



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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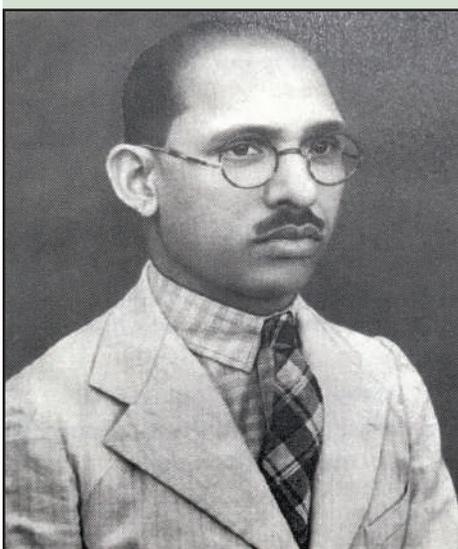
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Remembering Shri Ishwar Das Pawar on his birthday (May 9, 1908)

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-in-Chief

(Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba)

Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar is a household name in the Doaba region of Punjab. He was probably the first Punjab Civil Service officer from the Ad Dharmi community of the region. Ad Dharmis of Punjab were the pioneers of the Dalit movement in the Northwest India. Sh. Pawar Ji served the



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

cause of the S a m a j through his b o l d decisions in the direction of Dalit empowerment. When he was appointed as the passport i s s u i n g officer in the region, he made great contribution t o w a r d s

helping his people reach foreign lands to improve their life conditions. To obtain a passport one needs to show some property, which lowest of the low were deprived of simply for being born in such families. Sh. Pawar saw to it that this formidable hurdle should not come in their way to obtain passports. It was during his tenure at the Passport office that a large number of people belonging to various Scheduled Castes (SCs) communities started reaching abroad. Currently SCs of Punjab constitute the second largest emigrant group from Punjab in North America and Western Europe.

The lesson to serve one's community, Sh. Pawar Ji learnt from the teachings of Ad Dharm movement. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the glorious Ad Dharam movement of Punjab, influenced Pawar Sahib deeply. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji used to go to Chandigarh to meet Sh. Pawar Sahib at his residence and Mrs. Pawar look after them passionately as both of them were well aware of their commitment towards the Dalit Samaj. ID Pawar was not only a source of aspiration for his people but also great support to help them at various levels of administration for their day-to-day life requirements. Ambedkar Times Forum takes lots of pride in serializing Sh. I. D. Pawar's autobiography "My Struggle in Life". Our thanks also to Sh. Pamas Rai Bhatti whose contribution towards the publication of this valuable treasure of our Samaj was duly recognized by Pawar Sahib in the preface of "My Struggle in Life"

Our heartfelt tribute to I D Pawar Sahib on his Birth Anniversary.

Dr Ambedkar's birth celebrated as an Equality Day



Dr Ambedkar perhaps is the only person in the history of India whose birthday is celebrated all over the world weeks and weeks after his actual birthday on 14 April. In foreign countries, it is generally celebrated on Sundays as most of the people work during the week. Most of the people are beginning to realise the significance of Dr Ambedkar's contribution in the matters of equality. In Bedford, 131st birth anniversary was observed as an equality day on Sunday, 8 May at the Shri Guru Ravidass Community Centre. The event was organised jointly by the Ambedkar Mission Society (AMS), Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (SGRS) and BhagwanValmik Sabha (BVS), Bedford. Bedford is the only town in the UK where all the followers of Dr Ambedkar, Guru Ravidass and BhagwanValmik have been organising Ambedkar related events for a number of years. They have set up an example for others to bury their petty differences and get united for a common cause. Dr Ambedkar and his life long struggle is the rallying point to show the strength of unity.

Rich tributes were paid to Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar by various speakers. In his welcoming speech, Jaswinder Kumar, President of SGRS said that both Guru Ravidassji and Dr Ambedkar devoted whole of their lives to uplift the downtrodden people of India. Dr Ambedkar devoted his life to fulfil the dream of Begumpura propounded by Shri Guru Ravidassji. SGRS is also trying to fulfil their mission by helping the needy and marginalised communities.

Giving the background of the equality Day, Arun Kumar, General Secretary, AMS said that the campaign to declare 14 April, birthday of Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar was first initiated by ambassador Ramesh Chander IFS (Retired) in 2015 when he wrote to the then Indian Foreign Minister, Mrs SushmaSwaraj to recommend to the UN to declare this day as an International Day of Equality. Since then a number of organisations including Chetna Association of Canada and the Federation of Ambedkrite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK) are raising this issue on various platforms. With the positive engagement of a number of activists with the different levels of the governments, it is a matter of happiness that 14 April, the birth of Dr Ambedkar is being observed as a Day of Equality

in Canada, USA, UK and India. Today Dr Ambedkar is widely accepted and recognised as one of the greatest champions of human rights. Hopefully the government of India would also recognise this and send recommendations to the United Nations for declaring 14 April as an International Day of Equality.

Sam Kalyan, President BVS reiterated the significance of unity. He said that the caste law was passed in the British Parliament as a result of joint campaign by all organisations in the UK and we must continue to work together.

Mohammad Yesin, Bedford Member of Parliament talked about Dr Ambedkar's contribution to the labour movement. Coming from a humble background, he went to the world renowned universities to get his education that helped him to challenge the society based on high and low. His struggle in life is an inspiration for all of us and we keep on working for the equal and exclusive society. Councillor Mohammed Nawaz, Deputy Speaker, Bedford Borough Council said that Dr Ambedkar's work on labour movement, education and human rights movement is as significant today as it was during his times. Ram Pal Rahi, Harish Thapar, Kewal Kalyan, Dhanpat Rattu, Bal Mukand also spoke. Ajaisingh Jassal, Sukhdev Jassi, Jaswinder Gill, Giani Balvir Singh, Giani Shakti Singh entertained with their sweet vocals.

