

Ambedkar Times

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Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji and the Dalit Movement in Punjab

Prem K. Chumber Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkartimes.com Punjab has the distinction of being the only state in India where caste based social exclusion was diluted because of the long spell of Muslin rule on the one hand and the most appealing egalitarian philosophy of Sikh faith and its grassroots impact on transformation of the life of downtrodden, on the other. However, caste and its resultant social negativities never ceased to torment the major section of the society. Caste discriminations in Punjab were/are more material in nature than social as in other parts of India. Prejudice takes precedence over pollution in Punjab. However, absence of pollution does not mean that Brahminism social order is alien to it. On the contrary, it thrives under new structures of social subordination entrenched in material deprivation of Dalits in the state. Material depravation of the downtrodden in the state was reinforced by the customary laws of Razat-Namaas and the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. Along with many other nonagricultural castes, Scheduled Castes people were historically deprived the right to own land. This restriction made them absolutely landless.

It was because of this legal restriction that when Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji after his return to Punjab from USA asked his father to buy some land to evade social oppressions at the hands of landlords that he came to know that social subordination of the Scheduled Castes people was also rooted in the law of the land. This has led him to organize his fellow beings to form a movement for the emancipation and empowerment of downtrodden what eventually termed as Ad Dharm Movement. This movement was the first of its kind that became suddenly popular because of its grassroots appeals. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji devoted his entire life for the cause of total transformation of his country and the socio-economic and political uplift of his people who were relegated to the periphery since centuries. He exhorted his people to come over a common platform to challenge the forces that subjugated the Dalits. He waged a long battle and finally able to unite many communities among the Scheduled Castes to work for their upward social mobility. Scheduled Castes of Punjab, particularly of the Doaba region, consider him the pioneer of Dalit movement in the state that played a leading role in strengthening the mission of Dr B. R. Ambedkar not only in Punjab but in the whole of the country.

Lohia Line on Destruction of the Caste System

Anand

Remembering Dr Ram Manohar Lohia on his birthday

Dr Ram Manohar Lohia was the theorist of seven revolutions in the context of creating a new

world order on the basis of socialism. The programme of seven revolutions included confrontation with discrimination

and deprivations based upon caste, class, race, gender and nationality. He wanted to give a new direction to the movement for socialism by giving equal emphasis to the struggles against sexism, class and caste-based exploitations.

It was a departure from the Marxist line of a class-centric programme for a socialist revolution. It was also going beyond the Gandhian emphasis on con-

structive programme of ending untouchability and casteism. These seven revolutions are supposed to be simultaneously taking place in the modern world system and it was presented as the most outstanding feature of the twentieth century. These seven revolutions are: (1) for equality between man and woman; (2) against political, economic and other inequalities based upon skin colour; (3) against the inequalities between higher and backward castes and for preferential opportunities for the backward sections; (4) against foreign rules and for freedom and democratic world government; (5) for economic equality and planned production and against the lust for and system of private property; (6) against unjust interference in private life and for democratic methods; and (7) against arms and

weapons and for Satyagraha. It is obvious that nearly half-a-century after this thesis of Lohia the world has moved closer to these noble aims in different parts of the world.

But the Lohia line of caste-related preferential opportunities has become the most powerful programme among the backward castes and communities in India. Lohia began conceptualising his understanding of the caste system (JatiPratha) as well as his programme for eradication of castes (Jati Toro) between 1952 and 1967. The formal programme about preferential opportunities was adopted by his party at the Third Conference of the Socialist Party in 1959. He also created a manifesto of the Forum for Studying and Destroying Caste in 1960. He further developed his programme against the caste system by 1962 in the form of a seventeen-point programme. Finally an eleven-point programme was presented by him in a historical essay in 1966-SamtaAurSampannata. The Lohia line was first articulated in his famous lectures at Hyderabad in 1952 where he defined caste as immobile class and class as mobile caste. This was part of his worldview which has been published as Wheel of History.

