



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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The Ad Dharm in Dr. Ambedkar's writing!

STATEMENT "E" [f1] NOTE BY Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR TO THE INDIAN FRANCHISE COMMITTEE (LOTHIAN COMMITTEE) ON THE DEPRESSED CLASSES SUBMITTED ON MAY 1st, 1932

Depressed Classes in the Punjab

In connection with the population figure for the depressed classes given in the census of 1931 I wish to draw attention to two facts:

(1) The population of those who caused pollution by touch was according to the census of 1911, 2-8 Million while in the census of 1931 the population of untouchables is given as amounting to 1.3 million.

(2) The census of 1911 gives a list of 23 castes which are deemed to cause pollution by touch. The census of 1931 mentions only castes as forming the untouchable population in the Punjab. 12. Why the total population of the untouchables and the list of castes included in that category should have shrunk so much between 1911 and 1931 I am not able to ascertain. It is however necessary to state that among the untouchables of Punjab there has been going on for some years past a strong movement called the Ad-Dharm Movement the object of which is to separate from the Hindu fold and form themselves into a distinct community under the new name of "Ad-Dharmis". Such has been the strength of the movement that the untouchables decided to return themselves as "Ad-Dharmis" instead of Hindus in the census of 1931, and the Government gave recognition to this feeling and allowed the Census Superintendent of Punjab to open a new category of Ad-Dharmis. This led in some parts of the Punjab to riots between the Hindus and the untouchables. As a result the untouchables in some parts returned themselves simply as "Ad-Dharmis" without mentioning their respective castes, and in other parts where they were prevented from doing so returned themselves as Hindus under their caste names. I am mentioning these facts to show that the difficulties created in the enumeration of the untouchables and which are admitted by the Government of Punjab may be responsible for this shrinkage in the number and list of untouchables in the Punjab. The matter therefore requires to be carefully looked into.

Courtesy: C. L. Chumber
Editor-in- Chief: Kaumi Udarian
(Monthly Journal in Punjabi/Hindi/English)
Jalandhar City (Punjab) India.

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (California) celebrated Dr.B.R Ambedkar's 131st Birth Anniversary

It is immensely gratifying to share with pride that 131st Birth Anniversary of Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was celebrated in Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg, California on April 24th, 2022 (Sunday), preceded by recitation of three days Akhand Path ceremony.

Besides Giani Gurnam Singh and Giani Om Pal Singh (Guru Ghar Jatha), prominent Singing Groups led by Sukhdev Sahil, Amarjit Lalli, Satti-Pabla, Kumar Khtkar, and Mohan Diwana embellished the celebrations with their melodious songs and music. The following prominent speakers from the community well versed with the mission, struggles and contributions of Babasaheb, addressed the large audience with their thought provoking speeches.

Mr. O.P. Balley, founder Member of Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (CA) who also had a rare opportunity of meeting our Messiah in person and spending some precious moments during the last

the legacy of Babasaheb through his campaigns and as a founder of BSP.

Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber also provided full- time professional and live -coverage of the program. The voluntary services rendered by Mr. Chemas Bhatti of Sacramento, relating to pictorial services of the entire event deserve to be appreciated.

All the artists at the stage were honored with Siropas by the Managing Committee for their skilled performances. Mr. Abhishek Narabut, General Secretary assisted by



O.P. Balley
Founder Member
Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha,
Pittsburg (CA)



18 months of Babasaheb's life in New Delhi, elaborated on the mission and crusade of Babasaheb. Mr. Bhagwan Dass, a well-educated member of our community and Mr. Dilbag Singh Ex-General Secretary of Pittsburg Guru Ghar, also depicted in details the life and the history of Babasaheb's mission and accomplishments.

Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Chief Editor, Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times (Two weeklies) addressed the audience from his heart, emphasizing at length, on the unrelenting efforts of Babasaheb on the liberation of the down- trodden. He also mentioned about the glorious role attached to the deeds and efforts of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia in supporting Babasaheb through his telegrams reiterating Dr. Ambedkar as the sole representative of the lower castes at the Round-Table conferences, held in London from 1930 to 1932 in which the award of separate electorates for the depressed classes was announced by Ramsay McDonalds the then prime minister of Great Britain. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia even resorted to undertaking fast unto-death to counter Mr. Gandhi's. Mr.Chumber also referred to the invigorating role of the Punjabi brotherhood during Babasaheb's life-long campaign for social emancipation. He also lauded the dynamic role of Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji in reviving

Mr. Naresh Kumar Assistant Secretary managed well the proceedings of the entire event from the stage.

SPECIAL HOMAGE AND REVERANCE TO THE SAVIOR OF THE VOICELESS:-

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, born in a Mahar family of Maharashtra on April 14th, 1891 grew up in the midst of the harsh and severe social disabilities for the untouchables built in entire social hierarchy of Indian society for thousands of years. He created awareness among the afflicted and the tortured masses to raise their voice against the unjust society.

EDUCATIONIST: - Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that education is the light to the mind as eyes to the blind. The gifted and brilliant mind of Dr. Ambedkar would shed its luster in any epoch in any society. His birth in the family of so -called untouchables exploded the false myth that education is the birth right of only the selected segments of society. When Moon, Sun, Wind and Water are meant to be used by all, why education is limited only to higher classes. It is the worth and not the birth which is a true measure of someone's caliber, character and recognition in society.

(Contd. on next page)

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (California) celebrated Dr.B.R Ambedkar's 131st Birth Anniversary



All pictures by Prem Kumar Chumber "Ambedkar Times"

(Continue from page 1)

ARCHITECT OF the CONSTITUTION AND MODERN INDIA: -

Babasaheb cannot only be confined to the promulgation of free India's constitution but, in fact, he was the true builder of modern India, as illustrated by some of his invaluable contributions, based on his versatile knowledge in the field of social jurisprudence and Economics.

ESTABLISHMENT OF RESERVE BANK OF INDIA: - In 1934 a British Royal Commission headed by Mr. Hilton Young to study the intricacies of Indian currency and economy, visited India. Every member of the commission was holding in his hands a copy of the book "The Problem of the Rupee" written by Dr. Ambedkar who appeared before the commission for his valuable thoughts and recommendations on the subject. The establishment of "Reserve Bank of India" was based exclusively on the recommendations of Babasaheb which was a colorful badge of honor for his inexhaustible amount of knowledge and expertise in the field of Economics. Statutory establishment of various other commissions, to name a few, like Planning Commission, Finance Commission, Election Commission and University Grants Commission were the products of Babasaheb's intellect, wisdom and farsightedness.