A photo exhibition on the life and works of Dr Ambedkar was also displayed. A portrait of Dr Ambedkar was presented to the Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Bedford by the Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford. This portrait is a limited edition copy of Dr Ambedkar's 2020 portrait by the artist David Newens based on a 1946 photo taken by the renowned photojournalist, Margaret Bourke-White. This portrait was specially commissioned by the FABO UK for the Ambedkar Room at Grays Inn.

(See more pictures on next page)



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Dr Ambedkar's birth celebrated as an Equality Day



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Spell on the Constituent Assembly

Dr. Ambedkar's Maiden Historic Speech in the Constituent Assembly

Dr. Ambedkar delivered three historic speeches in the Constituent Assembly. This is an excerpt of his maiden speech delivered on 17th December 1946 when there was even no proposal to induct him into the Constitution Drafting Committee what to talk of making him its Chairman. The second speech was delivered on 4th November 1948 presenting the first draft of the Constitution for second reading (clause wise discussion). Third speech was delivered on presentation of final draft to the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949. It may be of interest to all to know the background and substance of the historic speech that cast spell on the Congressmen and the Constituent Assembly, and gave a landmark turn to his life and political career.

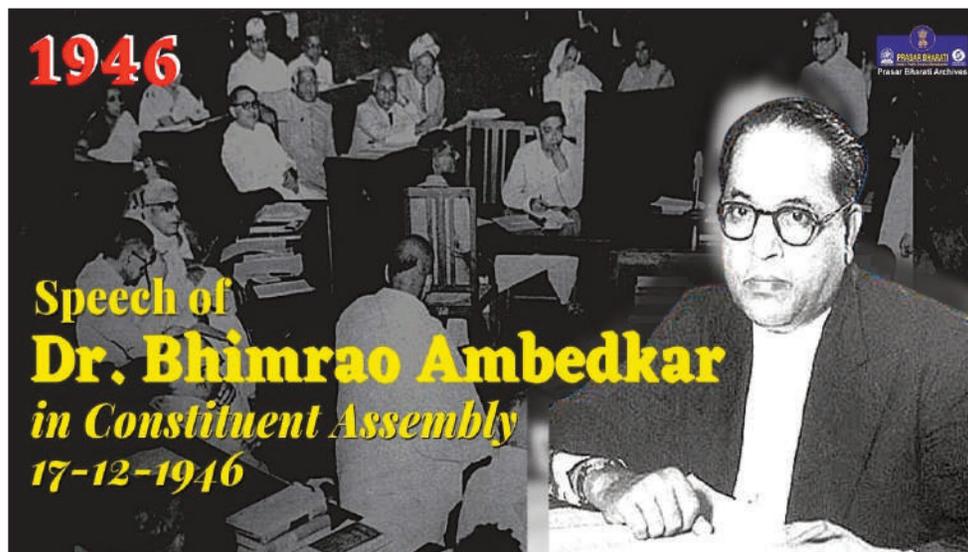
The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly of India commenced on the 9th December 1946. The Muslim League boycotted the meeting and the Princely States stayed away. The available members, mostly the Congressmen, then presented their credentials and signed their names in the register. Dr. Ambedkar signed as a member from Bengal. The Assembly elected Dr. Rajendra Prasad as permanent Chairman of the Constituent Assembly on 11th December 1946. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, moved the Resolution regarding aims and objects of the Assembly on 13th December 1946. It was followed by speeches by some prominent leaders and the Assembly then adjourned till 16th December 1946.

Dr. M.R. Jayakar, one of India's legal luminaries and elected to Constituent Assembly on Congress ticket, objected to the timings of the Resolution and moved an amendment on December 16, 1946, seeking postponement of passing of the Resolution until the Muslim League and Princely States came into the Constituent Assembly. He did it in good faith but this irritated the Congress bosses and voices rose from the Congress groups heckling Dr. Jayakar as an obstructionist. He sat down never to rise again in that House. But his amendment became a battle royal as there were voices for and against the amendment.

Amid this tense situation Dr. Ambedkar was invited unexpectedly on 17th December 1946 by the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad to express his views on the amendment moved by Dr. Jayakar. It was a surprise for him as there were 20 or 22 people ahead of him to speak. In response to the call, Dr. Ambedkar, the avowed enemy of the Congress, who had lashed at their ideology and scoffed at their leaders privately and publicly, rose to express his views on the amendment. The House was all attention. Everybody thought Ambedkar, by playing such a dangerous role, would go under with the mover of the

amendment. To rise against the will and objectives of the Congress bosses, who were the nation's most powerful leaders, was to meet one's Waterloo! The Congress members were ready with their hands raised to cripple their avowed enemy and put him on the mat. But the majority of the white-clad elite had never heard him although they had heard big things about him. In a grave manner, with unlimited command of language and supreme courage, Dr. Ambedkar delivered his maiden historical speech in the Constituent Assembly on this watershed day.

