and run by such people. Resultantly perpetual poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, marginalization, deprivation and criminal victimization continue to be the destiny of these unfortunate citizens of India. One can refer to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Reports to realize the gloomy picture in this regard. As a result, the constitutional ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice, and Babasaheb's ideals of 'annihilation of caste'; 'Everyone being Indian first and Indian last'; 'one India one people' and egalitarian social order remain more or less to be the ideals only so far. Babasaheb wanted his people educationally, socially, economically and politically sitting at the pinnacle of a palace overseeing community's interest and leading the country to the pinnacle of glory. He struggled throughout and sacrificed his life for their uplift and empowerment. Unfortunately most of the beneficiaries of his sacrifices also turned out to be self-centered and greedy for power

and position. Almost all their political representatives joined the opposite camp leaving them in the lurch. Babasaheb called them political vagabonds and traitors of the community. He once remarked: "...But for these black-legs, who were bartering away the rights and interests of the community for their petty personal gains we would have won the battle of our political emancipation long ago..." Feeling distressed at the situation, he strongly recommended abolition of political reservation on August 27, 1955.

Speaking of the educated people of these sections, he expressed his dismay in a speech delivered at Agra on 18th March 1956 saying: "...These educated persons have betrayed me. I expected that

they would do social service after getting higher education. But what I see is a crowd of small and big clerks who are busy in filling their own bellies..." Opening his heart out to his Personal Secretary Mr. N.C. Rattu on 31st July 1956, he said with tears rolling down the cheeks: "...Whatever I have been able to achieve is being enjoyed by the educated few, who with their deceitful performances have proved to be the worthless lot. They live for themselves and their personal gains. My lieutenant in whom I had full faith and confidence to run the movement are fighting among themselves for leadership and power. Tell my people that whatever I have done, I have been able to do after passing through crushing miseries and endless troubles all my life fighting with my opponents. With great difficulty I have brought this Caravan where it is seen today. Let it march on and further on despite the hurdles, pitfalls and difficulties that may come in its way. If my people are not able to take it, they should leave it where it is seen today, but in no circumstances should they allow the Caravan to go back."

According to Babasaheb, the problem of the marginalized sections is political, which cannot be solved unless political power comes in their hands. The political power is a key to all social progress and to bring salvation to them. In his landmark speech at the First Round Table Conference at London on 20th November 1930, he said: "...We feel that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political power in our own hands." Speaking to his people at Nagpur on 18th July 1942, he said: "...The only thing we can depend upon for our continued progress is the political power without which we will perish. It is a question of life and death for us." Delivering the historical speech in the Constituent Assembly while

pressed Classes at Nagpur on 19th July 1942, he said: If we have not so far achieved the position in the Constitution which is due to us, it is because we have not been united." In his speech there on 20th July 1942, he said: "I want assurance of strength, unity and determination to stand for our rights, fight for our rights and never to return until we win our rights. My final words of advice to you are: 'Educate, Agitate and Organize: have faith in yourself and never lose hope'." In his speech at Jalandhar on 27 October 1951, he said: "... we can achieve something only if we unite. United we stand and divided we fall." In his speech at Agra on 18th March 1956, he asserted: "I have got for you reservation and other safeguards and proper provision for education of your children. Now it is your duty to continue the struggle as one strong united force for removal of educational, economic and social inequality. For this purpose you will have to be prepared for all sorts of sacrifices and even to shed your blood."

The task of achieving unity of all ranks of the deprived sections, particularly when they stand divided not only into multiple castes themselves but also into millions of social, cultural and political groups created and run by handful persons of "R"s guided mostly by their self interest, seems to be very difficult. The situation may appear to be grim but not impossible. We have some sincere and committed youth and enlightened Ambedkarites and followers of our saints and Gurus who have unimpeachable dedication to the cause of community. Above all, Babasaheb's philosophy, life and mission are always there as beacon to guide his people through thick and thin. With his vow "It is my solemn vow to die in the service and cause of those downtrodden people among whom I was born, I was brought up and I am living. I would not budge an inch from my righteous cause..." and "If I fail to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustices under which the class, into which I was born, has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet" in the hearts and minds, and on the lips of true Ambedkarites and well-wishers of the community, the task cannot be insurmountable.

The mission 'unity' to accomplish Babasaheb's ultimate mission is possible if his people take refuge in him and his philosophy. They have to have the chant "Bhimam Sharnam Gacchami" always in their heart, mind and on lips. Imbibing Babasaheb's spirit, they need to join heads, hearts and hands together, march ahead fearlessly chanting 'Bhimam Sharnam Gacchami'. This can only be their true tribute to the great son of India, messiah of the humanity and an icon of his people, on his 130th Jayanti. The destiny will surely bestow smile on them and the destination - mission will kiss their feet sooner than later.