As a labor member of Viceroy's Executive Council from

1941 to 1945 Babasaheb made a revolutionary change in restructuring the labor law by reducing the working hours of the labor class from 12 to 8 hours which is still the law of the land. He also introduced the system of Employment Exchanges in India.

HINDU CODE BILL: - Babasaheb's introduction of Hindu Code Bill in 1951 was an exemplary, painstaking and a very courageous effort to safeguard the rights of women. The bill was vehemently opposed, when introduced, by the sinister attitude of the Hindu dominating parliament and the society. Babasaheb was so enraged and disappointed that he resigned as law minister from Mr. Nehru's cabinet. The bill was finally passed in pieces during the lifetime of Babasaheb and it stands as an epitome of Babasaheb's elegance, courage and sacrifice for the sake of the entire womanhood.

GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR: - Dr Ambedkar knew Mr. Gandhi in and out and they sharply differed in their approach to untouchability and caste system. Mr Gandhi posed to be against untouchability but supported Varna system whereas Dr. Ambedkar wanted to abolish the entire Varna system which gave birth to caste system and continues to be the root cause of its continuance. He wanted to discard the entire social hierarchy based on the futility of Shastras and Puranas. That is why he burnt Manusmriti publicly in 1927 to show

his wrath and opposition to its teachings.

My PERSONAL GLIMPSES OF BABASAHEB: - I had the opportunity to meet Babasaheb in person many times during 1955-56 at his residence at 26-Alipur Road, Delhi through Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu, his private Secretary who was very well known to me personally. On April 14, 1956 his birth day was publicly celebrated at Ambedkar Bhavan in Pahar-Gunj, New Delhi and I attended that function and listened to his versatile speech from a very close location.

LAST FAREWELL: - On December 6, 1956 he left his mortal frame in sleep and I was among the first few mourners to be at his residence and even had the opportunity to help moving his mortal remains physically from his bed room to the main hall for public view. I accompanied the funeral procession from his residence to Safdarjung Airport along with hundreds of thousands of mourners.

As written by late Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu on page 121 of his book "LAST FEW YEARS OF DR. AMBEDKAR" Mrs. Savita Ambedkar had planned, and in fact insisted, on taking the body to Sarnath for cremation but none, however, shared her views and it was decided to take the body to Bombay where millions of his followers, devotees and admirers were to participate in the funeral procession and pay their homages.

When Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu

asked Mrs. Savita Ambedkar to spare money for chartering the plane for taking the mortal remains of Babasaheb to Bombay, she said she did not have the money and that the lieutenants of Dr. Ambedkar should make their own arrangements which were widely resented. A few among the vast gathering came forward with substantial collection. When there was no hope for further collections, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, communication Minister was approached who was good enough to arrange a special chartered Dakota of the Indian Air Lines, with whatever collection in hand and to pay the balance later on.

CONCLUSION: - Since the vastness of the treasures of Babasaheb's contributions and sacrifices to society in almost every sphere of life, is unfathomable, it will be like showing a lamp to the sun. His crusade for social justice will be cherished as a perpetual source of inspiration to take his caravan to the goals Babasaheb dreamt of.

HIS MESSAGE: - My final words of advice to you are: "EDUCATE, AGITATE and ORGANIZE, have faith in yourself. With justice on our side how can we lose our battle. Ours' is a battle, not for wealth not for power. Ours is a battle for freedom for reclamation of human personality".

With many, many salutes to his honor and greatness.

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All pictures by Prem Kumar Chumber "Ambedkar Times"

Ambedkar, Caste and Nation – A Subaltern Perspective

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was an iconoclastic social reformer who, at the very formative years of his career, realized what it meant to be an Untouchable and how a struggle against untouchability could be launched. The social-reform movement of the caste Hindus could not win him to its side because of his existential understanding of the horror of untouchability. The issue of untouchability, for social reformers, was a mere problem. This problem was exterior to them in the sense that it affected only the Untouchables but not them. They themselves had never experienced the sinister blows of untouchability. Though they were sympathetic to the cause of lower castes, they belonged to the camp that imposed this inhuman system of social segregation.

Dr Ambedkar's analysis of the origins of the untouchability and his action plans for its eradication were different from the approach and practice of the caste Hindu social reformers, who were looking at the reality from above. What distinguished him from the other social reformers was that he looked at the evil of untouchability from below, from a vantage point of the socially excluded and the oppressed. This perspective led him to think differently from the ones who belonged to the dominant stream of social and political thought of his time. His major works – *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development; Annihilation of Caste; The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables? Who Were the Shudras* among others – are testimony to this perspective and his independent, original and rational thinking. He smashed the mythological basis of untouchability and laid bare its social and economic roots.

He built a strong case against the thesis of birth-based untouchability, which forced social exclusion on those kept outside the caste system and made their life hell. He exhorted its victims to oppose it tooth and nail. He said, "It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self respect. Self-respect is the most vital factor in life. Without it, man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition." He drew a distinction between merely living and living worthily. For living a worthy life, Ambedkar said, society must be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. For Ambedkar, social tyranny was more oppressive than political tyranny and "a reformer, who defies society, is a much more courageous man than a politician, who defies government".

Ambedkar was of the kind who defied society. In the beginning of his social-reform crusade, he tried to get respect and equality for the lower castes through reforms within the social set-up. He continued his

struggle for empowerment of the lower castes by seeking changes within the fold of the society till 1935. When he realized that the liberation of lower castes within the given social setup was impossible, he began his scathing criticism and tirade against the inegalitarian social order. Ultimately, he got convinced that the only safe passage available for lower castes lies in conversion, hence, his conversion to Buddhism. For Ambedkar, lower castes liberation was the foremost issue and he emphasized that lower castes themselves have to come forward for its realization. Thus, Ambedkar provided a subaltern perspective to see through the chameleon of Indian



caste-ridden social set-up and the ways to guard the interests of the Lower castes.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar made strenuous efforts to transform the hierarchical structures of Indian society for the restoration of equal rights and justice to the oppressed lot by building a critique from within the structure of Indian society. His was not a theoretical attempt but a practical approach to the problems of untouchability. He tried to resolve this perennial problem of Indian society not by making appeals to the conscience of those who religiously practised untouchability or begging them to transform their outlook but by relentless struggle against the socio-religious and politico-economic structure, where he thought the roots of the untouchability lay.