He began by saying that he had come without preparation for such a speech and would have liked to prepare himself as he had intended to make a full statement on such an occasion. Besides, a time limit of ten minutes only was fixed for him. Speaking on the Resolution, he said,

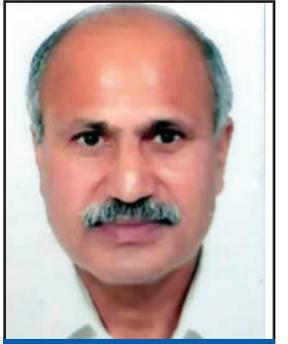


“The Resolution in the light of the discussion that has gone on since yesterday, obviously divides itself into two parts, one part which is controversial and another part which is non-controversial. The part which is non-controversial is the part which comprises paragraphs (5) to (7) of this Resolution. These paragraphs set out the objectives of the future constitution of this country. I must confess that, coming as the Resolution does from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who is reputed to be a Socialist, this Resolution, although non-controversial, is to my mind very disappointing. I should have expected him to go much further than he has done in that part of the Resolution. As a student of history, I should have preferred this part of the Resolution not being embodied in it at all. When one reads that part of the Resolution, it reminds one of the Declaration of the Rights of Man which was pronounced by the French Constituent Assembly. I think I am right in suggesting that, after the lapse of practically 450 years, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the principles which are embodied in it has become part and parcel of our mental makeup. I say they have become not only the part and parcel of the mental make-up of modern man in every civilized part of the world,

but also in our own country which is so orthodox, so archaic in its thought and its social structure, hardly anyone can be found to deny its validity. To repeat it now as the Resolution does is, to say the least, pure pedantry. These principles have become the silent immaculate premise of our outlook. It is therefore unnecessary to proclaim as forming a part of our creed. The Resolution suffers from certain other lacuna. I find that this part of the Resolution, although it enunciates certain rights, does not speak of remedies. All of us are aware of the fact that rights are nothing unless remedies are provided whereby people can seek to obtain redress when rights are invaded. I find a complete absence of remedies. Even the usual formula that no man's life, liberty and property shall be taken without the due process of law, finds no place in the Resolution. These funda-

these propositions, the Resolution is, to my mind, somewhat disappointing...”

Speaking on the controversial part of the Resolution, he said, “...The controversy seems to be centered on the use of that word ‘Republic’. It is centered on the sentence occurring in paragraph 4 “the sovereignty is derived from the people”. Thereby it arises from the point made by my friend Dr. Jayakar yesterday that in the absence of the Muslim League it would not be proper for this Assembly to proceed to deal with this Resolution. I have got not the slightest doubt in my mind as to the future evolution and the ultimate shape of the social, political and economic structure of this great country. I know to-day we are divided politically, socially and economically. We are a group of warring camps and I may go even to the extent of confessing that I am probably one of the leaders of such a camp. But, Sir, with all this, I am quite convinced that given time and circumstances nothing in the world will prevent this country from becoming one. With all our castes and creeds, I have not the slightest hesitation that we shall in some form be a united people. I have no hesitation in saying that notwithstanding the agitation of the Muslim League for the partition of India someday enough light would dawn upon the Muslims themselves and they too will begin to think that a United India is better even for them. So far as the ultimate goal is concerned, I think none of us need have any apprehensions. None of us need have any doubt. Our difficulty is not about the ultimate future. Our difficulty is how to make the heterogeneous mass that we have to-day take a decision in common and march on the way which leads us to unity. Our difficulty is not with regard to the ultimate; our difficulty is with regard to the beginning. Mr. Chairman, therefore, I should have thought that in order to make us willing friends, in order to induce every party, every section in this country to take on to road it would be an act of greatest statesmanship for the majority party even to make a concession to the prejudices of people who are not prepared to march together and it is for that, that I propose to make this appeal. Let us leave aside slogans, let us leave aside words which frighten people. Let us even make a concession to the prejudices of our opponents, bring them in, so that they may willingly



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(Contd. on next page)

Spell on the Constituent Assembly

(Continue from page 3)

join with us on marching upon that road, which as I said, if we walk long enough, must necessarily lead us to unity. If I, therefore, from this place support Dr. Jayakar's amendment, it is because I want all of us to realize that whether we are right or wrong, whether the position that we take is in consonance with our legal rights, whether that agrees with the Statement of May the 16th or December 6th, leave all that aside. This is too big a question to be treated as a matter of legal rights. It is not a legal question at all. We should leave aside all legal considerations and make some attempt, whereby those who are not prepared to come, will come. Let us make it possible for them to come, that is my appeal.

Referring to the debate that took place he said, "In the course of the debate that took place, there were two questions which were raised, which struck me so well that I took the trouble of taking them down on a piece of paper. The one question was, I think, by my friend, the Prime Minister of Bihar who spoke yesterday in this Assembly. He said, how can this Resolution prevent the League from coming into the Constituent Assembly? Today, my friend, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, asked another question. Is this Resolution inconsistent with the Cabinet Mission's Proposal? Sir, I think they are very important questions and they ought to be answered and answered categorically. I do maintain that this Resolution whether it is intended to bring about the result or not, whether it is a result of cold calculation or whether it is a mere matter of accident is bound to have the result of keeping the Muslim League out. In this connection I should like to invite your attention to paragraph 3 of the Resolution, which I think is very significant and very important. It envisaged the future Constitution of India. I do not know what the intention of the mover of the Resolution is. I take it that after this Resolution is passed, it will act as a sort of directive to the Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution in terms of Para 3 of the

Resolution. Paragraph 3 says that in this country there shall be two different sets of polity, one at the bottom, autonomous Provinces or the States or such other areas as care to join a United India. These autonomous units will have full power. They will have also residuary powers. At the top, over the Provincial units, there will be a Union Government, having certain subjects for legislation, for execution

and for administration. As I read this part of the Resolution, I do not find any reference to the idea of grouping, an intermediate structure between the Union on the one hand and the provinces on the other. Reading this Para in the light of the Cabinet Mission's Statement or reading it even in the light of the Resolution passed by the Congress at its Wardha session, I must confess that I am a great deal

surprised at the absence of any reference to the idea of grouping of the provinces. So far as I am personally concerned, I do not like the idea of grouping. I like a strong united Centre, much stronger than the Centre we had created