• Lohia interacted with some of the most important anti-caste leaders, movements and organisations of India in the 1950s with the quest for ending the caste system. He engaged with Dr B.R. Ambedkar in 1955-56 and Periyar RamasamiNaicker in 1958. He did not agree with the anti-Brahminism of both the social revolutionaries as it was found to be used for dominance of the middle caste in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. It generated a split among the poor of India. Lohia also

found the necessity to connect the movements for unity among the non-dwija castes with the socialist movement to strengthen the struggle for equality and prosperity in India after independence. In

Lohia's view, the caste system has not created a bi-polar system of forward and

backward castes. In fact there are three layers in the society because of the logic of the caste system-the real upper castes who are affluent, the fake upper castes who are the poor, and the backward Shudars. He also underlined the pathetic condition of all women across caste lines. Thus he wanted unity of all the women, Shudars and the fake upper caste people who are together trapped for centuries in the prison of

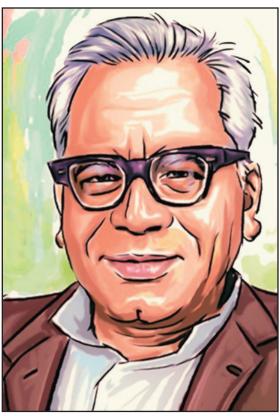
poverty and powerlessness. Furthermore, he also wanted to take the anti-caste forces beyond the twin tragedies of jealousy and sycophancy so that a new age of unity, sacrifice and reconstruction may be inaugurated through struggle against the caste system.

He was aware of the negative and positive aspects of his caste policy. He used the metaphor of Samudra-Manthan where poison (Vish) preceded nectar (Amrit). He also used

the example of Mahabharata to prepare the socialists of India for his anti-caste programme. He did agree that there will be need of large-heartedness on the part of the youth of the upper castes as the programme of preferential opportunities may contain elements of shortterm injustices against them. But it has to be tolerated in order to energise the backward

millions of men and women who are arrested in two prisons of caste and gender-based segregation for centuries. He also warned the victims of caste and gender-based injustices about the possibilities of their leadership adopting the ways and means of the uppercaste elite and destroys the dream of an egalitarian and prosperous Indian society through destruction of caste and class-based injustices.

Lohia wanted preferential opportunities for all the backward sections of the Indian society which included (a) women, (b) the backward castes, (c) the Scheduled Castes, (d) the Scheduled Tribes, and (e) the backward sections of Muslims and other minorities. These opportunities were in the fields of (i) political leadership, (ii) government jobs, (iii) army and (iv) economic enterprises. But he was against prevention of the children of non-backward sections from educational opportunities. He was against any reservations and discrimination in the field of education as he wanted quality of basic education for all children and open opportunities for higher education for all students. Therefore, he was only a partial supporter of the recommendations of the First Backward Classes Commission. The Lohia line was part of his vision of seven revolutions. He wanted to combine the forces of class conflict and caste conflict. His dream was partially accepted in the later years in the form of the Mandal Commission recommendations. But there is a fundamental difference between the Lohia line and the Mandal mindset: Lohia wanted end of the caste system whereas the Mandal movement has only promoted a dominant-caste democracy. It is time to get back to the Lohia line.





Congratulations everyone on the Province of British Columbia proclaiming April as the Dalit History Month (2024) - Jai Birdi

Canada Province of British Columbia A Proclamation

CHARLES THE THIRD, by the Grace of God, King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth

To all to whom these presents shall come - Greeting

Attorney General Lieutenant Governor

WHEREAS British Columbia is a culturally diverse province comprising many peoples and communities, and WHEREAS Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour in British Columbia continue to experience systemic racism, injustices, discrimination and hate, and the government of British Columbia is committed to addressing all forms of racism and discrimination, and

WHEREAS April is a significant month for Dalit communities, and this special month includes birth and death anniversaries of important Dalit leaders and social reformers in the movement against systemic discrimination based on caste, such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi, and

WHEREAS the government of British Columbia acknowledges the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all, and

WHEREAS Dalit History Month is an opportunity to honour, celebrate and reflect on the history, experiences and accomplishments of the Dalit community; NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that April 2024 shall be known as

"Dalit History Month"

in the Province of British Columbia.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province of British Columbia to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS, The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this twenty-eighth day of March, two thousand twenty-four and in the second year of Our Reign. BY COMMAND.

Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Woman of the Year

Yesterday I had the great privilege of honoring Sheri Merrick as the



2024 Woman of the Year for the 7th Assembly District. Sheri recently became the new Executive Director for the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce, having previously worked as Chief Operations Officer for the Folsom Chamber of Commerce. After 19 years in the dental industry, Sheri is now using her passion and experience to support small businesses throughout our community. Thank you Sheri for everything you do!

Earl Le Gette Elementary School Modernization Project

I had a wonderful time in Fair

Oaks at the Earl Le Gette Elementary School modernization project ribbon cutting last week. The 65-year-old campus has been given a 21st-century



upgrade with construction of a brand new multipurpose room, as well as new kindergarten and first-grade class-rooms. Existing classrooms were also given a full renovation including electrical work, new paint, furniture, and updated technology. Thank you to Principal Greg Barge, SJUSD Superintendent Melissa Bassanelli, the board of education, all the wonderful teachers, and the parents who made this great renovation possible for our students.

Children's Choice for Hearing and Talking Cente

Recently I had the pleasure of participating in a tour in Rancho Cordova of the Children's Choice for Hearing & Talking (CCHAT) Center. Since opening its doors in 1996, CCHAT has occupied a unique position in the greater Sacramento area. As Califor-



nia's only listening and spoken language program north of San Francisco, they service a very wide area that includes more than 30 school districts. And over the years, they have helped hundreds of children who are deaf and hard of hearing matriculate into mainstream school programs.

Supporting organizations like CCHAT is crucial as they play a pivotal role in ensuring children with hearing impairments receive specialized education, empowering them to integrate

seamlessly into mains tream school programs and fostering inclusivity in our communities.



Ribbon Cut-

ting in Orangevale

My staff was on hand this past week to join in the ribbon cutting of Grocery Outlet in Orangevale, located at 8835 Greenback Lane, which is now



under new ownership. They are open every day from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, and offer discount brand-name groceries, plus items like gifts & toys.

The Real Impact of Going Green

prioritize the safety and well-being of our community above all. California's ambitious goal to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2030 is a testament to the state's leadership in addressing climate change.

Among the measures taken to meet this goal, the California Air Resources Board's decision to ban the sale of new gas furnaces and water heaters starting in 2030 stands out. This policy aims to reduce our reliance on fossil



fuels, a significant step toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

However, while the intentions behind such policies are commendable, they often come with unintended consequences. For instance, the largest contributor to modern wildfires in our state is not the appliances in our homes but the high-voltage transmission lines that crisscross our forests. These lines, essential for transporting electricity - much of which is imported due to California's dependence on solar and wind powerpose a significant risk of sparking wild-

The push for electrification, including the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, is part of the state's strategy to reduce emissions. However, last summer's heatwave-induced blackouts, which led to restrictions on EV charging, highlighted the fragility of our current electrical grid. These incidents serve as a stark reminder of the challenges we face in transitioning to a more sustainable energy system.

Additionally, the economic impacts of these policies cannot be ignored. The construction industry, for example, has been hit hard by the increased costs associated with meeting new environmental standards, making homeownership even more elusive for many Californians.

The recent controversy over gas appliances and the Berkeley ordinance banning gas infrastructure in new constructions has sparked a heated debate. While the Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals struck down Berkeley's ban, the broader issue of transitioning away from natural gas remains contentious. Many residents and businesses are concerned about the implications of such bans on their daily lives and the economy.

While the state's efforts to combat climate change through ambitious goals like zero carbon emissions by 2030 are laudable, we must also critically assess the broader implications of these policies on our community's safety, wellbeing, and economic stability.

The unintended consequences of well-meaning initiatives, from increased wildfire risks due to overreliance on electric power to the paradoxical rise in plastic waste following bag bans, underscore the need for a more nuanced approach to environmental policymaking.

Thank you for Reading - and as always if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov. Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost rep-

As a Sacramento County Supervisor, I resents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho

Second Installment of Property Tax Due April 10

The deadline for paying the second installment of your 2023-2024 Sacramento County property taxes is coming up very soon. Payments are due no later than April 10, 2024. Late payments will incur a 10 percent penalty plus a \$20.00 cost for each tax bill. Partial payments are not accepted.

Payment must be received in the Tax Collector's Office by 5 p.m. on April 10, 2024, or either postmarked or paid through our website by April 10, 2024. The Tax Collector also wants to remind property owners to include the appropriate installment payment stub from the tax bill or website or write the parcel number of the property on the check being submitted to make sure that you receive proper credit for the payment.





Payment may be mailed to P.O. Box 508, Sacramento, CA 95812-0508. Be sure to mail your payment early enough to ensure a timely postmark and avoid penalties.

Making Payments

Property taxes may be paid by echeck or credit card through Sacramento County's Online Property Tax Bill Information System or over the telephone at 1-844-430-2823, using the 14-digit parcel number.

For a convenience fee, a contractor will process your credit card payment if you elect to pay the annual property tax bill using this method. This convenience fee is not revenue to the County. There is no fee to make a payment via e-check.

To avoid penalties, transactions made either on the internet or over the telephone, must be completed before midnight on the payment pay by date. Debit and credit cards will be processed as a credit transaction, and therefore the convenience fee will apply.

Please plan ahead and do not wait until the last minute to make your payment. If you are unable to get through on the internet or telephone, causing you to miss the payment deadline, penalties will NOT be waived.

Please verify your data entry very carefully when making online payments. If your payment is rejected by your financial institution FOR ANY REA-SON, you will be charged a \$53.00 return payment fee as well as penalties if your payment is rejected after the due

If you use your bank's Online Bill Pay service, a paper check will be printed and mailed to the Tax Collector. Because the check is sent without a payment stub, please enter the parcel number, current year's bill number and installment being paid in the online account number field for payment identification.

The date on the check issued by your bank is considered the postmark, make sure you are aware of the bank's timeline on issuing the check. Some banks take 5 to 7 business days before the check is issued, and penalties will apply if the check is dated after April 10, 2024.

How to Obtain Information about Your Tax Bill

If you have not received a tax bill, you can obtain your tax bill information and payment stubs (coupons) at the Tax Collector's website, over the automated telephone system or by contacting the Tax Collector's Office at (916)

Sacramento County offers an online email subscription service for property tax information to receive e-mail notifications when the annual secured property tax bills are available each year and reminders before the first and second installments delinquent dates.

This service is provided at no cost to subscribers.

Visit saccounty.gov and enter your email address or mobile number under the "Connect with us" header, located at the bottom right-hand of the page.

For additional information about property taxes, the Sacramento County Tax Collector's website provides answers to most common questions from taxpayers regarding property taxes and links to tax bill information and online payments.

Community Achievement Recognition

We are proud to spotlight an exceptional individual and the vibrant spirit of our youth, who have significantly enriched our community.

The SBB (Student Business Board) serves as a cornerstone for this ethos, with youth members from local organizations like Green Acres 4-H, the Rio Linda High School FFA program, and the Rio Linda Grange investing in their growth while embracing best business practices and character development. The support from community members, including families, business owners, and club leaders, enriches this ecosystem, nurturing our future leaders.

Andy Sartori's MealPro has made a mark in Citrus Heights, transforming from a humble food truck into a community staple. With a focus on health and wellness, Andy's passion shines through in every nourishing meal, feeding not just the body but the soul. MealPro stands as a testament to how a small business can deeply impact its community, blending convenience with wholesome goodness. Join us in celebrating MealPro's journey, a true embodiment of passion turned into purpose.

Sac County Inspector **General Selected**

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously today to approve the selection of Kevin Gardner as the County's new Inspector General and authorizes the County Executive to sign a contract with Gardner for that position, effective April 2, 2024.

The nationwide search com-

menced with two collaborative interview panels that were convened for the Inspector General search. One



Sue Frost

panel was comprised of members appointed by the Community Review Commission, as well as representatives from both the Law Enforcement Management Association (LEMA) and the Sacramento County Deputy Sheriff's Association (SCDSA).

The second panel included the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff, and representatives from LEMA and SCDSA.

All panel representatives expressed their support of moving forward with recommending Gardner's appointment.

Gardner has 31 years of sworn law enforcement experience, including service with the City of Vacaville and City of Sacramento police departments. During his time with the City of Sacramento, Gardner rose through the ranks, ultimately becoming an Acting Deputy

Beginning in 2017, Gardner served two years as the Chief of the Division of Law Enforcement for the California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General. Most recently, he served as the Interim Director for the City of Sacramento's Office of Public Safety Accountability.

Gardner has a bachelor's degree in Administration of Justice from Union Institute and University and a master's degree in Leadership from Saint Mary's College.

The Office of the Inspector General was created to facilitate the Board of Supervisors' responsibility to oversee



without interfering with the Sheriff's investigate of personnel deployment functions. The Inspector General ensures the integrity of the citizen complaint process and the thoroughness and fairness of related Sheriff's Office investigations, while fostering positive relations with the community. The Community Review Commission acts in a supporting role to the Office of Inspector General and acts as a conduit between the community and the Office of Inspector General.

Sign up to receive email or mobile text messages when new Community Review Commission meeting information is available.

The Inspector General works independently on items detailed in the scope of services. The Inspector General will present recommendations relating to these examinations to the Board of Supervisors, County Executive and the Sheriff. The Office of the Inspector General is a contract position. The contract, once executed, will be effective beginning April 2, 2024 through March 31, 2026, with the option to renew the contract for one additional two-year term.

TN party goes 'balle balle', fields seven Tamil Sikhs in LS polls

THOOTHUKUDI: One of the defining aspects of Sikhism is universal brotherhood and the faith that has its roots in Punjab seems to have found a band of brothers and sisters espousing its cause in Tamil Nadu.

Taking inspiration from the Delhi farmers' agitation of 2021 that made the mighty union government scrap the three farm laws, the Bahujan Dravida Party (BDP), a party founded by a Tamil but registered in New Delhi, has fielded seven candidates in Tamil Nadu for the Lok Sabha polls to usher in social change through political action. Interest-

ingly, all these candidates, originally belonging to different faiths, have embraced Sikhism after participating in the farmers protest.

The seven candidates are Selvakumar alias Selva Singh (27), who is contesting from Tirunelveli constituency, Korkai Palanisamy Singh (36) from Virudhunagar, Rajan Singh (60) from Kanniyakumari, Seetha Kaur (52) from Tenkasi, Manivasagam (46) from Ramanathapuram, Asiriyar Shanmuga-Singh (37)sundaram Thoothukudi, and Naga Vamsa Pandian Singh (30) from Madurai constituency. While the Tirunelveli candidate has been given the 'pen nib with seven rays' symbol, the other candidates will contest on 'diamond' symbol.

BDP founder Jeevan Singh,

who belongs to Thoothukudi, told TNIE that his aim is to bring social change at the grassroots level by establishing a cultural identity through Sikhism. Only Sikhism can create a casteless society, said Jeevan Singh,

pressed by the Punjabi Sikh farmers' strong and unified protest for a single cause affecting the farming community. "Their concerted effort and perseverance attracted me to Sikhism," said the 27-year-old. He participated in the

get out of the caste system in Hinduism that divides people into lower and upper castes". Shanmugasundaram, who is a Dalit, said he feel empowered after embracing Sikhism and has gotten out of his sense of inferior-

Shanmugasunity. daram said Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu stand up against social injustice, but we fight for social transformation to usher in social change to build an egalitarian society. "Only social change can make political parties field a candidate like A Raja, a Dalit and a senior DMK leader, to contest from a general seat," he

said. Palanichamy alias Korkai Palani Singh, who embraced Sikhism on March 15, 2022 along with Selva Singh, said the farmers' agitation influenced him to become a Sikh. "I saw the agitation during BDP's 22-day rally in September 2021. I admired the Sikh farmers' leadership. Since I had faced caste-based discrimination, I was attracted by the Sikh principle of equality," Palani Singh, a photo designer from Madurai, said.

Rajan Singh, a retired conductor of MTC, and his wife Seetha Kaur of Tirunelveli, both from an SC community, got baptized as Sikhs in 2022 and 2023, respectively. "I tied the turban and took oath to withdraw from superstitious beliefs," Kaur told TNIE.

(With thanks Indian Express)



who was earlier a follower of Buddhism. The primary principle of the party is to establish Begampura Kalsha Raj, which in Punjabi means a discrimination-free liberated kingdom. "Our party works for the empowerment of SC/STs, OBCs, and religious minorities who form 95% of the population in India," he said.

Jeevan Singh was with BSP for several years before founding the Bahujan Dravida Party in 2019. He quit BSP after Periyar's photograph was removed from the party's Maha Purush list

Speaking to TNIE, Selva Singh, who hails from Chekkarakudi in Thoothukudi, said he participated in the farmers' agitation on March 16, 2021, on behalf of BDP and was im-

stir along with 100 parai musicians.

"I don't believe that such strong cohesion is possible in Tamil Nadu as someone can weaken a group's unity from within for their vested interest," he said.

"I learned how to respect Gurugranth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhs, before embracing the religion on March 15, 2022, at the Golden Temple in Amritsar," said Selva Singh, who is now pursuing law in Uttar Pradesh. Selva Singh's family members in Thoothukudi's Chekkarakudi village follow ancestral worship, but he had relinquished it long ago after accepting the principles of Periyar.

Thoothukudi candidate Asiriyar Shanmugasundaram Singh told E, "My ultimate aim in embracing Sikhism is to

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