It is in this context that Dr Ambedkar's views on Indian nationalism needs special attention. His

views on Indian nationalism are in stark opposition to the dominant discourse of secular nationalism represented by Jawaharlal Nehru; Hindu nationalism represented by Raja Rammohan Roy, B.G. Tilak, M.S. Golwalkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee; and Communist-secular-socialist nationalism represented by M.N. Roy, R. P. Dutt, T. Nagi Reddy and E.M.S. Namboodiripad. His views on Indian nationalism are not only distinct but also original. Hindu nationalism in essence aims at strengthening the brahmanical supremacy in post-colonial India. The communist-secular-social nationalism had the abolition of class as objective, but its ideologues, like that of the Hindu nationalism,

Indian nationalism remained indifferent towards removal of the caste system; and the economic analysis of the communist secular socialist school also failed to highlight the issue of caste in its mechanical

interpretation of class, Ambedkar – himself an Untouchable and victim of untouchability – formulated his own framework from the perspective of lower castes for the understanding of the system of caste and untouchability. The foundations of lower castes-bahujan nationalism lie in this framework developed by Ambedkar. It aimed at restructuring Indian society into a casteless and classless society – an egalitarian Sangha. Annihilation of caste was its central theme. Caste, asserts Ambedkar, was antithetical to nation. He realized that any form of nationalism whose roots were steeped in segmented socio-religious order could not bring relief to lower castes. Any discourse of nationalism bereft of annihilation of caste was not acceptable to him at all. The agenda of annihilation of caste was so important to him that it became a central point of his struggle against colonial rule. In the first Round Table Conference, he minced no words in criticizing the British government for its failure to undo untouchability.

Swaraj without extinction of caste had no meaning for Ambedkar. In his undelivered speech to the Jat-Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore, he said, "In the fight for swaraj you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this, you have to fight against the whole nation and that too your own. But it is more important than swaraj. There is no use having swaraj, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question of defending swaraj is the question of defending Hindus under the swaraj. In my opinion, only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery." Thus, it was Ambedkar's subaltern perspective, which distinguished his conception of swaraj from that of the protagonists of the various shades of the national freedom movement. In his editorial in the *Bahishkrit Bharat*, Ambedkar wrote on 29 July 1927, "If Tilak had been born among the Untouchables, he would not have raised the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright', but he would have raised the slogan 'Annihilation of untouchability is my birthright'."



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April 14, 2022 - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality at Simon Fraser University

By- Ratan Paul, Media Coordinator, Chetna Association of Canada

As a part of Azadi KaAmritMahotsav and Dr. Ambedkar's 131st birth anniversary celebrations, Chetna Association of Canada partnered with the Consulate General of India (Vancouver) and observed Equality Day on April 14, 2022 at Simon Fraser University (SFU) library, in Burnaby, Canada. Chetna's treasurer, Surjit Bains, acknowledged the unceded territories where the event was being hosted and expressed his gratitude to the First Nations.

In addition to Consul General Manish, Harsh Thakore of the Thakore Charitable Foundation, Surinder Sandhu (General Secretary of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha), and Rakesh Kumar from Calgary (a

trustee of Sant Sarwan Dass Charitable Trust of Western Canada) graced the occasion.

Pre-recorded greeting of BC's Parliamentary Secretary Grace Lore (Gender Equity) was also played during the ceremony.

Manish spoke on Babasaheb's monumental contribution for social justice & writing of the Indian Constitution and paid floral tribute to the bust of Babasaheb Ji.

General Secretary of Chetna Association of Canada, Jai Birdi, in his introductions highlighted Babasaheb's many contributions for equality and paid tribute to him.

Dr. Deanna Reder of the English Department and Indigenous Stud-

ies at SFU expressed her admiration for Dr Ambedkar.

MoninderLalli, librarian at SFU, welcomed all guests and shared a brief background on how the Dr. Ambedkar's Collected Speeches and Writings were first donated to the library in 1995 followed by gifting of the Dr. Ambedkar Bronze Bust in 2004. The Bust has inspired many students and faculty members to do further research on Ambedkar and his writings as well as has served as a place of pilgrimage for many of his patrons.

JyotikaJasuja, member of Chetna's Women Empowerment Committee, spoke on Dr. Ambedkar and his contributions to empower-

ment of women and building of the nation.

After the formal greetings, all guests paid homage by garlanding the Bust of Dr. Ambedkar.

Local and provincial/state governments were also acknowledged for proclaiming or celebrating April 14, 2022 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality/Equity:

- City of Burnaby
- City of Surrey
- City of Jersey
- City of Coventry
- Province of British Columbia
- State of Colorado
- State of Maryland
- State of Michigan



An Open Letter to Ambedkarite Organizations – Time to Act

Dear fellow Ambedkarites,

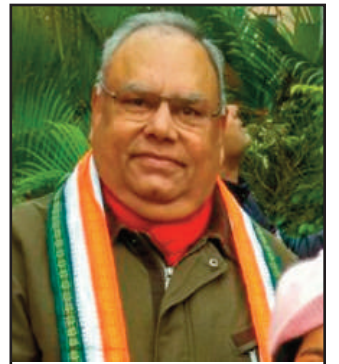
The State of British Columbia of Canada declared the month of April as "Month of Dalit History" in recognition of Babasaheb Ambedkar,

in my blogs. This is fourth in a row before the close of the month.

Ambedkar was celebrated throughout India and abroad also on his birth anniversary on April 14 and

greatest son of India in liaison with Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (FABO) of UK. My immediate provocation to write again on Ambedkar came from the timely

June, 2015. It is gratifying to note that the



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
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14 April, 2022

Her Excellency, Mrs Gauri Issar Kumar
The High Commissioner of India

Your Excellency,


14 April-An International Day of Equality

Today Dr Ambedkar is widely accepted as one of the greatest champions of equality and human rights. His contribution in the matters of equality is recognised worldwide as equality matters to everyone. It helps in creating inclusive societies where everyone is able to make contributions and advance interests of humanity. That is why the premier institutions around the world take pride in honouring Dr Ambedkar. World-renowned universities have already installed his statues in their premises. Recently a room Ambedkar Room was named after Dr Ambedkar at Gray's Inn where Babasaheb was called to the Bar. His contribution to social equality is as significant as that of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr Nelson Mandela. The time is ripe for Indians to also accept him as our national treasure and actively pursue to declare the date of his birth – 14 April as the International Day of Equality.

Ambassador Ramesh Chander (rtd) has been writing regularly since 12 June, 2015 to the External Affairs Ministry to make a demarche to the UN to declare April 14, birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar, as International Day of Equality. The proposal was made with a view, not only to get much deserved honour and recognition to the Indian iconic figure, but also to promote and strengthen India's 'soft power diplomacy' in line with India's successful initiatives on International Day of Non-violence and International Day of Yoga.