under the Government of India Act of 1935. But, these opinions, these wishes have no bearing on the situation at all. We have travelled a long road. The Congress Party, for reasons best known to itself consented, if I may use that expression, to the dismantling of a strong Centre which had been created in this country as a result of 150 years of administration and which I must say, was to me a matter of great admiration and respect and refuge. But having given up that position, having said that we do not want a strong centre, and having accepted that there must be or should be an intermediate polity, a sub-federation between the Union Government and the Provinces I would like to know why there is no reference in Para 3 to the idea of grouping. I quite understand that the Congress Party, the Muslim League and His Majesty's Government are not ad idem on the interpretation of the clause relating to grouping. But I always thought that, —I am prepared to stand corrected if it is shown that I am wrong, —at least it was agreed by the Congress Party that if the Provinces which are placed within different groups consent to form a Union or Sub-federation, the Congress would have no objection to that proposal. I believe I am correct in interpreting the mind of the Congress Party. The question I ask is this. Why did not the Mover of this Resolution make reference to the idea of a Union of Provinces or grouping of Provinces on the terms on which he and his party was prepared to accept it? Why the idea of Union is completely effaced from this Resolution? I find no answer..." Referring to the questions posed by the Prime Minister of Bihar and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, he pointed out: "... Here is Para 3 which the Muslim League is bound to take advantage of and justify its continued absence. My friend Dr. Jayakar, yesterday, in arguing his case for postponing a decision on this issue put his case, if I may say so, without offence to him, somewhat in a legalistic manner. The basis of his argument was, have you the right to do so? He read out certain portions from the Statement of the Cabinet Mission which related to the procedural part of the Constituent Assembly and his contention was that the procedure that this Constituent Assembly was adopting in deciding upon this Resolution straightaway was inconsistent with the procedure that was laid down in that Paper. Sir, I like to put the matter in a somewhat different way. The way I like to put it is this, I am not asking you to consider whether you have the right to pass this Resolution straightaway or not. It may be that you have the right to do so. The question I am asking is this. Is it prudent for you to do so? Is it wise for you to do so? Power is one thing; wisdom is quite a different thing and I want this House to consider this matter from the point of view, namely, whether it would be wise, whether it would be statesmanlike, whether it would be prudent to do so at this stage. The answer that I give is that it would not be prudent, it would not be wise. I suggest that another attempt may be made to bring about a solution of the dispute between the Congress and the Muslim League. This subject is so vital, so im-

portant that I am sure it could never be decided on the mere basis of dignity of one party or the dignity of another party. When deciding the destinies of nations, dignities of people, dignities of leaders and dignities of parties ought to count for nothing. The destiny of the country ought to count for everything. It is because I feel that it would be in the interest not only of this Constituent Assembly so that it may function as one whole, so that it may have the reaction of the Muslim League before it proceeds to decision that I support Dr. Jayakar's amendment — we must also consider what is going to happen with regard to the future if we act precipitately."

Talking of the possible future scenario, he said, "I do not know what plans the Congress Party, which holds this House in its possession, has in its mind? I have no power of divination to know what they are thinking about. What are their tactics, what is their strategy, I do not know. But applying my mind as an outsider to the issue that has arisen, it seems to me there are only three ways by which the future will be decided. Either there shall have to be surrender by the one party to the wishes of the other - that is one way. The other way would be what I call a negotiated peace and the third way would be open war.

Sir, I have been hearing from certain members of the Constituent Assembly that they are prepared to go to war. I must confess that I am appalled at the idea that anybody in this country should think of solving the political problems of this country by the method of war. I do not know how many people in this country support that idea. A good many perhaps do and the reason why I think they do, is because most of them, at any rate a great many of them, believe that the war that they are thinking of, would be a war on the British. Well, Sir, if the war that is contemplated, that is in the minds of people, can be localized, circumscribed, so that it will not be more than a war on the British, I probably may not have much objection to that sort of strategy. But will it be a war on the British only? I have no hesitation and I do want to place before this House in the clearest terms possible that if war comes in this country and if that war has any relation to the issue with which we are confronted today, it will not be a war on the British. It will be a war on the Muslims. It will be a war on the Muslims or which is probably worse; it will be a war on a combination of the British and the Muslims. I cannot see how this contemplated war be of the sort different from what I fear it will be..."

Supporting the policy of reconciliation instead of confrontation or war, Dr. Ambedkar said, "Sir, I like to read to the House a passage from Burke's great speech on Conciliation with America. I believe this may have some effect upon the temper of this House. The British people as you know were trying to conquer the rebellious colonies of the United States, and bring them under their subjection contrary to their wishes. In repelling this idea of conquering the colonies this is what Burke said: "First, Sir, permit me to observe, that the use of force alone is but temporary. It may

subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered. My next objection is its uncertainty. Terror is not always the effect of force and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource for, conciliation failing, force remains; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness; but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence...A further objection to force is, that you impair the object by your very endeavors to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover; but depreciated, sunk, wasted and consumed in the

contest". These are weighty words which it would be perilous to ignore. If there is anybody who has in his mind the project of solving the Hindu-Muslim problem by force, which is another name of solving it by war, in order that the Muslims may be subjugated and made to surrender to the Constitution that might be prepared without their consent, this country would be involved in perpetually conquering them. The conquest would not be once and for ever. I do not wish to take more time than I have taken and I will conclude by again referring to Burke. Burke has said somewhere that it is easy to give power; it is difficult to give wisdom. Let us prove by our conduct that if this Assembly has arrogated to itself sovereign powers it is prepared to exercise them with wisdom. That is the only way by which we can carry with us all sections of the country. There is no other way that can lead us to unity. Let us have no doubt on that point."