Jai Bhim, Jai Bharat.

Prithvi Raj Kumar



Ambedkar Jayanti, 2021 – Solute to a Potent Legacy

I am stationed in Jalandhar, an important town of the Doaba region of Punjab. As usual, Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated and observed with fervor and enthusiasm to remember and pay tributes to the greatest son of India in the contemporary times in spite of Covid constraints and restrictions. Each and every locality involving the cross sections of the society, hosted events and functions to observe the day with all solemnity and reverence. It was a matter of satisfaction to note that acceptance and recognition of Babasaheb Ambedkar was growing at a pace which surprised many particularly those who consciously or otherwise tried to undermine Ambedkar and his legacy because of traditional caste-ridden considerations and resultant mindset.

development and foreign policy to ward off danger to our security and get a dignified position for India in the comity of nations among others. Against the caste ridden social order, he embraced Buddhism in October, 1956, a couple of months before his death in December, 1956. Even after his death, Ambedkar still remained a pariah both in the polity and society of the country for which he did a lot. It was the height of hypocrisy. But as Mahatma Gandhi said, 'You can criticize Ambedkar but you cannot ignore him', Ambedkar could not be suppressed for long. His legacy is so potent and his work and mission so relevant he came out on his own strength not only in India but in the world at large. Babu Kanshi Ram brought his political legacy to the fore

Ambedkar and his mission, if they really intend to make a dent in the social structures to bring about their much publicized idea of 'Samrasta'. There is no other way. Ambedkar will remain a force to reckon with in the years to come. Ambedkar's fragrance would spread as Allma Iqbal said in some other context:

Uthaye Kuch Waraq Lale Ne, Kuch Nargis Ne, Kuch Gul Ne
Chaman Mein Har Taraf Bikhri Huwi Hai Dastan Meri

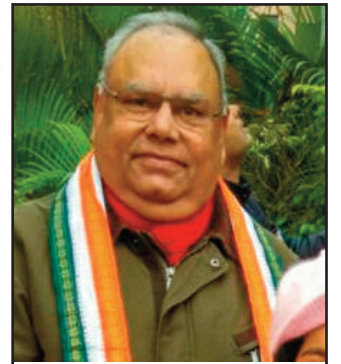
Some leaves were picked up by the tulip, some by the narcissus, some by the rose

My story is scattered around everywhere in the garden

Urha Li Qumriyon Ne, Tootiyon Ne, Andleebon Ne

soon come on board and honour Dr. Ambedkar as the Province of British Columbia did. We are confident that the day is not too far when countries would take due note of

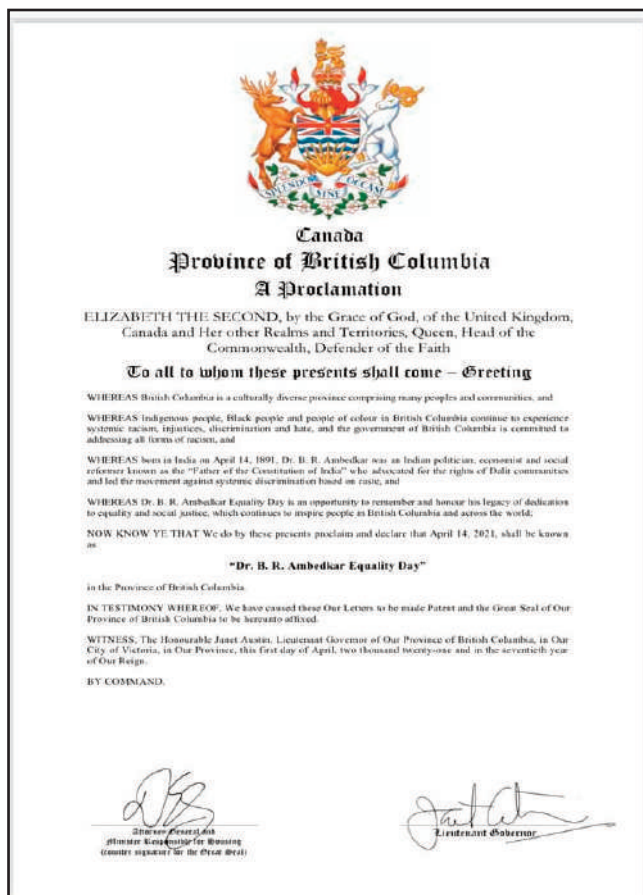
it and the proposal will be firmly routed to the UN by the stake holders worldwide. We hope GOI would understand and wake up in time to get



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940



The tragedy of the matter is that Ambedkar never got his due in the media, school curriculum, academia and other socio-political activities of the society willingly or voluntarily. He remained a crusader throughout his life for the causes concerning the weaker sections of the society and also women folk. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought with Mahatma Gandhi, Congress party and its leadership, Manuwad and Manuwadis single handedly as a most qualified and competent person of his times for equality and justice to the marginalized sections of the society. Due recognition and support was hard to come by only because of his low position in the caste hierarchy. With great reluctance, he was



beginning 1970s. PM VP Singh and the likes of Ram Vilas Paswan were instrumental in conferring the Bharat Rattan on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in early 1980s. The statues and other memorial sites of Ambedkar became the norm not only in India but abroad too to relate to the weaker sections of the society. The visionary stipulation of 'One Vote – One Value' in the democratic edifice of India so aptly introduced by Ambedkar himself made all political forces to fall on each other to claim the legacy of Ambedkar. Even social organizations like RSS etc. are keen to own Ambedkar. They need to shed inherent inconsistencies in their agenda and reconcile with



Chaman Walon Ne Mil Kar Loot Li Tarz-e-Faghan Meri

The turtle=doves, parrots, and nightingales pilfered away
The garden's denizens jointly robbed away my plaintive way

The month of April this year started with a befitting tribute to Ambedkar on his birth anniversary on April 14. In pursuance of our proposal to get declared April 14 as International Day of Equality under the aegis of the UN which is lying in the Ministry of External Affairs of GOI, the Province of British Columbia of Canada proclaimed to observe April 14 as "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality" taking the cue from the City of Burnaby of Canada which made a similar proclamation last year, 2020. In this regard, it will not be out of place to mention and appreciate the role and efforts of Chetna Association of Canada. Similarly Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (FABO), Global Ambedkarite Convention of the UK, inter alia, are fully engaged in the proposal. Hopefully, some of entities in the UK would

the iconic personality of India, Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized internationally to add to the 'soft power' of India diplomatically and rightly so. It is a matter of satisfaction that the legacy the legacy of Ambedkar is gaining further roots and strength in the Doaba region of

Punjab with every successive year. I myself attended various events and function this year in Jalandhar, 130th birth anniversary of the leader on April 14 viz. i) Chetna March on April 13 at the eve of the anniversary. In spite of the Covid restrictions and constraints, it was a spontaneous show by the followers of Babasaheb ii) Sardhanjali function at Vidya Dham arranged by the Samrasta Chapter of the North Zone of RSS. As I said earlier that RSS needs to understand and reconcile with Ambedkar and his thought for the larger good of the society rather than selectively quoting Ambedkar to justify their position iii) Function as the 'Service Day' to pay tributes to Babasaheb at the Jalandhar Regional Passport office and iv) Participated in the Webinar on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar hosted by Global Ambedkarites Convention of the UK. Salute to Babasaheb Ambedkar and his legacy which is bound to get further currency and strength in the years to come. It is my firm belief. I conclude this as my humble tributes to the greatest son of India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.



Dr. Ambedkar Foundation
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
www.ambedkarfoundation.nic.in

BABASAHEB DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

APRIL 14 1891, RAMJI SAKPAL'S WIFE, BHIMABAI, GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.

LOOK AT HIS FACE! IT'S SO RADIANT. LET'S CALL HIM BHIM—A NAME BEFITTING ONE DESTINED TO BE GREAT.

YES, WE WILL GIVE HIM THE BEST UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION. IT WILL EQUIP HIM FOR GREAT DEEDS.

DESPITE HARDSHIPS, RAMJI SENT HIS CHILDREN TO SCHOOL. HE ALSO TAUGHT THEM HIMSELF.



IN HIGH SCHOOL, BHIM WAS OFTEN TREATED SHABBILY BECAUSE OF HIS CASTE. BUT HE FOUND AN OASIS OF AFFECTION IN ONE TEACHER NAMED AMBEDKAR.

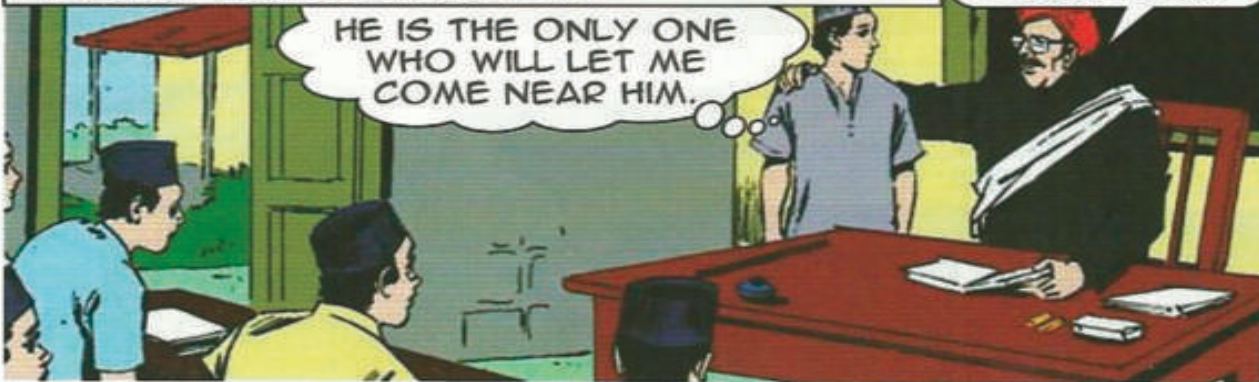
GOOD! YOU HAVE SOLVED ALL THE SUMS CORRECTLY.

ONCE, THEY WERE EATING TOGETHER—

BHIM, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU MY SURNAME OF AMBEDKAR.

HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO WILL LET ME COME NEAR HIM.

AS YOU WISH, SIR.



AFTER SOME TIME, RAMJI MOVED WITH HIS CHILDREN TO BOMBAY. HE TOOK UP A ROOM IN A CHAWL IN THE MILL AREA AT PAREL. THE ROOM SERVED AS A KITCHEN, BEDROOM AND STUDY ROOM.

BHIM, YOU CANNOT STUDY IN ALL THIS NOISE. GO TO BED NOW. I'LL WAKE YOU UP AT TWO IN THE MORNING.

ALL RIGHT, FATHER.



BHIM STUDIED HARD WHILE THE OTHERS SLEPT.

HE USED TO GO TO THE CHARNI ROAD GARDENS TO STUDY. THERE, HE OFTEN MET K.A. KELUSKAR, A SCHOLAR AND SOCIAL REFORMER.

HOW ARE YOUR STUDIES GOING, BHIMRAO?

I AM STUDYING HARD, SIR.



BHIM WAS THE FIRST IN HIS COMMUNITY TO PASS THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION. HIS COMMUNITY CONVENED A MEETING TO HONOUR HIM. SHRI KELUSKAR WAS ALSO PRESENT TO FELICITATE HIM. SHRI S.K. BOLE, A WELL-KNOWN SOCIAL REFORMER, PRESIDED.

AS A TOKEN OF MY BLESSINGS, I PRESENT YOU WITH MY NEW BOOK ON THE LIFE OF BUDDHA.



AFTER GRADUATION, BHIMRAO WAS SELECTED BY THE STATE OF BARODA TO STUDY ABROAD. IN JULY 1913, HE JOINED COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK.

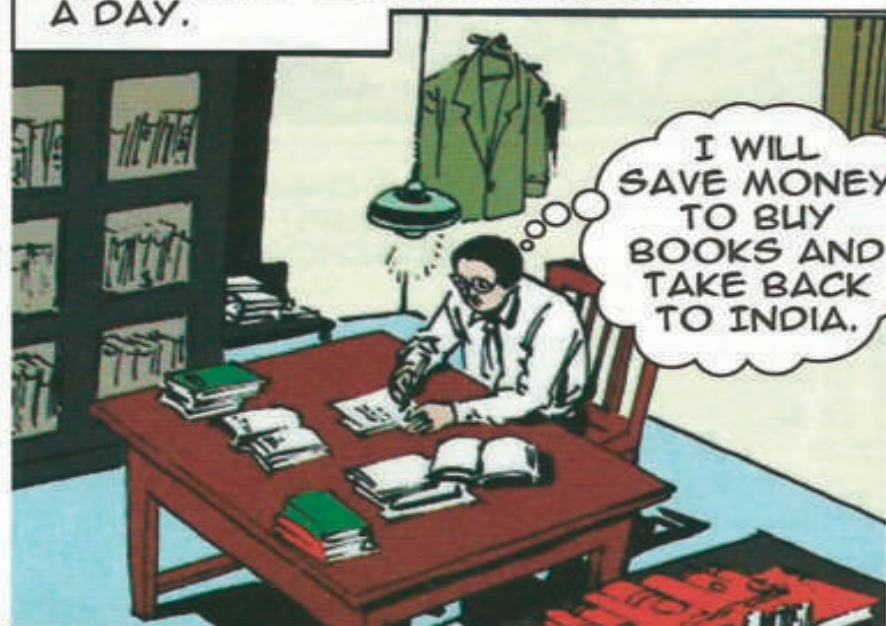
I FEEL SO FREE HERE. THERE ARE NO SOCIAL RESTRAINTS ON ME. I CAN STUDY AS MUCH AS I PLEASE!



THE FREEDOM AND EQUALITY IN THE USA WAS A NOVEL EXPERIENCE FOR BHIMRAO.

HE WORKED ALMOST 18 HOURS A DAY.

I WILL SAVE MONEY TO BUY BOOKS AND TAKE BACK TO INDIA.



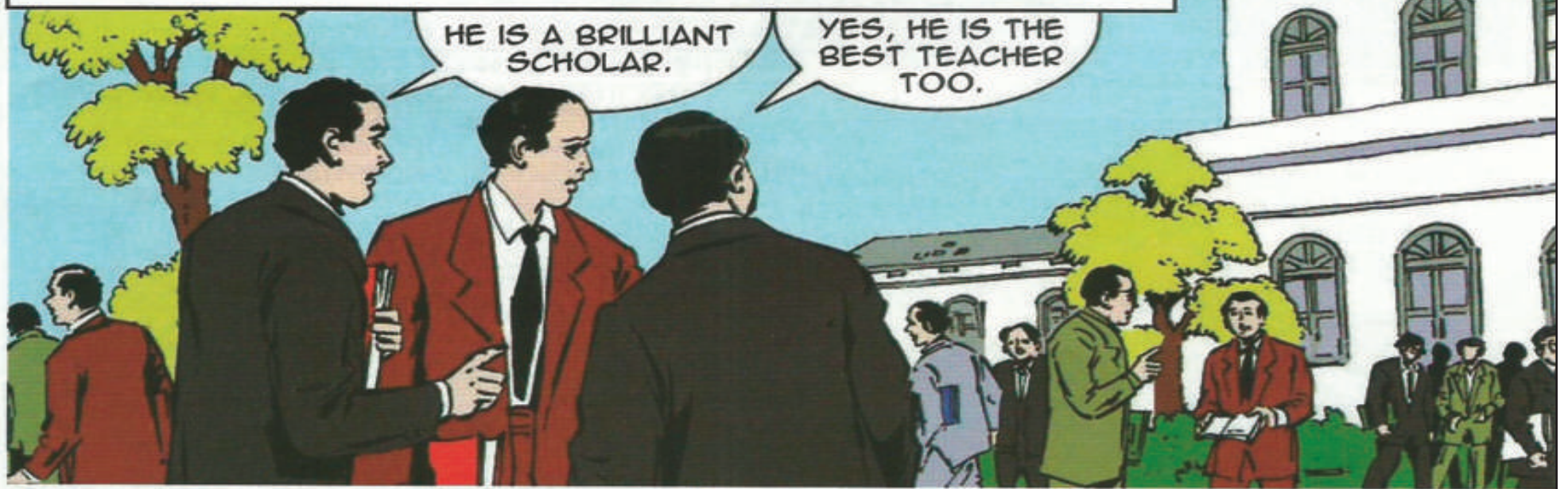
IN 1915, HE ATTAINED HIS M.A. DEGREE AND LATER WAS AWARDED HIS PH.D.

HAVING COMPLETED HIS STUDIES IN THE USA IN LESS THAN THE STIPULATED TIME, HE PROCEEDED TO LONDON.

I MUST HAVE A DEGREE IN LAW FROM GRAY'S INN, LONDON, AND UNDERTAKE FURTHER STUDIES IN ECONOMICS FROM LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. POST THAT, I'LL HEAD TO BONN UNIVERSITY, FOR STILL FURTHER STUDIES.

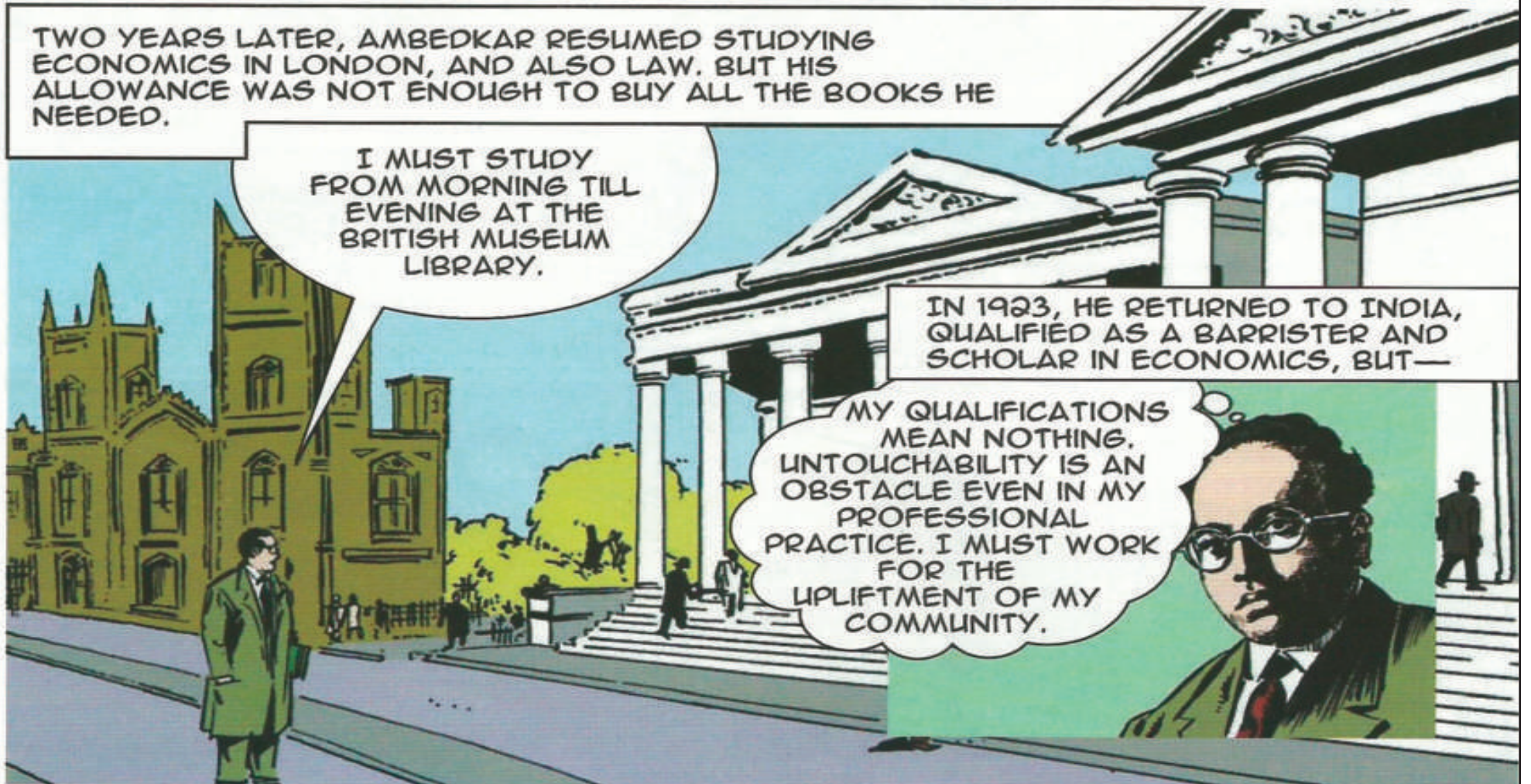


HE SECURED A JOB AS A LECTURER IN SYDENHAM COLLEGE, BOMBAY (NOW MUMBAI) IN NOVEMBER 1918.



TWO YEARS LATER, AMBEDKAR RESUMED STUDYING ECONOMICS IN LONDON, AND ALSO LAW. BUT HIS ALLOWANCE WAS NOT ENOUGH TO BUY ALL THE BOOKS HE NEEDED.

I MUST STUDY FROM MORNING TILL EVENING AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY.

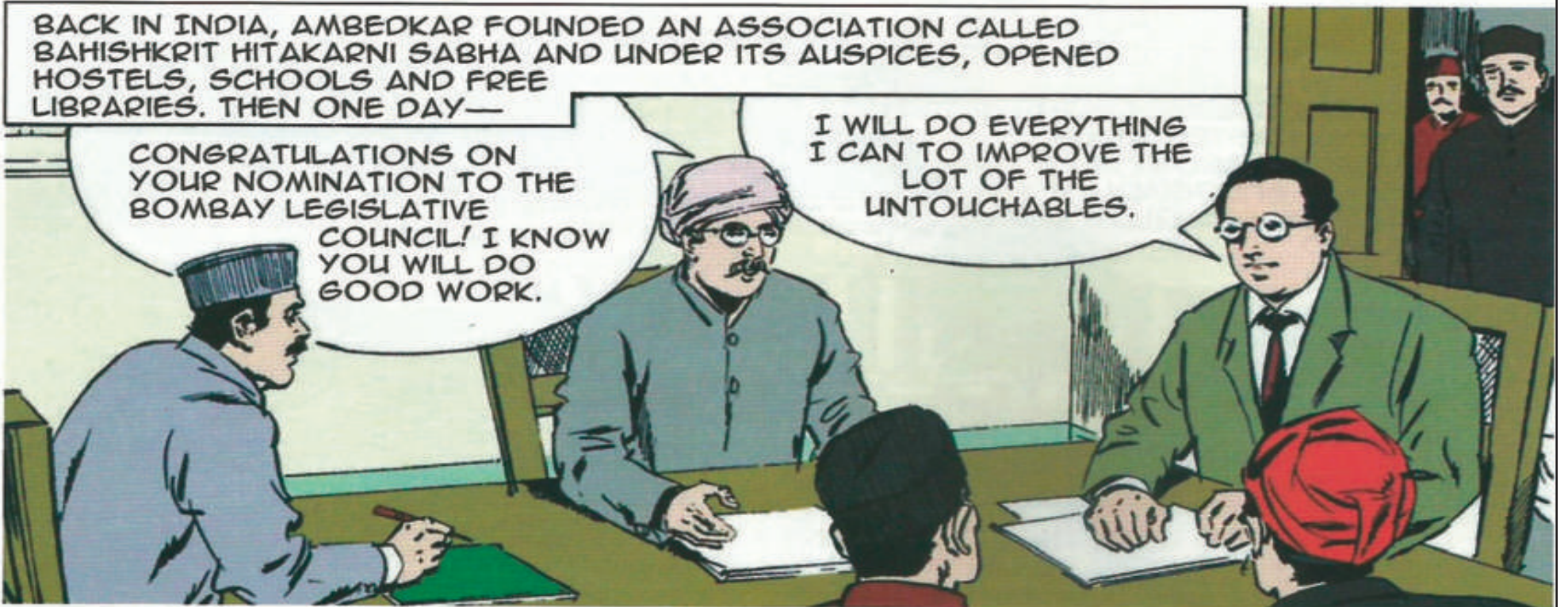


IN 1923, HE RETURNED TO INDIA, QUALIFIED AS A BARRISTER AND SCHOLAR IN ECONOMICS, BUT—

BACK IN INDIA, AMBEDKAR FOUNDED AN ASSOCIATION CALLED BAHISHKRIT HITAKARNI SABHA AND UNDER ITS AUSPICES, OPENED HOSTELS, SCHOOLS AND FREE LIBRARIES. THEN ONE DAY—

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NOMINATION TO THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL! I KNOW YOU WILL DO GOOD WORK.

I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE UNTOUCHABLES.

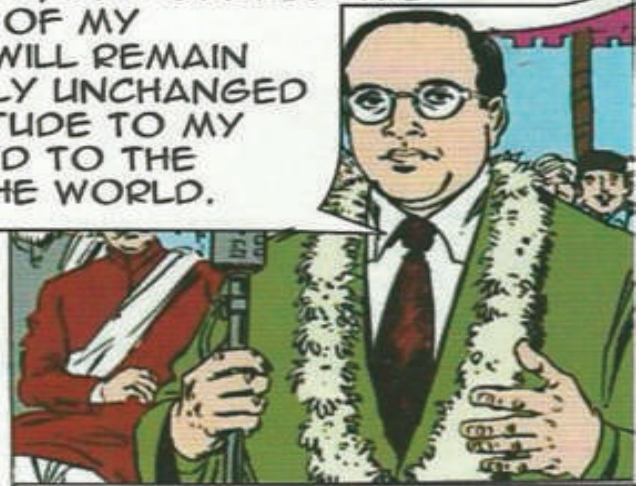


ON 24 SEPTEMBER 1932, AMBEDKAR SIGNED THE POONA PACT, UNDER WHICH, INSTEAD OF SEPARATE ELECTORATES, MORE REPRESENTATION WAS TO BE GIVEN TO THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

IN 1939, THE SECOND WORLD WAR BROKE OUT. THE CONGRESS MINISTRIES RESIGNED. IN JULY 1942, THE VICEROY APPOINTED AMBEDKAR AS LABOUR MINISTER IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. AT A RECEPTION GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR—

I WAS BORN OF THE POOR. I WAS BROUGHT UP AMONG THEM, HAVE LIVED AMONG THEM. I HAVE SLEPT LIKE THEM ON DAMP FLOORS COVERED WITH SACK-CLOTH, AND SHARED THE SORROWS OF MY PEOPLE. I WILL REMAIN ABSOLUTELY UNCHANGED IN MY ATTITUDE TO MY PEOPLE AND TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THE DIVISION OF THE PEOPLE ON CASTE LINES HAS BEEN AVERTED.

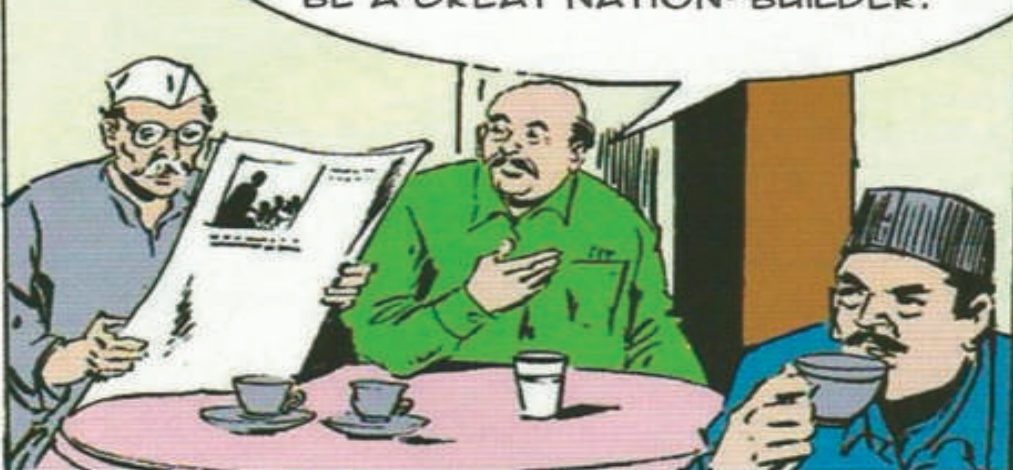


HE FORMED THE ALL INDIA SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION IN 1942.

WHEN INDIA BECAME INDEPENDENT IN AUGUST 1947, AMBEDKAR BECAME THE FIRST LAW MINISTER OF INDEPENDENT INDIA.

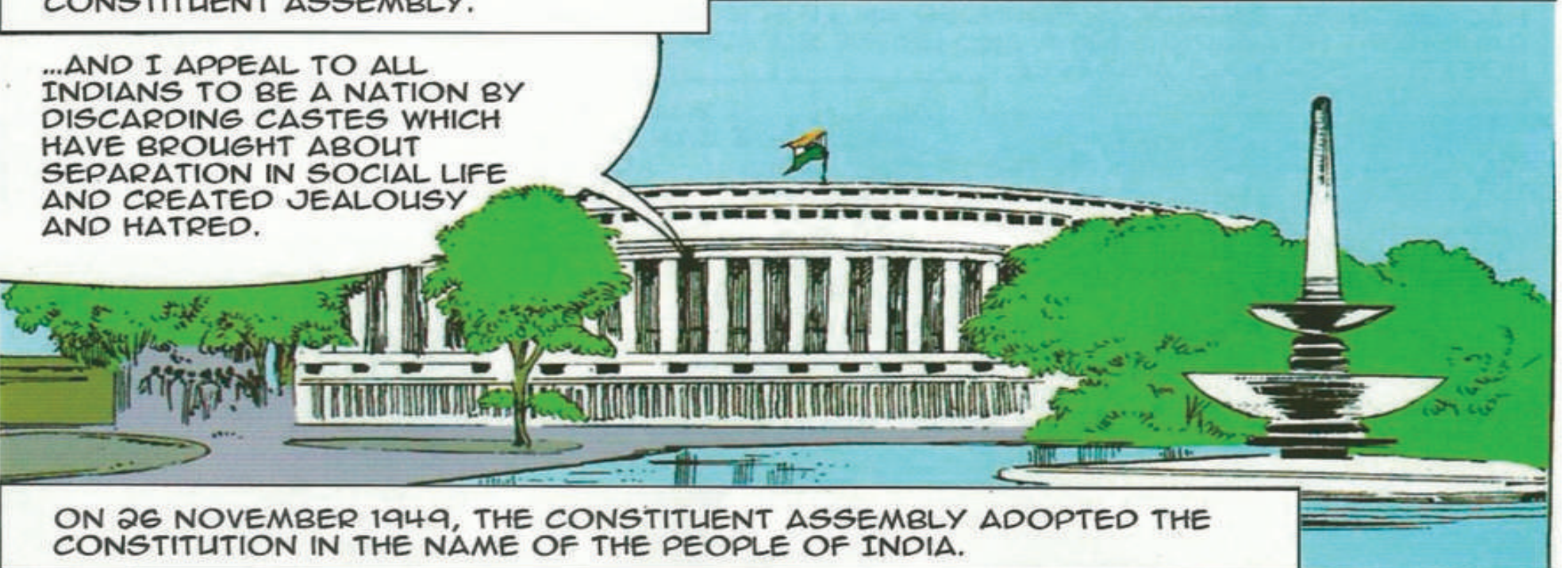
THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY APPOINTED DR. AMBEDKAR AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FORMED TO DRAFT THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA. AND THE BURDEN OF PREPARING A CONSTITUTION FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY FELL UPON HIS SHOULDERS.

THIS MAN WILL BRING HONOUR TO HIS COMMUNITY AND PROVE TO BE A GREAT NATION-BUILDER.



ON 4 NOVEMBER 1948, DR. AMBEDKAR PRESENTED THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

...AND I APPEAL TO ALL INDIANS TO BE A NATION BY DISCARDING CASTES WHICH HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT SEPARATION IN SOCIAL LIFE AND CREATED JEALOUSY AND HATRED.



ON 26 NOVEMBER 1949, THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ADOPTED THE CONSTITUTION IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.