We at the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK) have supported the Mr Chander's proposal with a letter to Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on 10 August 2015. Since then we have made a number of follow-up requests. Sadly there has been no response from the Government of India.

It is a matter of pride for all Indians that Dr Ambedkar's enormous contribution towards a just society and equality has been recognised in many countries and around the world and honoured him by declaring 14 April, a day of equality. First City of Burnaby in Canada proclaimed in April, 2020 and declared 14 April as "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality" followed by Province of British Columbia of Canada in April, 2021 and reaffirmed it again in



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April, 2022. In the US, the state of Colorado has also declared as a 'Day of Equity'. In the United Kingdom, the City of Coventry, the local council is celebrating 14 April as a Day of Equality.

In the past, India has been in the forefront of fighting injustice around the globe whether it was in Palestinians, America or in South Africa. By honouring Dr Ambedkar at the UN, India will not only be strengthening its 'soft power' in diplomacy but also promoting the UN goals of just world order based on equality. We urge the government of India to recommend to the United Nations to declare 14 April as an International Day of Equality. It would be wonderful tribute to Dr Ambedkar.

We hope you will send this proposal to the government of India with your recommendation.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Arun Kumar	C. Gautam
General Secretary	Joint Secretary

esteemed paper The Asian Independent of UK carried a detailed story on the subject which may be read at: <https://theasianindependent.co.uk/call-to-declare-ambedkar-birthday-as-an-international-day-of-equality/?fbclid=IwAR32OeaHiNkfg5ZiSA8b0MEFqFrp3MXH2ZEC-SLdxRg4qs8ShagawuOTXIfc>

One may see that things are moving fast. Many positive developments are taking place. We are approaching our goal, slowly but steadily. Government of India is yet to wake up from unintended or intentional slumber. We are to keep

Jyotirao Phule, Babu Mangu ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi. It was an appreciable gesture towards the lofty ideals of equality and fraternity. It is just a matter of coincidence that for me too, in the month of April, remained fully dedicated to the greatest son of India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,

rightly so. Several cities and provinces in Canada and USA declared April 14 as "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality". The City of Coventry in the UK celebrated April 14 as "International Day of Equality". Indian High Commission in London celebrated the birth anniversary of the

action of FABO in submitting a letter to Her Excellency High Commissioner of India, Ms. Gauri Kumar urging her to convey and communicate their support to the proposal of April 14 as International Day of Equality resting with the Government of India in the Ministry of External Affairs since


our guard and keep pursuing the proposal on International Day of Equality – Rang Laygi Hamari Fakamasti Ek Din. The mantra of struggle and success given by our leader: Educate – Organize – Agitate is our guiding spirit. The purpose of this open letter
(Contd. on next page)

**Govt. of India should make proposal at
United Nations General Assembly in Sept 2015 to declare
14th April, Birthday of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

**INTERNATIONAL
DAY
OF
EQUALITY**

14

April



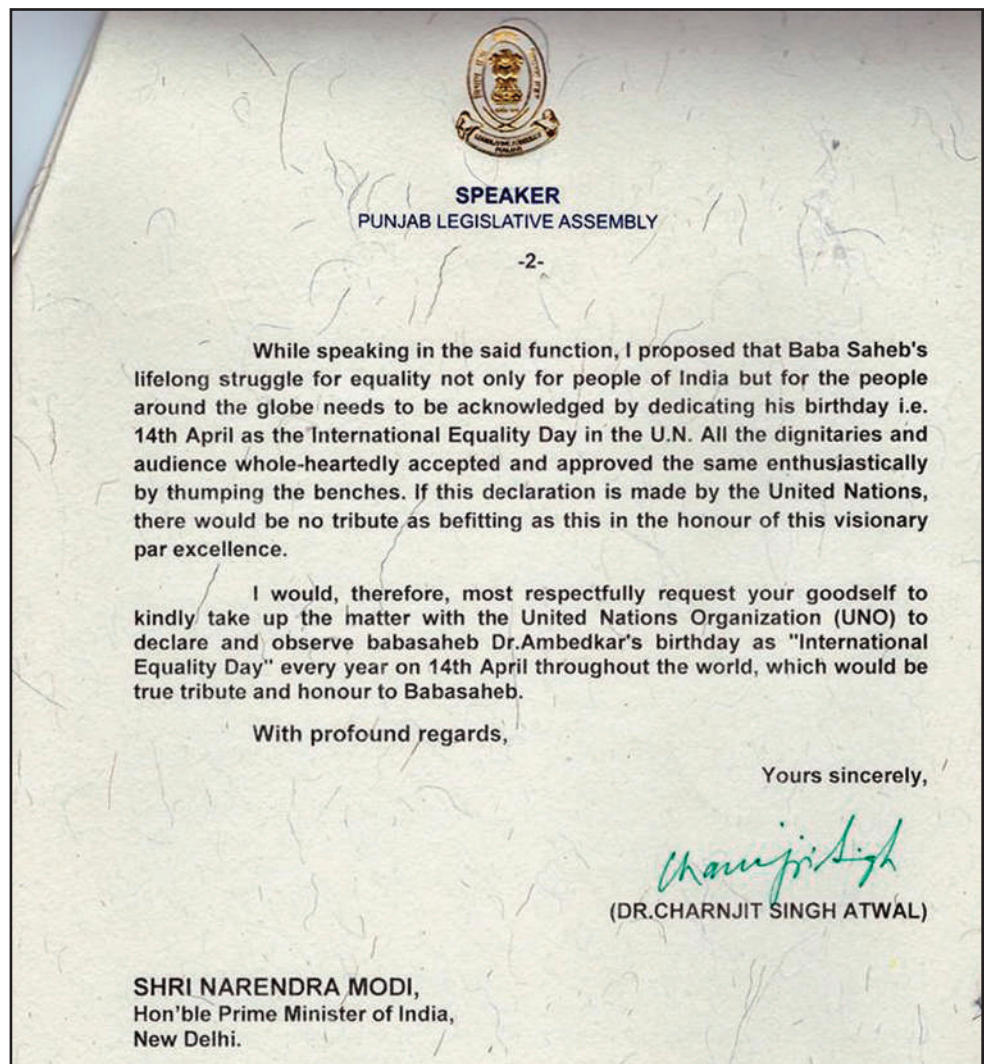
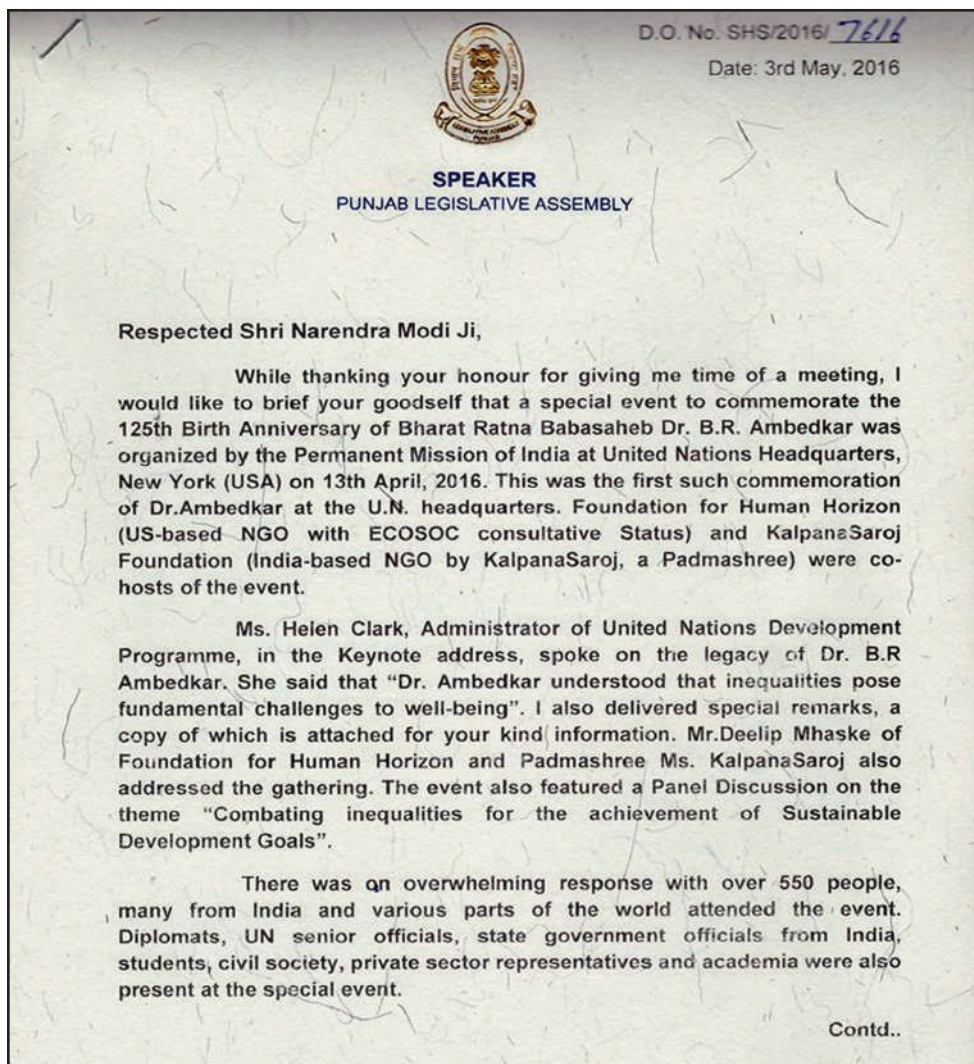
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

www.facebook.com/InternationalDayOfEquality

A befitting tribute to the memory & legacy of messiah of millions of poor and socially backward followers of the great leader with a view to honor Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on

125th Birth Anniversary

An Open Letter to Ambedkarite Organizations – Time to Act



(Continue from page 7)
to the Ambedkarite Organisations is to urge them to kindly consider and follow suit in line with the action taken by FABO of UK by writing to the respective Indian Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Consulate Generals abroad and to EAM Dr. S. Jaisankar and PM Narendra Modi in India and request them to make an appropriate demarche to the UN for declaring April 14 as International Day of Equality.

With a view to explain the

matter a bit further, let me reiterate here that our proposal on International Day of Equality has no political connotations.

It is a simple and straight suggestive and persuasive proposal to get due recognition to the son of the soil, Babasaheb Ambedkar on one hand and contribute positively to the lofty ideals of 'Equitable World Order' in line with the 'Soft Diplomacy' which is the hallmark of the foreign policy of India. India's initiatives to get October 2, birthday of Mahatma

Gandhi, as the International Day of Non-violence and June 21 as International Day of Yoga were much appreciated by the international community. We are confident that the proposed International Day of Equality on the birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar will further enhance the international prestige of India in pursuance of its 'Cultural and Humanistic Diplomacy'.

Let us hope that the Government of India under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi would rise to the

occasion and take the matter to the world body, the UN at New York in the run up to the forthcoming UNGA in September, 2022.

It is time to act. Kindly consider and persuade the GOI to take an early decision in this regard and get another feather in its cap (Pagdi) in commensuration with the growing profile of India.

With regards,

Yours truly,

(Ramesh Chander)

Ambassador – IFS (Retired)



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London Celebrates Dr Ambedkar's 131st birthday



Arun Kumar
General Secretary
Federation of Ambedkarite & Buddhist Organisations UK

Babasaheb Dr B h i m r a o Ambedkar is recognised as one of the greatest icons of human rights in the world. His stature continues to increase day by day. His birth anniversary has become an annual festival and people celebrate

it with great pump and show. In West London, celebration starts a day ear-

meet the dignitaries attending the celebration. Mr Virendra Sharma MP, Mayor of Ealing, Councillor Munir Ahmad, and Deputy Mayor of Ealing, Councillor MohinderMidha, graced the occasion. Ms Santosh Dass MBE, President of the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations, UK (FABOUK) presided over the function. Celebrations began with the cutting of cake by the Mayor of Ealing Councillor Ahmad. Deputy Mayor, Mrs Midha was impressed to see the majority of students from India in the audience were undertaking masters or PhDs in the UK. She said "Dr Ambedkar wanted women to progress. It is the duty of men to encourage women

lic Inquiry, Gray's Inn - where Dr Ambedkar was called to the Bar - naming a room after Dr Ambedkar in June 2021 and FABO UK donating a portrait for that room. Ms Dass stressed that India is going through a difficult time and it was important to raise our voices against the atrocities against the Dalits that continue to take place and the incarcerations of human rights activists and academics and writers (including Dr AnandTeltumbde on spurious charges. She stressed the need to protect India's Constitution. Arvind Kumar, Delhi University requested the Ambedkarite diaspora to help the students studying in various universities in the UK.

traction point of AmbedkarJayanti on 14 April. The celebrations started after the garlanding of bust and statue of Dr Ambedkar by India's High Commissioner (IHC) to the UK, Mrs Gairilssar Kumar, and the Mayor of Camden City Council, Councillor Sabrina Francis. IHC, Mrs Kumar said "Dr Ambedkar belongs to us all. His relevance of ideas is universal and much more relevant today than ever before. He believed that political democracy should be based on social democracy. It should stand on the principle of equality, liberty, fraternity and dignity of every individual". Mayor Francis said, "Dr Ambedkar is an inspiration for change. He is an ex-



lier, on 13 April. This is unique in a way because it is celebrated as a New Year eve for the Ambedkarites. A cake is cut at what would be the stroke of midnight in India. People get together at the Ambedkar Centre, Southall from far and wide. It is a good opportunity for students studying in London and other universities around the country to network and

to pursue their dreams". Mr Sharma encouraged the youngsters to get involved in politics here in UK and in India as well. Change is only possible through politics. Ms Santosh Dass gave a brief introduction to Dr Ambedkar's achievements and huge body of works. She updated FABO UK's initiatives on Ambedkar Museum London and its successful Pub-

Advocate Sushant Singh, President, students union SOAS, University of London stressed upon the higher education. High achiever students and persons in the public field were honoured by the United Buddhist and Ambedkarite Foundation, Maharashtra.

Ambedkar Museum, 10 King Henry Road, London was the main at-

ample for others. His life shows that though we born in humble surroundings, we can rise through hard work and determination. Ambedkar Museum, in her borough is a national and international centre for learning. It will help to learn about his work and achievements." The Mayor was presented with a limited copy of

(Contd. on next page)



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

London Celebrates Dr Ambedkar's 131st birthday



FEDERATION OF AMBEDKARITE & BUDDHIST ORGANISATIONS UK

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14 April, 2022

Her Excellency, Mrs Gaitri Issar Kumar
The High Commissioner of India

Your Excellency,

14 April-An International Day of Equality

Today Dr Ambedkar is widely accepted as one of the greatest champions of equality and human rights. His contribution in the matters of equality is recognised worldwide as equality matters to everyone. It helps in creating inclusive societies where everyone is able to make contributions and advance interests of humanity. That is why the premier institutions around the world take pride in honouring Dr Ambedkar. World-renowned universities have already installed his statues in their premises. Recently a room Ambedkar Room was named after Dr Ambedkar at Gray's Inn where Babasaheb was called to the Bar. His contribution to social equality is as significant as that of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr Nelson Mandela. The time is ripe for, Indians to also accept him as our national treasure and actively pursue to declare the date of his birth – 14 April as the International Day of Equality.

Ambassador Ramesh Chander (rtd) has been writing regularly since 12 June, 2015 to the External Affairs Ministry to make a demarche to the UN to declare April 14, birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar, as International Day of Equality. The proposal was made with a view, not only to get much deserved honour and recognition to the Indian iconic figure, but also to promote and strengthen India's 'soft power diplomacy' in line with India's successful initiatives on International Day of Non-violence and International Day of Yoga.

We at the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK) have supported the Mr Chander's proposal with a letter to Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on 10 August 2015. Since then we have made a number of follow-up requests. Sadly there has been no response from the Government of India.

It is a matter of pride for all Indians that Dr Ambedkar's enormous contribution towards a just society and equality has been recognised in many countries and around the world and honoured him by declaring 14 April, a day of equality. First City of Burnaby in Canada proclaimed in April, 2020 and declared 14 April as "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality" followed by Province of British Columbia of Canada in April, 2021 and reaffirmed it again in

brating this day as a day of equity. He said "it is matter of pride for all Indians that in the UK, Coventry City Council is celebrating 14 April as a day of equality in the council chambers where our President, Ms Santosh Dass is giving a keynote speech".

Handing over a memorandum to the Indian High commissioner, Ms Kumar called the Government of India to recommend to the UNO to declare 14 April as an International Day of Equality. He appealed to the IHC to send this letter with their recommendation.

Concluding event on the day



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April, 2022. In the US, the state of Colorado has also declared as a 'Day of Equity'. In the United Kingdom, the City of Coventry, the local council is celebrating 14 April as a Day of Equality.

In the past, India has been in the forefront of fighting injustice around the globe whether it was in Palestinians, America or in South Africa. By honouring Dr Ambedkar at the UN, India will not only be strengthening its 'soft power' in diplomacy but also promoting the UN goals of just world order based on equality. We urge the government of India to recommend to the United Nations to declare 14 April as an International Day of Equality. It would be wonderful tribute to Dr Ambedkar.

We hope you will send this proposal to the government of India with your recommendation.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Arun Kumar

C. Gautam

General Secretary

Joint Secretary



Arun Kumar presenting portrait to the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Sabrina Francis for the Ambedkar Museum.

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David Newen's 2020 portrait of Dr Ambedkar for the museum by Arun Kumar and C. Gautam on behalf FABOUK. The original portrait was commissioned by FABO UK in 2020 and donated to Gray's Inn in June 2021 and is displayed in the Ambedkar room at Inn. In a short speech Arun Kumar, General Secretary of FABO UK said that around the globe Dr Ambedkar is being celebrated as an apostle of equality.

First Burnaby and now the Province of British Columbia have declared 14 April, as a day of equality. In the US, state of Colorado is cele-

was held at the Ambedkar Hall, India House, the Indian High Commission. Again the event started with the garlanding of Ambedkar statue and portrait by the Deputy High commissioner, Mr Sujit Ghosh. Congratulating on the birth of Dr Ambedkar, Mr Ghosh said, "Dr Ambedkar believed that education is a path to progress particularly in women education. Values of equality, dignity, morality, and Indianness are the important pillars of Dr Ambedkar's vision. This is the day to reiterate our commitment to fulfil his vision and to make his dream as reality." Ram Pal Rahi, Vice President of FABOUK, Sushant

Singh, Students Union, SOAS, London University, Raj Bangar, Kanshi TV, Chaman Madhar, Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Eastham, London, Atma Ram Midha, Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Southall also spoke at the event. All the events started with Buddhist prayers and closed with light refreshments.

The 14th April was made even more special with Hurst Publishers announcing its forthcoming book 'Ambedkar in London' with co-editors Dr William Gould, Santosh Dass MBE, and Christophe Jafrelot. Arun Kumar also has a joint chapter in the book.

Santosh Dass MBE, keynote speech on Equality Day 14 April, 2022 at Council House, Coventry, UK.



Arun Kumar
General Secretary
Federation of Ambedkarite &
Buddhist Organisations UK

Lord Mayor, Councillor Mr John Nicholas, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mr Kevin Maton, my dear friend-Councillor Mr Ram Lakha, my friend Ms Parmjeet Jassal Chair of the Equality Group Coventry, distinguished guests, thank you for inviting me to your celebration of Equality Day this year.

Celebrating it at Coventry's Council House, today on 14 April –

minister in 1948 introduced the Hindu Code Bill. This bold legal initiative saw several laws passed in the 1950s that facilitated the legal recognition of women as equal citizens. It granted Hindu women the right to a divorce from an unhappy marriage, the right to inheritance of her husband's property, and also her father's. We take this for granted. The plight of Hindu women had already taxed Dr Ambedkar for over three decades. In his 1917 published paper called 'Castes in India – The Mechanism, Genesis and Development' he set out in the Indian context the ways in which women and their sexuality was controlled. There was massive resistance to the Bill from those who argued that Government had no right to

I can't even begin to cover in this short speech Dr Ambedkar's academic credentials; his vast published writings on numerous topics, the decades long movement he led on passive resistance, and the many social reforms he introduced including the farsighted Constitution for India for a vision of a society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Even the Reserve Bank of India set up in 1935 was in accordance with his guidelines. Dr Ambedkar fought hard to be able to give a voice to the millions of Dalits – previously labelled 'Untouchables' in India's Caste system. He continued to do so until the end of his life on 6 December 1956.

From the few lines of introduction I have given about Dr Ambed-

tem that has existed for thousands of years. He was a very bright student. With scholarships, and later with savings, he attained degrees and doctorates from India, America and the United Kingdom. His many qualifications include a Phd in 1917 from Columbia University, Doctor of Science in 1923 from London School of Economics, and a Barrister at Law in 1922 from Gray's Inn, London.

Dr Ambedkar arrived in London the second time in 1920 to complete his studies at the LSE and Gray's Inn that he had enrolled in 1916, but could not complete because scholarship had ended. He came with a letter of introduction from the Maharaja of Kolhapur who wrote to his friend Sir Alfred Pease.



the 131st birth anniversary of the great Indian social reformer, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's birth, is extra special. For Coventry, a city of Equality, and the UK's City of Culture to hold its Equality Day Celebrations on this date is very significant for the thousands of his followers from the Indian diaspora in the UK.

I first visited Coventry in 2003. I'm in awe of this city's long history of men and women fighting for justice and equal rights. Whether it's Lady Godiva's battle for

fairer taxes, or activists fighting for better housing, pay and conditions, or its residents fighting for justice for victims of caste discrimination that has been imported to this country.

Your city is packed with women who have spoken up on behalf of the oppressed or that voiceless. It's a city of women who have fought for social change from the suffrage struggle, to the miners' wives. It might therefore be of interest to the women here today that Dr Ambedkar, who as Independent India's first law



interfere with the personal laws of Hindus. Even if this made society more just!

So who was Dr Ambedkar? Dr Ambedkar was a great visionary, a politician, lawyer, barrister, economist, a prolific writer, staunch egalitarian, non-violent revolutionary, a progressive humanist, and a key figure in the revivalism of Buddhism in India. He is a figure on par with Dr Nelson Mandela, and Dr Martin Luther King when it comes to civil rights.

kar just now, it may interest you to know that there is not even a walk-on part for Dr Ambedkar in Sir Richard Attenborough's 1982 film Gandhi. The Indian Government funded the film.

Dr Ambedkar came from humble beginnings. He was born in a military cantonment town of Mhow in the Central Provinces of India (now in Madhya Pradesh) on 14 April 1891. His family was from Maharashtra and belonged to a community treated as 'Untouchables' in India's caste sys-

I'll quote some text from the letter:

"He [Dr Ambedkar] intends to lay before the enlightened public of England the viewpoint of non-Brahmin Hindus who are unanimous in the opinion that in asking for home rule the real object of Brahmins has been to regain and establish their long lost power.... The present scheme of self government of India will not make the people free and equal, but will only make the Brahmins powerful. Request Sir Please give patient hearing to Dr Ambedkar."

Overcoming great obstacles, Dr Ambedkar became involved in the negotiations for India's independence campaign. He published journals that advocated political rights and social freedoms. On 20 March 1927 he led a satyagraha [passive resistance movement] in Mahad, Maharashtra to draw, and drink water from a public tank. A law had been passed in 1923, to allow the so-called Untouchable community to draw, and drink water from the main water tank of

(Contd. on next page)

Santosh Dass MBE, keynote speech on Equality Day 14 April, 2022 at Council House, Coventry, UK.

(Continue from page 11)

the town. But the higher castes had not allowed this prior to assertion of their rights. The 'Mahad Satyagraha' began three years before Mr Gandhi's much publicised 'Salt March' in 1930 as an act of civil disobedience to protest against British Rule. But Dr Ambedkar's 'satayrashes' not only on the water tank issue, but other social rights issues, never did get same level of international attention.

In the 1930s Dr Ambedkar attended three landmark Round Table Conferences in London on the future of India. There he championed the needs (political, social and economic) of the so-called Untouchables after Independence. His robust lobbying resulted in the British colonial government's announcement in 1932, of the formation of a separate electorate for "Depressed Classes" in the Communal Award. Mr Gandhi opposed this and went onto a fast unto death by way of protest in his prison in Poona. On 25 September 1932, Dr Ambedkar reluctantly signed what is known as the Poona Pact. This resulted in significantly reduced pro-equality representation for the Depressed Classes in the Provisional legislatures within the general electorate. We can only imagine what a difference political representations of Dalits might have made if Mr Gandhi had not resisted Dr Ambedkar's calls for proportionate representation.

In 1936, Dr Ambedkar published a bold, and significant undelivered speech, the Annihilation of Caste. He was to deliver this at a Conference in Lahore, India, but the organisers withdrew their invitation unless Dr Ambedkar made changes to the content. The bit they had an issue with was where he said he was not having a choice about being born a Hindu but would not die as one. He refused and published the speech instead. If you haven't read it, do get a copy. The annotated version with Arundhati Roy's introduction 'The Doctor and the Saint' is really good to get a wider perspective.

To me, the Annihilation of Caste is Dr Ambedkar's sunapologetic truth of the caste system, and the everyday impact of it on the so-called low-Caste and so-called Untouchables. The speech is as relevant today as it was then. A Dalit by birth, Dr Ambedkar knew Caste and its impacts. In the speech he calls for social reform. He examines Caste in the contexts of other societies – Roman, Greek, Irish – and demonstrates his deep consideration and analysis of those societies. He quotes from the British social activist, amongst many other talents, William Morris' poem 'A Dream of John Ball'. In the speech, he paraphrases the hedge priest's preachings and sermonising that fed the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. "...The great treading down the little, And the strong beating down weak, Cruel men fearing not, Kind men daring not, And wise men caring not."

Ambedkar saw William Morris' potential for 'transferability'. 'A Dream of John Ball' illustrates what it means to live under the weight of feudalism. Call it Caste. Call it a kind of a social apartheid.

In the speech, he poses the question, "Should we treat them [that is, the Untouchables] as unequal because they are unequal? He sets out his thoughts on the principles and practices a society should be based on. He says, "My ideal would be a society based on liberty, equality, and fraternity". These principles later dissolved and resolved into the preamble to India's Constitution - with a complete recipe for delivering equality of treatment and opportunity.

Dr Ambedkar held numerous significant roles in politics. He was India's first Minister of Labour (22 July 1942 - 20 October 1946) in the British Viceroy's Executive Council. He was the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee (29 August 1947 - 24 January 1950) and the chief architect of India's Constitution. This saw the abolition of Untouchability and the introduction of affirmative measures in the form of reservations for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in public sector jobs. This levelling up agenda's aim was, and continues to, to uplift the SC and STs economically.

As independent India's first Law minister (3 April 1947 - 6 October 1951) Dr Ambedkar actively oversaw laws to improve labour rights. He promoted trade unions, reduced working hours for factory workers, and introduced maternity rights for working women. As mentioned earlier, he also went on to promote the rights of Hindu Women as part of the Hindu Code Bill.

Dr Ambedkar died on 6 December 1956. His contribution to his homeland was magnificent. Yet it took the Indian Government until 1990 to posthumously confer him with the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India. Dr Ambedkar left a huge body of works. His star continues to rise around the world. He is followed by hundreds of thousands of the Indian diaspora in this country, and millions of people around the world.

He has an entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies as someone who has made a significant contribution to the UK.

At Gray's Inn, in London, he has the 'Ambedkar' room named after him. This was unveiled on 30 June 2021 and FABO UK donated a new portrait (Gray's Inn already has two portraits on display) for the room. Dr Ambedkar is the only Indian to be given such an honour. On 28 June 2022, Gray's Inn and FABO UK and jointly marking at Gray's Inn the centenary of Dr Ambedkar being called to the Bar.

In 2020, Camden Council approved the museum status of 10 King Henry's Road NW3 – the house where Dr Ambedkar lived from 1921-22. It al-

ready had a commemorative blue plaque unveiled in 1991 by Roy Hattersely MP and the actress Glenda Jackson. The Government of Maharashtra bought the house in 2015 after a year's worth of lobbying by FABOUK. Permission for museum status was refused by Camden Council following which a Public Inquiry was held in 2019, and in March 2020 Mr Robert Jenrick, the then Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and local Government, who had 'recovered' the appeal in the case in September 2019, agreed with the Public Inquiries' findings and granted retrospective permission for the Ambedkar Museum London. Do visit it if you are in London.

Since 2015, Lord Harries of Pentregarth has hosted FABO UK's celebration of Dr Ambedkar's birth in the House of Lords. We are holding the event on 11 May this year have a number speakers including Nigel Planer, the actor, recently described Dr Ambedkar as his hero.

Moving on to caste discrimination. Dr Ambedkar in his paper Castes in India describes India's caste system as having features that include hierarchy, endogamy, graded occupation and restrictions on temple worship. It is over 70 years since Untouchability was made unlawful in India's Constitution. Yet crimes against this branch of humanity continue in the worst of ways and numbers. There are those on the crime sheets. More never get logged. More go unreported. There are human rights activists and academics incarcerated in jail with bail on spurious charges by the Indian Government. One of them is Dr Anand Teltumbde, the husband of Rama Ambedkar, the granddaughter of Dr Ambedkar.

Its amazing how well Caste and Caste discrimination travels! Here in the UK, research has confirmed that Caste affects South Asian communities..

We are fortunate to have equality and human rights laws that help prevent and if necessary, deal legally with many forms of discrimination in the UK. Many migrants like me who arrived in London have benefited from protection and opportunities these laws give us.

There is ample evidence of Caste-based discrimination in the Government-commissioned and independent reports like that by the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance. Take the case of a very old and vulnerable Indian woman in Derby who was not given full care in accordance with her care plan by a 'higher Caste' female carer. Or the bus company manager in Southampton who had to completely re-organise the shift system in order that a lower Caste driver wouldn't coincide with a 'higher Caste' inspector's shifts.

We don't tolerate other forms of discrimination in the UK. Why continue to ignore or tolerate Caste-based discrimination in this country and pro-

vide equality on this issue? There are many more examples of this form of discrimination set out my organisation's – the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance's - 2009 report. We called it A Hidden Apartheid for good reason. And then there is the government's own commissioned report by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Bringing about anti-Caste discrimination law in the UK won't cure our society. It is one way of dealing with the discrimination so many faces.

Caste discrimination has also raised its head in other countries including the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.

Promoting Ambedkar's life, work, and the books he has left us is key to understanding how we can go about making more just societies – no matter where we are based. His final message to us was 'Educate, Agitate, Organize'. It is the slogan that first appeared in print in 1883 as the Political Manifesto of the Democratic Federation of which William Morris, whom Dr Ambedkar refers to in his 'Annihilation of Caste' speech - was the treasurer. This slogan became a slogan for the Fabian Society. In simple terms, social reformers believed success can only be achieved by organised effort. To me the 1883 leaflet spells this out beautifully and we can understand why Dr Ambedkar used this slogan.

Educate: We shall need all our intelligence
Agitate: We shall need all our enthusiasm
Organise: We shall need all our force

Dr Ambedkar's star continues to rise around the world as beacon for social justice. In 2020, 2021 and 2022 the City of Burnaby Canada proclaimed 14 April as 'Dr B. R. Ambedkar Day of Equality'. The City of Surrey, Canada, marked a similar proclamation in 2021. This April, the Province of British Columbia made the same proclamation and also proclaimed April a Dalit History Month.

In the United States, the State of Colorado proclaimed 14 April 2022 as 'Dr B R Ambedkar Equity Day'.

These very bold moves by City Councils in American and Canada are welcome. They are shining a light on Dr Ambedkar and his mission for a more just world.

I therefore congratulate Coventry's Equality Group and Coventry Council on its pioneering work on marking its Equality Day on 14 April and remembering Dr Ambedkar. I am honoured to be part of this celebration.

I will end with some words from Dr Ambedkar's Annihilation of caste, speech:

'A just society is that society in which ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into creation of a compassionate society'

**Happy Equality Day.
Thank you.**