So forceful and logical were his passionate and convincing views and appeal that they produced an excellent impression upon the Assembly. He was frequently and loudly cheered and thunderously applauded by the Congress members - his deadly foes. Dr. Jayakar's speech containing the same appeal aroused resentment while Ambedkar's fine oration evoked a sense of cooperation in their minds, and the hands that were itching to smash him rang with approbation! It was a red-letter day in his amazing life. Once a sacrileger and a scoffer, he had become a counsel and friend who cast a spell on the Congressmen and the Constituent Assembly. This historic speech changed the course of Dr. Ambedkar's political career. As Mr. N.V. Gadgil, an eye witness to this event observed: "His speech was so statesmanlike, so devoid of bitterness and so earnestly challenging that the whole of Assembly listened to it in rapt silence. The speech was greeted with tremendous ovation and he was smothered with congratulations in the lobby." The speech had its ultimate effect and the Constituent Assembly postponed the consideration of the objective Resolution till the next session.

Source:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
Writings and Speeches, Vol. 13,
pp. 5-14, Dhananjay Keer,
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar,
Life and Mission, pp. 386-389

The Wage Rate Issue

Battle Lines drawn between Farmers and Agricultural Labourers in Rural Punjab

In a democratic and peaceful struggle which started in 2020 and lasted for more than a year, farmers as well as agricultural labourers of Punjab had left no stone unturned in making their contribution to the best of their ability. Farmers, agricultural labourers, and many other working classes from most of the states of the country played their part in this struggle and this struggle became unique in the whole world. During the struggle, the speakers from the stages set up by the farmer and agricultural labour organizations shed light on various aspects of the objectives of the struggle and promised to solve the problems of the farmers as well as the problems of the agricultural labourers.

Battle lines have been drawn between farmers and agricultural labourers in three villages of Bathinda and Sangrur districts of Malwa for planting paddy and daily wages. Such a confrontation was also witnessed in 2020 and 2021 due to the shortage of migrant agricultural labourers in Punjab as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which was sensibly avoided by some progressive farmer and agricultural labour organizations. Such a confrontation was not expected after the significant contribution of the agricultural labourers in the farmer and agricultural labour struggle and the promises made by the leaders of various farmer organizations to protect the interests of the agricultural labourers.

According to newspaper reports, the panchayat of Mansa Kala village in Bathinda district had read out its decision in Gurudwara Sahib according to which rate of paddy planting has been fixed at Rs. 3500 per acre, daily wage rate at Rs. 300 for male labour and Rs. 250 per day for female labour, in addition to announcing a fine of Rs 5000 for violating the above decision. The agricultural labourers who don't accept these wage rates should be prevented from going to the fields of farmers. In Daska village of Sangrur district, farmers have fixed paddy planting rate at Rs. 3500 per acre and those farmers who do not abide by this decision will be fined Rs. 20000. The daily wage in this village has been fixed at Rs. 350. The agricultural labourers of this village have decided to plant paddy at Rs. 6000 per acre and the wages of the agricultural labourers have been fixed at Rs. 500 per day and a fine of Rs 2000 will be imposed on the agricultural labourers who violate the above decision. In Chahlan Patti, another village in Sangrur district, the farmers have fixed paddy planting at Rs 3500. The farmers who will violate this decision will be fined Rs. 50000. The farmers have also announced a reward of Rs. 10000 to the person who will inform the violation of this decision.

It is not justifiable for the farmers of three villages in Bathinda and Sangrur district to make such de-

isions regarding the wage rates of agricultural labourers. It is not at all desirable to announce such decisions in Gurudwara Sahib, because Gurudwaras are common to all and prayers for the welfare of all (Sarbat) are offered in Gurudwaras. Sikhism also gives prominence to the message of "mouth of the poor, Guru ki Golak". Understanding this message, setting a maximum wage rate for agricultural labourers in Gurudwara Sahib by the farmers is against the preachings of the Sikh Gurus and a shock to the poor agricultural labourers.

When the country was importing foodgrains from the United States under PL480 in the 1960s due to severe food shortage, the Government of India decided to introduce 'New Agricultural Technology' to overcome this problem. After studying different parts of the country, decision was taken to introduce this technology in Punjab. The courageous farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans, and the rich natural resources of Punjab were behind such a decision. Due to the hard work of the courageous farmers, agricultural



labourers, rural artisans and excessive utilization of the rich natural resources of Punjab, the severe shortage of foodgrains in the country was overcome.

The 'New Agricultural Technology' was a package of high yielding seeds, assured irrigation, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, machinery, and modern farming methods. Initially due to the resources used in this package, the groundwater and the healthy soil of Punjab and the conducive agro-climatic environment for different crops increased the cropping intensity which in-turn increased the demand for labour. Due to the success of this technology, the Central Government to fulfill its targets of central pool of foodgrains imposed paddy crop on the farmers of Punjab from 1973 through the policy of Minimum Support Prices for agricultural commodities and assured government procurement. Paddy is not a suitable crop in terms of agro-climatic conditions of Punjab due to which agricultural labourers started coming to Punjab from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and some other states for planting this crop. Due to the low demand and the very low rates of wages for agricultural labour in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and some other states, a large number of migrant agricultural labourers

from there have accepted low wages in Punjab which has fatally affected the working days and wage rates of agricultural labourers in Punjab.

The wage rates of agricultural labourers in Punjab have been determined by the demand and supply of agricultural labourers. Although there has been some increase in wage rates over time, rising inflation has kept them from increasing their net wage rates. Different research studies have revealed the fact that there has been no increase in the net wage rates of agricultural labourers, rather these rates had decreased in most cases. Now, the demand for labourers for paddy plantation exceeds their supply, it is unreasonable in all respects to fix their maximum wage rates.

The poor socio-economic conditions and the poor political participation of the agricultural labourers of Punjab continue to bring out the major problems of these labourers from time to time. Various research studies conducted in Punjab have brought to light the fact that the pockets of the agricultural labourers are empty, their stomachs are hungry, ragged clothes on their bodies and besides these landless agricultural labourers are also falling prey to feudalistic mentality / thinking.

The use of herbicides and machinery in the package of 'New Agricultural Technology' adopted in Punjab has reduced the employment days in the agricultural sector and in particular of the agricultural labourers.

Prior to the adoption of this technology, the relationship between farmers and agricultural labourers was warmer than it is now. At that time, Sanjhi / Siri agricultural labour system was prevalent in most parts of Punjab. Sanjhi / Siri used to get a share in the agricultural production of farmers, even though at that time Saanjhi / Seer was not fair under which the farmer got a very large share and Sanjhi / Siri got a very small share. But in spite of this, farmers helped them to the best of their ability during the difficult times. The commercial nature of the 'New Agricultural Technology' has hurt this warm relationship. While the use of herbicides and machinery has reduced the working days of agricultural labourers and either prevented an increase or reduced their net wage rates, now direct sowing of paddy to reduce agricultural costs and to come over the problem of groundwater depletion will further reduce their days of employment and income. There are very few employment opportunities in Punjab in the industrial and service sectors. Due to low employment in the agricultural sector, some rural labourers are going to work in nearby towns and cities, but most of them cannot find employment, they sit in the labour squares and eat dry bread brought from home with a small cup of purchased tea. Although 100 days em-

ployment is legally guaranteed under MGNREGA, rural labourers are facing many other problems besides getting very few days employment under MGNREGA. As a result, their net income is so low that their pockets remain empty.

Far from meeting all the basic necessities of life, these agricultural labourers have to borrow money to keep the stove burning for just two square meals a day, which takes the form of debt due to non-payment on time. Although this debt may seem small, it creates untold and unbearable problems for these landless agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourers have phones, but these phones are either low-priced or second hand. These phones have become a necessity for agricultural labourers to get connected with farmers for employment. Such is the case with some of these labourers having scooters. Some of these agricultural labourers also have chairs and tables or sofas in their homes, but they are also used by relatively high-income people. The clothes on the bodies of most of these agricultural labourers are worn-torn or handed down by relatively high-income people.

Although feudalism was legally abolished with the independence of the country, the feudal mentality / thinking of most of the farmers of Punjab seems to be humiliating the agricultural labourers in various respects. A recent example of this is the decisions taken by farmers in three villages in Bathinda and Sangrur districts regarding agricultural labourers.

Measures have to be taken by the Central and State Governments to overcome the various problems of Punjab's agricultural labourers. It is important to ensure that the land acquired by the Punjab Government as a result of redemption of Panchayat lands in various villages of Punjab is given to the agricultural labourers for co-operative agriculture without taking any rent. Days of employment under MGNREGA should be increased according to the requirements of agricultural labourers and the wage rates should be at least equal to Minimum Wage Rates determined by the Central / State Governments. In addition, progressive organizations of farmers and agricultural labourers should come forward as in previous years to reduce the tension between farmers and agricultural labourers as was witnessed during the last two years.



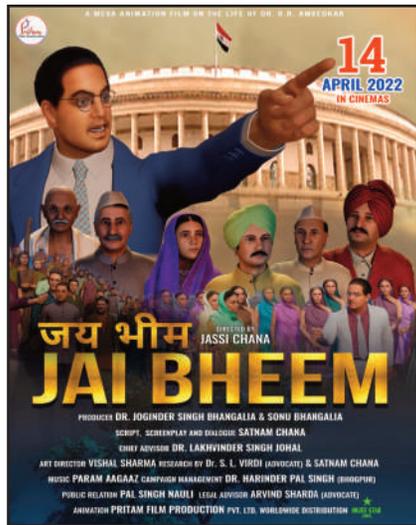
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Jai Bheem - Animation Film on Babasaheb Ambedkar

It is a matter of gratification to note that every successive year the month of April is dedicated to the greatest son of India, Babasaheb Ambedkar as his birth anniversary falls on April 14. This year yet another dimension was added to the Day – release of Jai Bheem, the first animation film on the life and thought of the icon, Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar. Over the year, of late, many films on Babasaheb have been made in various languages by competent film makers and the last in the series was Jai Bhim directed by T.J. Ghanavel released in November, 2021. The Jai Bhim got many good reviews in the social media and, I think, it also received much needed popular acceptance and recognition. The commercial and mainstream media, obviously, expects paid marketing. I am confident that the Jai Bheem – an animation film launched on April 14 in Punjab would not lag behind and would receive its due, if I go by the social media feedback and my personal informal talk with my friend, Satnam Chana – Script, Story and



Screenplay Writer and his son, Jassi Chana - Director of the film which has been produced by their associate, Dr. Joginder Singh Bhangalia of UAE.

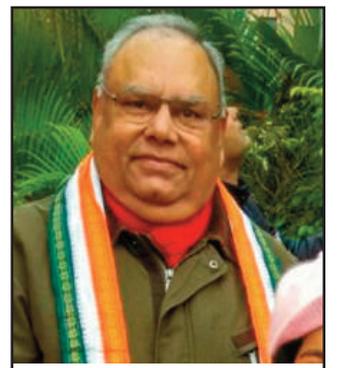
First on the making of the film – Satnam Chana, a son of the soil from the village Birpind near Nakodar in Jalandhar, is a known and intelligent social and community activist who himself is a staunch Ambedkarite since his student days and his work in the international students movement in Eastern Europe with base in Prague, the capital city of then Czechoslovakia in late 1970s and early 1980s. He is fully qualified and competent to do full justice to the project in hand – Jai Bheem. The services of Dr. Santokh Viridi, a pro-

lific writer and social activist, were handy as a resource person on the facts of the life and thought of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Yet another friend Dr. Lakhwinder Johal of Punjab Press Club chipped in as Adviser in the project and rightly so. The Director of the film, Jassi Chana is a fully qualified and a trained professional in Graphic Designing and Animation having a post-graduate degree from a university of New Zealand. The Producer and financier of the film, Joginder Singh Bhangalia and Sonu Bhangalia, though I don't know them personally, must be men of dedication

to the social and community causes besides their commercial and business interests. Jai Bheem is a product of Pritam Film Production made and presented with high standards of film making with dialogue and narration delivery by the legendary film personally, Reza Murad and dubbing done by Ganesh Divakar of Bollywood. Jai Bheem, as such, is the end product of a highly qualified team.

I was under the impression that Jai Bheem was a film of short duration but no, it is full-fledged movie of about 156 minutes with almost as many scenes. The film touches all important aspects of life and thought of Babasaheb. It is not only an educative movie for the

younger generations but also a telling commentary on the struggle and travails of the leader for bring about socio-economic equality and establish a democratic and harmonious social order in the caste ridden society, who is still, unfortunately, side lined and ignored by the main stream of the society. I hope the film would succeed in putting the things in right perspective for the greater good of the country and the society at large. The film tends to strengthen the principles of affirmative action to empower the socially weaker sections of the society on one hand and on the other warns



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
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life and mission of B a b a Banda Bahadur was much ac- c l a i m e d which also won the PTC Film Award. I wish Jai Bheem also scales those heights. But, obviously, we must understand that people like Satnam Chana, with meager budgets and financial sources, do require much needed and sought after patronage from the civil society and common people. Chana Sahib told me with a sense of satisfaction that educated people mostly service class of the weaker sections of the society gave their wholehearted support and went to theaters to see the movie. General public showed due interest but on ticketing arrangements done by social activists and their organizations. One should not shy away from the ground realities

and admit the truth. It seems the general public from the main stream of the society are still to come forward and support the effort. I think they need to think over and leave the traditional bias against Ambedkar and his legacy in the larger interests of the idea of 'Samrasta'. Mere lip service would not do. Since the film has been released only in Punjab as yet, the Punjab Government should consider and wave the entertainment tax on the film. The Education Department of the Punjab Government may issue a formal or informal advisory to all government and private colleges and schools to arrange special shows of the Jai Bheem for the benefit of young students. The social and cultural organizations like SGPC, RSS among others may advise their cadres and followers to see the movie with a view to learn from the life and struggle of Babasaheb in making our country proud in the run up to attaining a due space and position in the comity of nations. It is demand of the time to meet the challenges before the country.

Films and others instruments to spread the thought and legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar, to my mind, would show us the way to take the caravan forward. PM Narendra Modi in his tributes to Babasaheb on his recent birth anniversary rightly said and rightly underlined, "He (Babasaheb Ambedkar) has made indelible contributions to India's progress. This is a day to reiterate our commitment to fulfill his dreams for our nation." Let us see the movie – Jai Bheem as part of the 75th year of our independence – "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahaotsav"

With this I wish Jai Bheem all success in the days to come.

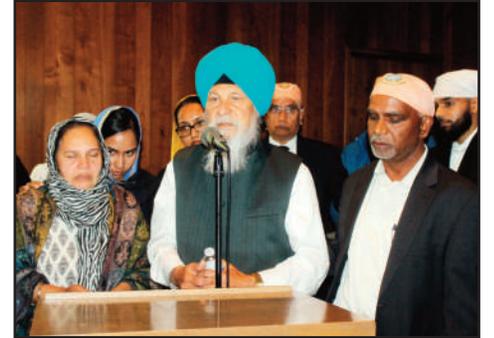
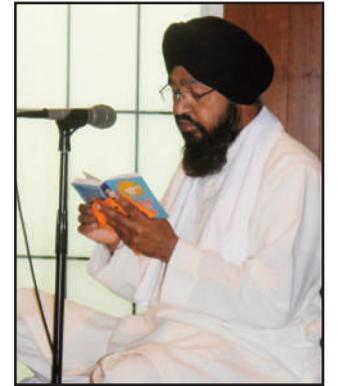
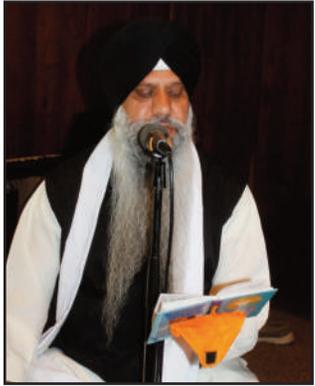


S R LADHAAR and Mr GAUTUM Garish LADHAAR Attended meeting of National Commission Of minorities New Delhi Punjab Sikh, Dalit and Christian community leaders attended the meeting to make them familiar with Government of India schemes. A memorandum was also handed over to the minister incharge for Release of Sikh detainees who have completed their terms of sentences. Mr Dushyant Gautam Mr Iqbal Singh Lalpura Mr Balra Hon'ble minister of state Deptt of minorities were present.

'We the people of India' by depicting the narration in animation format what Dr. Ambedkar said in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949 to ward off dangers to our newly gained independence. Some of the scenes of Gandhi-Ambedkar dialogue on matters of concern and interest to the country give us the flavor of role of both the leaders in the much needed political and social reforms in the run up to independence in August, 1947. One of the scenes, Ambedkar's speech t one of Roundtable Conferences in London amply makes it clear, which many of don't know, that Babasaheb was a nationalist of the first order. Ambedkar's take on the role of Shaheed Bhagat Singh in the freedom movement is refreshing as many people do not know these details. The scenes pertaining to Babasaheb's conversion and embracing of Buddhism in 1956 and his regrets and dissatisfaction with the behavior of his own people shared with his Aide, Nanak Chand Rattu, are really thought provoking. One can easily say that Jai Bheem is a film worth seeing and more so by the children and young students. The legacy of Babasaheb is fully potent to take India out of the emerging scenario of hate and distrust. We need to tell our children that our fore-fathers were great people who got us the independence and set us on the path of development with great sacrifices. The films like Jai Bheem would tend to do that job.

Satnam Chana and Jassi Chana told me that they were inclined to take up the matters of concern and interest to the community through visual communication like films. Their earlier film 'Guru Da Banda' on the

BIBI GURMEET KAUR GIVEN AN EMOTIONAL SEND-OFF



Bibi Gurmeet Kaur, wife of Mr. Joginder Singh (Delhiwale) who left for her heavenly abode on May, 9th, 2022 (Mother's Day), was given an emotional send-off on May 16th, 2022 (Sunday) in Pittsburg Funeral Home (CA). The proceedings of the funeral ceremony were consecrated with the recitation of Gurbani Path (Sukhmani Sahib) and Antim Ardass by Bhai Gurnam Singh (Priest -Guru Ghar) Since Bibi Gurmeet Kaur, born on November 5th, 1947, lived a long, wonderful and an abundant life, the funeral services, was nothing short of holding a celebration of her virtuous journey of life filled with remarkable trail of memories. Besides her close family a large number of mourners attended the funeral ceremony in expression of their sympathies with the bereaved family.

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Some prominent members of the community, noted below, paid their floral tributes to the departed soul. Mr. Abhishek Narabat (Also managed the stage), Mr. O.P. Balley Mr. Ram Saran (Younger Brother late

Bibi Gurmeet Kaur from UK), Mrs. Gina Bhatia, Mr. Baljit Singh with his wife, Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Mr. Ramesh Suman, Mrs. Kamaljit Kr. Bhatia (Daughter of Bibi Gurmeet Kaur), Grand Children of the deceased, Mr. Joginder Singh Delhiwale (Husband) and Mr. Kashmiri Bhatia (son-in-law) also thanked the Sangat on behalf of the family for attending and sharing with the grieving family. Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber (Editor-in-Chief) Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times (Weeklies) also provided complete coverage of the ceremony at the chapel with live Video coverage and photograph services and the family thanked him for that.

After the cremation the Sangat also participated in a religious ceremony with recitation of

"AlahniaPath", Shabad Kirtan and Antim Ardass at Pittsburg Guru Ghar, followed by Guru Ka Langar.

PERSONAL HOMAGE:-Based on the sacred teachings of Gurbani, the human body in flesh and bones is subject to extinction sooner or later, but the immortality of soul is eternal. With her demise, just after celebrating the MOTHER'S Day, on May 9th, 2022 with her family, Bibi Gurmeet Kaur, has left a lasting and an adorable reminiscence for the family to cherish in the years ahead.

May Akalpurkh bless the departed soul with peace and tranquility and provide solace and strength to the bereaved family, to bear this loss.

- O.P. Balley Founder Member:
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg.
(See more pictures on next page)



All pictured: Prem K. Chumber
"Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba"

Recreational Cannabis Sales in Orangevale

With the legalization of recreational cannabis in 2016, we have seen a status quo in terms of where you can legally purchase it in Sacramento County, with only Sacramento City and tiny Isleton currently allowing it. Due to a recent action by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, unincorporated Sacramento County could be added to that list - which would impact communities like Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, and Rio Linda/Elverta. I would like to take this opportunity to explain to you what happened, what my stance is, and where we are going from here.

On May 10th, the Board of Supervisors had a workshop to hear a report on the positive economic impacts of allowing recreational cannabis sales. During this discussion, multiple Supervisors said they would like this to be approved, and asked staff to bring a formal item back to the Board of Supervisors as soon as possible so that this issue could be placed on the November ballot for a public vote. Even though it's legal in California, jurisdictions have to get residents to have a public vote in order to get it approved locally.

The push to get this allowed in Sacramento County is entirely due to money. Based on the report that

we received, cannabis retail would generate anywhere between \$5 million to \$14.5 million each year for the County general fund. And with projected budget shortfalls in the near future, that money could be incredibly important.



I was reluctant to support bringing this back for a formal vote however, as I personally felt that this topic was being too quickly rushed and wasn't giving the public enough of an opportunity to have their voices heard. While the economic aspect of this issue is important, I feel of equal importance are the public safety and public health aspects - both of which

the Board of Supervisors has not had any discussion over. As such, I made a request that before this is formally voted on, that we have full presentations from both public safety and public health to get their take on this issue. This request was broadly ac-

ceptable to the rest of the Supervisors, and will happen in the near future.

When it came time for a vote on whether or not to bring this back for a formal vote to put this on the November ballot, the issue passed by a vote of 3-2 with me voting "no". While I have not made my mind up on whether or not to ultimately support

this, I continued to feel that this issue was being rushed too quickly and that we shouldn't decide to organize a vote on this until after we have heard from public safety and public health.

Based on that vote, the Board of Supervisors is now slated to vote on whether or not to put this on the November ballot on July 26th. In order to get placed on the ballot it will need a minimum of four Supervisors to approve it, meaning at least one of the two Supervisors who voted "no" on May 10th will have to switch their vote to a "yes". In the meantime, I hope you will tell me your thoughts by e-mailing me at Supervisor-Frost@sacounty.net so I can start to get a feel for how my constituents want me to vote.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murietta.



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor

BIBI GURMEET KAUR GIVEN AN EMOTIONAL SEND-OFF



All pictured: Prem K. Chumber "Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba"