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Poona Pact, Affirmative Action and Dalit Social Mobility

Invited Editorial Article

Poona Pact (September 24, 1932) sets the stage for the institution of state affirmative action during the colonial administration in India, which in turn gave shape to a long drawn political struggle by the millions of the socially excluded sections of the Indian society for an egalitarian social order. It came into existence after the promulgation of the Communal Award on 16 August 1932 by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, which provided for separate electorates for the 'Depressed Classes' along with the Muslims, the Europeans, the Sikhs, the Anglo-Indians and the Indian-based Christians. The Communal Award, in turn, was based on the findings of the Indian Franchise Committee, called the Lothian Committee, and the detailed discussions that took place at the London Round Table Conferences 1930-32. The Lothian Committee was constituted in December 1931 under the Chairmanship of the Marquess of Lothian, C.H., Parliamentary under Secretary of State for India. It consisted of 18 members of whom Dr. Ambedkar was one. The Committee began its work of hearing the views of the parties concerned and the provincial franchise committees constituted by the respective Provincial Legislatures on 1 February 1932 at Delhi. It conducted its enquires in Lahore on 31 March and 1 April 1932. The Ad Dharm Mandal and Dayanand Dalit Uddhar Mandal represented the Depressed Classes of the Punjab before the Committee. The Ad Dharm Mandal delegation consisted of 18 members, including Mangu Ram Mugowalia (President), Hazara Ram Piplanwala (General Secretary), Hans Raj (Vice-President), Ram Chand Khera (Editor, Adi Danka), Pt. Hari Ram and Sant Ram (Ahir 1992: 8-9). Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia laid emphasis on the special electoral rights of the lower castes in the legislative assembly while asserting that people belonging to Depressed Classes were neither Sikhs, Hindus, Christians nor Muslims. He reiterated that they were, in fact, the indigenous people of India whose religion was Ad Dharm. He also sent telegrams during the Round Table Conferences in London pledging Ad Dharm support for Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as the leader of the Untouchables in India instead of Mahatma Gandhi (Ram 2012: 682). Consequently, the Communal Award was proposed to find an amicable solution to the varied conflicting communal interests. It was built on the principle of separate electorates, which the British government had already put in place through the Indian Councils Act 1909, commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919). Under a separate electorates system, each community was allocated a number of seats in the legislatures and only members from these communities would be eligible to vote to elect a representative of

their respective community to legislative assemblies.

Mahatma Gandhi, who was in Yervada jail (Pune) at that time, interpreted the Communal Award as a British conspiracy to separate the Depressed Classes from the Hindu electorates in order to weaken the Indian freedom struggle. To stall its implementation, he announced his fast unto death and began the same on September 18, 1932. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who later became the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of Independent India, supported the Communal Award. He thought that it would empower the Depressed Classes (lower castes) and help them in their struggle for equality and dignified life. Dr. Ambed-

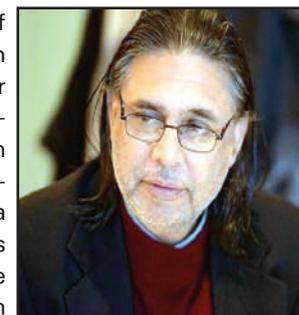


kar got tremendous support from the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement in Punjab. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, President of the Ad Dharm Manda, as mentioned above, took keen interest in the implementation of the Communal Award. When Mahatma Gandhi sat on fast-unto-death at Poona against the separate electorate for untouchables, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia followed suit declaring: 'Gandhi if you are prepared to die for your Hindus, then I am prepared to die for these untouchable.' The fast undertaken by him continued for 28 days from 20 September to 17 October 1932, until the pact was publicly received (Ram 2004: 335). He broke his fast-unto-death by accepting juice from Sant Sarwan Dass, the then head of the Dera Sachknd Ballan (Ram 2008: 1349). On this ground, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was accused of being casteist: "The rift between the liberal Gandhian and radical untouchables was not healed, however, since each continued to perceive the other as an obstacle to achieving inter-caste harmony. Gandhi thought the untouchables' militant separatism was reinforcing the concept of caste and the untouchables thought Gandhi was trying to whitewash existing differences and to

deny untouchables their legitimate base of power. Both the perceptions were to some extent correct" (Juergensmeyer 2000: 230). The Untouchables found their fear justified when Dr. Ambedkar was forced to agree to a solution called Poona Pact under the duress of communal consequences of the death of Mahatma Gandhi as a result of his fast-unto-death.

Though in the Poona Pact Depressed Classes were able to achieve increased representation (147 reserved seats) in comparison to what they have granted in Communal Award (71 seats), Ambedkar complained of blackmail for the loss of the separate electorate provision that could have given the lower caste an exclusive identity of the own to

clusion of reservation provisions for the Scheduled Castes in the Government of India Act 1935 as well as the Constitution of the Republic of India. For Dr. Ambedkar, an e m i n e n t



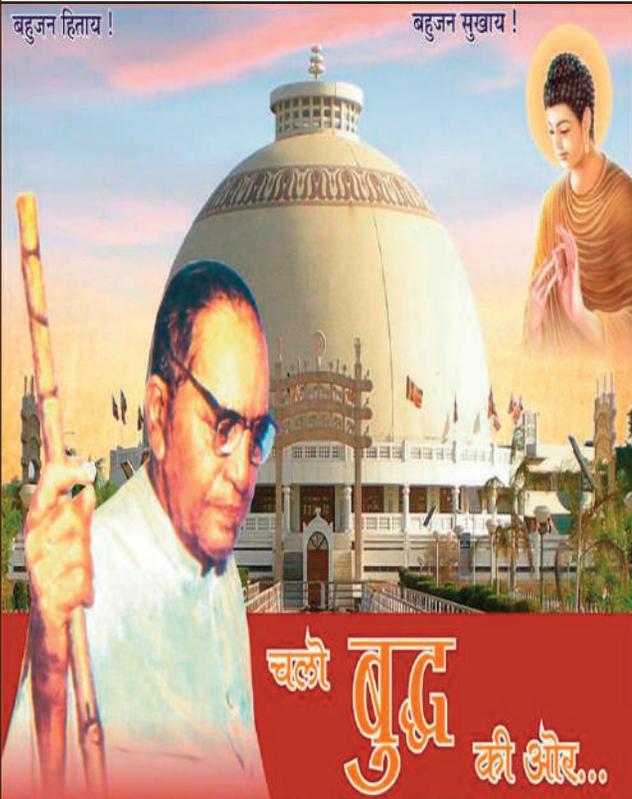
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scholar, able administrator, jurist of world repute and a thorough democrat, the ultimate goal was to annihilate caste from the social soil of Bharat; and for that he was ready to sacrifice every thing that come in his way. He was also a practical statesman, who took twenty years to decide to embrace Buddhism and his Dhamma, as he documented in his magnum opus "Buddha and his Dhamma" published posthumously, to fulfil his vow not to die as a Hindu.

The Poona Pact cemented his resolve that social emancipation of the lower castes is as much an important issue as the political freedom of the country. He never compromised on these two most essential goals of his life. His love for Bharat and his people was indivisible. He was of the firm view that caste was the biggest hurdle on the way of independent Bharat. It must go for Bharat to deliver its message to the world. Dr. Ambedkar devoted his entire life for the emancipation and empowerment of the lower castes of India who for centuries were compelled to live in deplorable lives. He tried different ways to get rid of the graded caste inequality. First, he did his best to improve upon the situations through reforms within Hinduism. But soon, he realized that reforms within Hinduism will not work for the annihilation of caste because without caste the whole structure of Hinduism would come down like a house of cards and that would not be acceptable at all to its protagonists. "Annihilation of Caste", as he mentioned in this booklet, requires doing away with those Hindu Sastras (sacred scriptures/law books) that sanctioned caste divisions. The protagonists of Hinduism, he said, would never agree to comply with such suggestions. Thus the other way, he asserted, to seek casteless social order was to say good bye to Hinduism and construct a new society under a different religion for the Ex-Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar finally left Hinduism and established a new social-religious order popularly known as Navayan-Buddhism (Buddha and His Dhamma) where no one is subjected to any social discrimination based on accretive and primordial notions of caste and creed. In between, Dr. Ambedkar battled many struggles for

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Congratulations on Diksha Day and for inaugurating the largest statue of Dr Ambedkar



Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

"Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba" Weeklies Newspapers congratulate our esteemed readers, contributors and well-wishers on the Diksha day (on this historic day, October 14, 1956, Dr B.R. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with a large number of his followers at Nagpur) and also congratulate the organizers of Ambedkar International Centre (AIC) for inaugurating the largest statue of Dr Ambedkar on its 13 acres of land in Accokeek city of Maryland (USA). This is the largest statue of Babasaheb outside India and has been installed as a part of the Ambedkar Memorial being constructed at this center. It is expected that a large number of representatives of the Ambedkarite movement and his followers will be attending the event from across the USA and other parts of the world." This memorial will serve, said the organizers of AIC, to spread Babasaheb's messages and teachings and showcase a symbol of equality and human rights.

Why Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR EMBRACED BUDDHISM

October 14th, 1956 is a landmark day in the pages of the modern history when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Messiah of the down trodden, embraced Buddhism along with four hundred thousands of his followers at Nagpur (Maharashtra), famously known as Dikshabhumi. It was not an instantaneous move on the part Dr. Ambedkar, but a very well calculated decision to revive the concept of Buddhism in India. It took him more than 20 years to implement his internal resolve to move out of the fold of Hinduism, giving a new voice to the victims of centuries-old social discrimination. In 1935 he declared in a huge gathering that "Though I was born as a Hindu which was not in my control, but I won't die as a Hindu which is in my control."

BRIEF HISTORY: -

With the incursion of Muslim invaders, Buddhism had almost become extinct in India. In North India the two Ad-Dharm movements that challenged Hinduism in favor of alternative religious folds, were launched by Swami Achhutanand in U.P and Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia in pre-partition Punjab. Babasaheb considered conversion to many other schools of religious thought including Islam and Christianity but he wanted to maintain the Indianness of his new religion. He also gave a very serious consideration to adopt Sikhism because of its spiritual teachings but because of social distinctions he noticed among its followers, he changed his mind and ultimately adopted Buddhism with his radical reinterpretations of the faith.

Babasaheb's version known as "Navayana Buddhism published in his Treatise "Buddha And His

Dhamma" was completed and adopted just less than 2 months before he breathed his last on December



O. P. Bailey
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6th, 1956. Babasaheb, for his Navayana Buddhism, is definitely accredited with his efforts to revive Buddhism in India, choosing it as a righteous path to attain the realm of true Nirvana.

With the sudden demise of Babasaheb in 1956 the growth and expansion of Buddhism in India was impeded but it is regaining its momentum, strength and luster as the new generations are becoming more and more perceptive and responsive to the ideals and preachings of Babasaheb's version of Buddhism.

14th October, 2023 was also celebrated

very enthusiastically by Ambedkar International Center as a "Diksha Day" in New Jersey (USA) with the unveiling of the largest statue of Dr. Ambedkar outside India.

Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber Editor-in-Chief: "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" weeklies did a remarkable job by creating two videos of this glamorous event organized by Ambedkar International Center, getting very viral and can be watched on his channel on YouTube Channels: Ambedkar Times TV and Desh Doaba Channel.

Poona Pact, Affirmative Action and Dalit Social Mobility

(Continue from page 1)

the betterment of living conditions of the lower castes. Poona Pact was one of such major struggles.

It was through this historic Pact that Dr. Ambedkar got voice for his people in the provincial legislative structures in the form of certain fixed number of seats. That was September 24, 1932. A lot has changed since then. Under the current Neo-liberal regime, the State in India is fast withdrawing from its responsibilities towards the people. It firmly believes that market can save them from all the hardships they face. In other words Neo-liberalism is being projected as the messiah of down-trodden. In such a changed scenario, down-trodden have to rethink rather critically about the nature of a struggle that they have to wage for the acquisition and protection of their rights. Quite interestingly, there is an alternate viewpoint emerging from within the inner academic circles of the lower castes, which stipulates that the Neo-liberal market economy offers lots of opportunities to the socially excluded sections of the society, who no-longer face any

social exclusion in the aftermath of 1991 Globalizing India. This view-point also talks about Dalit Capitalism, Dalit billionaires and Dalit Chambers of Commerce; and English as a language of social emancipation and economic upliftment. It also calls for the 'Dalit English language movement' (Yengde 2020). What it, however, forgets is that in the free market economy only those are welcomed who have the required capital to invest. And the capital in India used to be the prerogative of the upper castes only. Lower castes were deliberately kept out of its reach by all possible means under the garb of a discriminatory and hegemonic socio-religious order. What about the millions of lower castes who do not have requisite capital to invest and enter into the so-called non-discriminatory market economy in India? Would they not be discriminated in this Neo-liberal economic order? Neo-liberalism is no more different from capitalism. Both Capitalism and Neo-liberalism thrive on accumulation of capital in the form of profit. There is no escape route available within both of them to run away

from the stairless multi-storey caste building. Both are quite comfortable with caste and its elusive socio-cultural paraphernalia. We must not forget that the two main enemies of the lower castes are, as cautioned by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, are Capitalism and Brahmanism. For him Brahmanism is not a caste. It is a state of mind (what Dirks called 'Castes of Mind'). It is not a specific person of a particular caste. It is an ideology that can flourish within any caste group as well as economic model be it Capitalism, Neo-liberalism or any other subtlist variant of it at any point of time during its dialectical-material transformations. It is both a question of sociology and political economy that needs to be understood in juxtaposition of each other at the one and the same time. It needs to be rescued from the narrow social binaries of *Svarnas vs Avarnas*. To that extent, the teachings of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar seem to be of much more value today from the perspective of Poona pact, affirmative action and Dalit social mobility.

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Making Sense of Poona Pact in Current Time

Prem K. Chumber Editor-in-Chief:
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba (Newspapers)

Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar devoted his entire life for the emancipation and empowerment of the Scheduled Castes of India who for centuries were compelled to live degraded lives. He tried different ways for this noble cause before finally setting the goal of annihilation of caste. First, he tried to improve upon the situations through reforms within Hinduism. But soon realized that reforms within Hinduism will not work because caste lies at the centre of Hinduism and without caste the latter would come down like a house of cards, which would not be acceptable to its protagonists at all. Annihilation of caste at the first instance requires doing away with the Hindu Sastras (sacred scriptures/law books), which Hinduism would never agree to comply with. Thus the other way and rather the only way open to seek casteless social order was to say good bye to Hinduism and construct a new society under a different religion for the Ex-Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar finally left Hinduism and established a new socio-religious order popularly known as Navayan-Buddhism (Buddha and His Dhamma) where no one is subjected to any social discrimination based on accretive and primordial notions of caste and creed. In between, Dr. Ambedkar battled many struggles for the betterment of living conditions of the Scheduled Castes. Poona Pact was one of such major struggles.

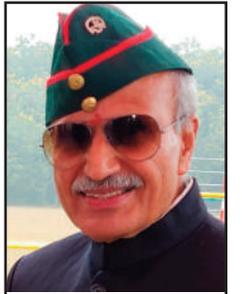
It was through this historic Pact that Dr. Ambedkar got voice for his people in the provincial legislative structures in the form of certain fixed number of seats. That was 1932. A lot has changed now in 2023. State in India is fast withdrawing from its responsibilities towards the people. It firmly believes that market can save them from all the hardships they face. In other words neo-liberalism is being projected as Messiah of the Scheduled Castes. In such a changed scenario downtrodden has to rethink rather critically about the nature of struggle that they have to wage for the acquisition and protection of their rights. Quite interestingly, there is also fast emerging a viewpoint from within the academic circles of the Scheduled Castes which says that neo-liberal market economy offers lots of opportunities to the former untouchables who no-longer face any social exclusion in the aftermath of 1991 Globalizing India. This view-point also talks about SCs billionaires and their own chambers of commerce. What it forgets is that in the free market economy only those are welcome who have the capital to invest. And the capital in India used to be the prerogative of the upper castes only. Lower castes were deliberately kept out of reach of the capital by all possible means under the garb of a discriminatory and hegemonic religious social order. What about the millions of lower castes who do not have requisite capital to enter into the so-called non-discriminatory market economy in India. Would they be not discriminated in this new economic order? Neo-liberalism is no more different from capitalism. We must not forget that the two main enemies of the lower castes are, as cautioned by Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Capitalism and Brahmanism. Both of them are once again busy in fashioning new permutations and calculations to keep their hold intact. Thus to face the realities of current situation in contemporary India, the teachings of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar are of utmost value as they have been ever.

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Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

The historic Poona Pact was signed at 5 P.M. on Saturday, 24th September 1932 at Poona between the Congress leaders such as Madan Mohan Malviya, Tej Bahdur Sapru, Devdas Gandhi, Govind Malviya, M.R. Jayakar, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, G. D. Birla, C.V. Mehta, B.S. Kamat, N. V Gadgil, and others on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his followers on behalf of the Untouchables called Depressed Classes. It was signed primarily to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi from sure death as a result of epic fast undertaken by him on 20th September 1932 against the Communal Award of the British Government granting Separate Electorates to the Depressed Classes. It was made clear in the Award by the Government that it would not give consideration to any representation aimed at securing its modification if it was not supported

borough Committee in 1919, the struggle of Dr. Ambedkar turned into a pitched battle for the Special Rights and safeguards for the Untouchables in the Round Table Conference. Apart from the evidence given to the Southborough Committee on 27 January 1919, he submitted a written Statement as well as an exhaustive Supplementary Statement to the Committee covering various aspects of the franchise with special focus on the conditions of the Untouchables and need for their special treatment and empowerment in the new Constitution. The Government of India Act 1919 came into being taking into consideration



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by all the affected parties. Therefore, support of Dr. Ambedkar in favor of modification of the Award was mandatory. It was later on clarified by Dr. Ambedkar that he was constrained to sign the Pact under baffling situation created for him by the coercive fast of Mr. Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast on the evening of 26th September.

The Poona Pact produced different reactions. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Untouchables had every reason to be sad because the Pact had taken away the invaluable benefits given to them under the Communal Award. Simmering discontent among the Hindus against the Pact also surfaced in the form of their protest against it. Almost all Hindu leaders who had ratified it now turned out to be its opponents. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders started to feel the necessity of advocating an amendment of the Pact relating to Punjab where they said no Depressed Classes problem existed. Bengal Legislative Council passed a resolution asking for the annulment of the Poona Pact on the ground that the Bengal Hindu leaders were not party to the Pact. The Pact had very wide ranging ramifications on the history of freedom struggle of the country and struggle of the Depressed Classes for their liberation from age old bondages, and their uplift as equal citizens of the land (BAWS, Vol.17, Pt. 1, P. 175, Vol. 9, pp.87-91 and Keer, pp. 240, 241).

The genesis of Poona Pact lies in the long and fierce struggle of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers for the social, political and economic liberation and equality that culminated in the grant of Communal Award by the Government. Starting with the South-

borough Committee's recommendations, report of the Secretary of State for India Edwin Montagu and the Viceroy, Chelmsford and various other facts. The Act contained genesis of responsible Government in India which worked as the Constitution. It extended Separate Electorates to the Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians and Europeans. The Muslims had already been granted the Separate Electorates. The Act was set to be reviewed after ten years.

Accordingly, a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon was appointed in 1928 to investigate into the working of the Constitution and to report upon such changes as may be found necessary. The Congress and the liberals boycotted the Commission because it had no Indian member. To assuage this feeling of opposition it was announced by the British Government that after the work of the Commission was completed the Indian representatives would be assembled for a discussion before the new Constitution of India was settled. To co-operate with the Simon Commission the Central Government appointed a Committee for all British India and every Legislative Council elected its Provincial Committee to work with the Simon Commission. Dr. Ambedkar was selected on the Bombay Provincial Committee by the Bombay Legislative Council on August 3, 1928. The Committee submitted its report on May 7, 1929. Differing fundamentally with the Committee, Dr. Ambedkar submitted a separate exhaustive report bulkier than that of the Committee to the Commission on May 17, 1929. The report

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Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

(Continue from page 3)

contained his own views and recommendations on various constitutional, administrative and functional aspects of the Government. He also submitted separate Statements concerning the state of education of the Depressed Classes in the Bombay Presidency, and proposed safeguards for the protection of their interests. He recorded his evidence also before the Commission. He preferred Joint Electorates with adult franchise as a better option under the then prevalent conditions. Opposing the demand for separation of Karnataka from the Bombay Presidency, the patriot in Dr. Ambedkar declared: "The most vital need of the day is to create among the mass of the people the sense of common nationality, the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindu, Mohammedans or Sindhis and Kanarees afterwards, but that they are Indians first and the Indians last." Viewed in the context of principles, theories and personalities then prevailing, his report was as rationalistic as it was patriotic. It derived spontaneous eulogy from his inveterate foes, obstinate critics and the hostile press. He was found overnight to be a great politician, a great patriot, a diamond in the abysmal coal-mine of the Untouchables and a statesman of rare gift. Like a meteor and a mentor, he emerged as one of the great political minds of his generation, says his biographer, Dhananjay Keer (BAWS, Vol. 2, pp. 315-489, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 64-68 and Keer, pp. 122, 123).

First Round Table Conference (12 November 1930 - 19 January 1931)

The First Round Table Conference consisting of the representatives of India, the British Government and the British Political Parties was convened in London from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931 to frame a constitution for India. Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan represented the Depressed Classes. The Congress Party boycotted the Conference as its demand was for the Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution. The Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald was unanimously elected the Chairman of the Round Table Conference. Dr. Ambedkar was appointed a member of eight out of nine sub-committees constituted to accomplish work of the Conference (He was inducted in the ninth Committee i.e. Federal structure Committee in the second Conference, which was vitally connected with the drafting of the new Constitution for India). In his bold, candid and historic speech delivered in the Conference on 20th November, he strongly pleaded for Separate Electorates, special rights and safeguards for his people saying depressed by the Government, suppressed by the Hindu and disregarded by the Muslim, they were left in a most intolerable position of utter helplessness to which there was no parallel. The speech was rated by the Press as one of the finest bits of oratory and the best in the whole proceedings of the Conference. The result was that the world came to know for the first time that the fate of the Untouchables in India was worse than

that of the Negroes in America. He said their problem was essentially a political one as its solution lay in their political empowerment which was possibly through the Government of, by and for the people. This was for the first time that someone talked of the people's Government in India. A Memorandum titled "A Scheme of Political Safeguards for the protection of the Depressed Classes in the Future Constitution of selfgoverning India" containing irreducible minimum demands was submitted by him to the Minorities Sub-Committee for being included in the future constitution of India. The basic principles of the form of the Government and the Constitution were settled in the Conference and it was



adjourned on January 19, 1931 for the Second Conference (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 71-101; Vol. 9, pp. 41-52; Vol. 2, pp. 503-598; Keer, pp. 147-158).

Second Round Table Conference (7th September - 31st December 1931)

The second Round Table Conference was joined by the Congress Party with Gandhi as its sole representative. The main contentious and ticklish issue was the communal problem coming in the way of smooth passage to the agreed Constitution. A meeting between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar was held at Bombay on 14th August 1931 before going for the Conference. It was the first face to face meeting of the two great leaders. Gandhi, though, claimed to be a fighter against the Untouchability, was not prepared to touch the Varna system though he termed Dr. Ambedkar as a patriot of sterling worth. He made it clear that he was not in favor of regarding the Untouchables as a separate entity for political purposes. As they were being treated worse than cats and dogs in the Hindu society and wherein they could not get water to drink, Dr. Ambedkar wanted them to be recognized as a distinct separate entity for political safeguards like Separate Electorates as already granted to the Muslims, Sikhs and others. The meeting, therefore, ended on discordant note in a grim atmosphere sounding the beginning of a war between the two great leaders (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 51-55).

The main work of the Second Round Table Conference was to be done in the Minorities Committee and Federal Structure Committee. Since Gandhi was not present in the first

Round Table Conference, Dr. Ambedkar managed to speak before him in the plenary session so that he could be warned about the land of lies, and he might know what he should say and what he should not. In his speech of an hour and half - probably one of the largest of the speeches that he made in that country, Dr. Ambedkar exposed the whole business and let Gandhi know the prevailing condition. Opening his speech in the plenary session with the sentence "My heart is with Dr. Ambedkar but my head is not with him", Gandhi counteracted everything Dr. Ambedkar had suggested in his speech. In his speech made in the Federal Structure Committee on September 15, 1931, Gandhi claimed that as

the sole representative of the Congress he was the sole representative of the Indian nation. The next day he expressed his views that the Round Table Conference delegates were not the chosen ones of the nation but of the British Government. Referring to the problem of special representation claimed by different communities including the Depressed Classes, he said that the Congress had reconciled itself to the special treatment of the Hindu-Sikh-Muslim tangle for sound historical reasons but it would not extend that doctrine in any shape or form. He said he had not yet quite grasped what Dr. Ambedkar had to say, but the Congress would share the onus with him of representing the interests of the Untouchables as their interests were as dear to it as the interests of any other body or individual throughout the length and breadth of India, therefore, he would most strongly resist any further special representation. Dr. Ambedkar observed that it was nothing but a declaration of war by Gandhi and the Congress against the Untouchables (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, pp. 109-111, Vol. 17, Pt.3, pp. 327,328, Keer, pp.171-173).

Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan submitted a supplementary Memorandum on the claims of the Depressed Classes for Special Representation in which it was suggested that nomenclature 'Depressed Classes' should be changed to "Non-Caste Hindus", "Protestant Hindus", or "Non-Conformist Hindus" or some such designation as the nomenclature "Depressed Classes" was degrading and contemptuous. On the eve of commencement of the Minorities Commit-

tee's session on September 28, 1931, an interview was fixed between Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi at the residence of Sarojini Naidu by Gandhi's son Devdas. Gandhi did not open his mind and said that he would consent to Dr. Ambedkar's demands if others agreed. When the meeting of the Minority Committee commenced, Sir Aga Khan, Nawab of Bhopal sought the adjournment on the ground that Mahatma Gandhi was going to meet the Muslim delegates that night to resolve the communal tangle amicably. Dr. Ambedkar made it clear that he had already presented the case of the Depressed Classes to the Minorities Sub Committee and that those who were negotiating ought to understand that they were not plenipotentiaries at all; that whatever might be the representative character of Mr. Gandhi or the Congress, they certainly were not in a position to bind them. He asserted that if the Depressed Classes were not going to be recognized in the future Constitution of India, he would neither join the Committee nor wholeheartedly support the adjournment. The meeting between Gandhi and the Muslim delegates proved to be a failure. On October 1, Mahatma Gandhi asked for another adjournment of the Minority Community's session for a week so as to hold informal conference of the delegates of all interests with a view to arrive at an agreed solution. But the weeklong discussions also ended in fiasco. Learning that others particularly the Muslims were going to support Dr. Ambedkar's demands, Gandhi resorted to intrigue. He devised a scheme to buy out the Muslims by acceding to their fourteen demands, which had already been rejected by him and the Congress. An agreement titled 'Gandhi-Muslim Pact' was also drafted in this regard. He went secretly to Sir Agha Khan with a copy of the Holy Koran in his hand and asked him to withdraw his support to Dr. Ambedkar, but he refused to do so (BAWS Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp.111-113, 123, Vol. 9, pp. 71-74, and Vol. 17, Pt. 3, p. 74).

On 8th October 1931, Gandhi announced his utter failure to secure an agreed solution of the communal question through informal conversations saying that the causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian Delegation, and that they were almost all not the elected representatives of their parties or groups, nor were those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution. He, therefore, moved an adjournment of the meeting sine die and proposed that the fundamentals of the Constitution be hammered in to shape as quickly as might be. Dr. Ambedkar did not agree to his proposal. He accused Gandhi of a breach of understanding according to which it was agreed the previous night that none of the delegates was to make any speech or any comment that would cause exasperation. But Gandhi started casting reflections upon the representatives of different communities. Dr. Ambedkar said if the Depressed Classes were given a chance to elect their representatives for the Conference, he would

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Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

(Continue from page 4)

have undoubtedly found a place in the Conference. He showed telegrams received from his people from all over the country supporting the stand taken by him. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia led the campaign in Punjab in support of Dr. Ambedkar's stand, and caused a large number of telegrams sent to the British Prime Minister in this regard. Dr. Ambedkar said that the Depressed Classes were not anxious about the transfer of power under the existing circumstances, but if the Government wanted to transfer the power it should be shared by all communities in their respective proportions. He observed with his caustic ruthlessness about Gandhi's conduct: *"To say in public, I will agree if all others agree, and then to set out to work in private to prevent others from so agreeing by buying off those who are willing to agree, is, in our opinion, a piece of conduct unbecoming of a Mahatma and to be expected only from an inveterate opponent of the Depressed Classes. Mr. Gandhi is not only not playing the part of a friend of the Depressed Classes, but he is not even playing the part of an honest foe"*. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhi's partiality, discriminating conduct, equivocal manner of dealing, absolute disregard for other representatives and insults inflicted on them stood in the way of solution to the problems. Gandhi reacted by saying that he would resist the demand of untouchables with his life. Dr. Ambedkar observed that it appeared as if the main purpose of Gandhi to attend the Conference was to oppose the demand of the Untouchables for Separate Electorate. Indian national press let loose a campaign of unbridled ferocity against Dr. Ambedkar for his stand taken in the Conference. He was represented as a devil, traitor, and a stooge of the British Government. The anger of some people went so high that they talked of murdering him. But nothing deterred him from his noble mission.

Finding no unanimous solution to the Minorities problem, the British Premier asked all the members of the Minorities Committee to sign a requisition authorizing him to settle the communal problem and pledge themselves to accept his decision. Gandhi signed this pledge along with other members. But Dr. Ambedkar did not sign as he believed in the justice of his demands. The Prime Minister adjourned the Conference on December 1 (BAWS, Vol.2, pp.659- 663, Vol.17, Pt. 1, pp.113-119, 124, Vol. 9, p. 70, Keer, 176,177, 183, 186-187 and Swaroop Chander Bouddh, Shere Punjab Babu Mangu Ram, pp. 67, 68).

Having been disgusted with the Round Table Conference Gandhi was the first delegate to return to India. He reached Bombay on December 28, 1931 to the black-flag welcome by the people of the Depressed Classes. He was arrested on January 4, 1932 on account of statement wherein he had threatened to revive his campaign of Civil Disobedience. Though in jail, not Swaraj but Untouchables were on his brain. He feared that notwithstanding his threat to resist it with his life, the Prime Min-

ister as a sole arbitrator might accept the claims of the Untouchables. Long before any decision was given by the Prime Minister, he addressed a letter from jail on 11th March 1932 to Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, reminding him of his opposition to the claim of the Untouchables. He said that his vow to resist with his life the grant of Separate Electorates to the Depressed Classes was the call of his conscience which he dared not disobey. According to him, the Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes was harmful for them because they were dependant on the Caste Hindus. It was harmful for the Hinduism as it would simply vivisect and disturb it. But in his obsession against the Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes, he did not care that he was a signatory to the pledge given to the



Prime minister to accept his verdict (BAWS, Vol. 9, p. 77-79, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, p. 137 and Keer, pp.191, 192).

Lothian Franchise Committee

The Lothian Franchise Committee was appointed in December 1931 by the Prime Minister to devise a system of franchise in such a manner so that no important section of the community should lack the means of expressing its needs and opinions. It had a special task to investigate into the demands for a Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes to facilitate decision on the issue. Dr. Ambedkar was one of the members of the Committee. He prepared a set of answers to the questionnaire issued by the Committee and the same was circulated among various individual members and mushroom associations of the Depressed Classes. The answer was that in every territorial Constituency the number of Depressed Classes' voters was much too small to win a seat by them under the Joint Electorate system. Owing to social prejudices no voter of higher caste would vote for them. On the other hand owing to economic dependence on the higher castes and the religious and social influence of the higher castes they may be led to vote for a high caste candidate as against their own candidates. To the question of total population of the Untouchables, the Hindu witnesses recorded false statements saying that the Untouchables in their Province were infinitesimally small, and many witnesses even denied their existence. The false statements were given because the exist-

tence of the Untouchables was detrimental to their interest. All the Depressed Classes' leaders supported the scheme of Separate Electorates. A delegation of twenty members of the Adi Dharmis led by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia in Punjab appeared before the Committee and presented a memorandum in a procession of about one lakh Adi Dharmi followers in support of their demand for Separate Electorates. The Franchise Committee finished its business on May 1, 1932. Differing with the Hindu members of the Committee, Dr. Ambedkar submitted a separate note to the Committee. His proposal that the term 'Depressed Classes' should be applied to the Untouchables was accepted and included in the report of the Committee. In the meantime, Dr. Ambedkar went to England on May 26, 1932 and saw the Prime Min-

a general constituency. The Special Depressed Classes' Constituencies would come to an end after 20 years if not abolished earlier. It was made clear by the Government that it would not entertain any representation seeking modification of the award if it was not supported by all the affected parties. It was an historical victory for the Depressed Classes won by Dr. Ambedkar with his untiring efforts, dogged determination and invincible spirit. It was for the first time in the history of the land that deprived and marginalized people were empowered to elect their own representatives and the law makers. However, in a statement issued by him on 23rd August, Dr. Ambedkar said that the Award had ruthlessly scaled down their representation in the Provincial Legislatures to quite insignificance proportions creating positive grievances among his people. He made it clear that such injustice would make them averse to the acceptance of the Award (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, pp. 133-136, Vol. 9, pp. 80-82 and Keer, pp. 204, 205).

Gandhi's fast unto death against the Communal Award Finding his threat having failed, Gandhi first tried to get the terms of the Award revised. Accordingly, he addressed a letter to the Prime Minister on 18th August 1932 in which he said that he was left with no option except to execute his vow to undertake a perpetual fast unto death from the noon of 20th September next. He said that the fast would cease only if the British Government revised its decision and withdrew the Communal Award. Despite the Premier clarifying all his doubts and reminding him of his being signatory to the requisition, Gandhi decided to carry out his threat of fast unto death in his letter of 9th September 1932 to the Prime Minister. He said that in the establishment of Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes he sensed the injection of poison that was calculated to destroy Hinduism and do no good whatever to them. He had, therefore, been compelled reluctantly to adhere to the decision of going on fast unto death as already conveyed. In a statement issued on 11th September 1932, Dr. Ambedkar reiterated his conviction that Separate Electorates were in the interest of the Depressed Classes and repeated that Mahatma Gandhi must first put forward his proposals to enable him then to play his own cards. Declaring Gandhi's fast as a political stunt, he said that he did not care such political stunts. He reiterated that his decision stood and if Gandhi wanted to fight with his life for the interests of the Hindu Community the Depressed Classes would also be forced to fight with their lives to safeguard their interests. In his letter dated 15th September 1932, addressed to the Government of Bombay, Gandhi said that the Depressed Classes' question being predominantly a religious matter, he regarded it as specially his own by reason of life-long concentration on it (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 137-141 and Vol. 9, pp. 82-87).

Gandhi's announcement threw the country into a state of
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ister, all Cabinet Ministers and every big official, and pleaded the case of Separate Electorates and other safeguards to his people with heart and soul and presented to the British Cabinet twenty two typed pages representation in this regard (BAWS, Vol. 9, pp.74-75, Keer, p. 198, 202-204, BAWS, Vol.17, Pt. 1, p.131, Swaroop Chander Bouddh, Shere Punjab Babu Mangu Ram, pp. 56-58).

Announcement of the Communal Award - Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes

In the statement made by the Prime Minister on the conclusion of the Second Round Table Conference on 1st December 1931, it was made plain that the communities in India were unable to reach a settlement acceptable to all the parties on the communal questions which the Conference had failed to solve, the Government was determined that India's constitutional advancement should not on that account be frustrated, and that they would remove this obstacle by devising and applying themselves a provisional scheme. Accordingly, the Prime Minister announced his decision on the communal question on 17th August 1932 granting Separate Electorates to the Depressed Classes. According to the decision, known as the 'Communal Award', the Depressed Classes were granted 78 separate seats in the Provincial Legislatures to be filled by election from special constituencies in which only their electorally qualified members would be entitled to vote. They would also be qualified to vote in

Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

(Continue from page 5)

consternation; not because the caste-Hindus and their leaders felt ashamed of their cruelty to the Depressed Classes, but because the life of their political hero was at stake. Naturally all eyes turned to Ambedkar as a man of the moment. He now became the Cynosure of the whole country. In a statement issued to the Press on the eve of the conference of the Hindu leaders proposed for 19th September 1932, Dr. Ambedkar said he was willing to consider everything but would not allow the rights of the Depressed Classes to be curtailed in any way. It passed his comprehension why Gandhi should stake his life on an issue which he had declared at the Round Table Conference to be one of a comparatively small importance - an appendix to the book of India's Constitution and not the main chapter. It was also a painful surprise for him that Mr. Gandhi should single out Special Representation to the Depressed Classes as an excuse for his self immolation. The consequences of the Separate Electorates to the Depressed Classes expressed by Gandhi were purely imaginary. If the nation was not going to be split up by Separate Electorates to the Muslims, Sikhs and others, the Hindu society could not be said to be split up if the Depressed Classes were given Separate Electorates. Many had felt that if there was any class which deserved to be given the special political rights to protect against the tyranny of the majority it was the Depressed Classes as they were not in a position to sustain themselves in the struggle for existence. The religion to which they were tied, instead of providing for them an honorable place branded them as lepers not fit for ordinary intercourse. A well-wisher of the Depressed Classes would have fought tooth and nail for securing to them the needed political power in the Constitution for their liberation and uplift, but instead of doing that Mr. Gandhi staked his life to undo that what little they had got under the Communal Award. He pointed out that in the light of his past experience he could not accept the assurances of Mahatma that he and his Congress would do the needful for the Depressed Classes. He said, "The Mahatma is not an immortal person. There have been many Mahatmas in India whose sole object was to remove Untouchability and to elevate and absorb the Depressed Classes, but every one of them has failed in his mission. Mahatmas have come and Mahatmas have gone. But the Untouchables have remained as Untouchables." He clarified that he was prepared to consider the proposals of the Mahatma believing that he would not drive him to the necessity of making a choice between his life and the rights of his people. For he could never consent to deliver his people bound hand and foot to the Caste Hindus for generations to come. A furious campaign was launched against Dr. Ambedkar and he was again called a monster, a traitor and a hireling (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, pp. 140-145, 148-150, Vol.9, pp. 311-317 and Keer, p. 205, 206).

A Conference of the Hindu leaders was held on 19th September under the chairmanship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to find an acceptable solution. It was attended by the leading Hindu leaders and the leaders of the Depressed Classes such as Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Solanki, Shrivartkar, P. Balu, Rajendra Prasaad, C. Rajgopalachari, Pandit Kuzaru, Swami Satyanand, G.A.Gavai, Sir Chunnilal, Dr. Deshmukh, Seth Birla, Dr. Savarkar, Kamla Nehru and others. Speaking in the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar stated in a candid manner that Mahatma Gandhi should have put up some concrete alternative proposal before staking his life. Unless it was known as to what was in his mind, the repetitive deliberations were not going to yield any result. He made it clear that he would not sacrifice the rightful de-



mands of his people just in order to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Since there was no alternative proposal from Mahatma Gandhi the Conference adjourned for the day (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, pp, 150 and 151).

Gandhi begins epic fast unto death – Tuesday the 20th September 1932

Gandhi started his fast unto death on September 20, 1932 at 12 O'clock noon. A Committee of the high Caste Hindus comprising of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Madan Mohan Malviya, Jayakar and Mathurdas Wassenji was formed to negotiate in the matter. Dr. Ambedkar was invited for the meeting held on 20th September 1932. Speaking in the meeting, he said that in the peaceful negotiations he appeared to be acting as villain for the protection of just demands of his people but he was willing to suffer to any extent in order to get the just demands of his people fulfilled. He asserted: "I shall not deter from my pious duty, and betray the just and legitimate interests of my people even if you hang me on the nearest lamp-post in the street. I don't care even if a hundred Mahatmas are sacrificed. Mahatmas are not immortal creatures." He said although Mr. Gandhi had declared a fast unto death, he did not want to die. He wanted Mahatma Gandhi to postpone his fast for 10-12 days to allow time to think over his proposals. But Gandhi remained adamant. In Punjab, Babu Mangu Ram went on fast unto death against Gandhi's fast (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, pp.152,153, Swaroop Chander Boudh, Shere Punjab Babu Mangu

Ram, p. 68).

Hectic activities to save Gandhi's life

From 19th September to 25th September hectic meetings, parleys and conferences took place between the Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar and his team to work out an agreeable formula to save Gandhi's life. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru evolved a scheme of primary and secondary elections for the reserved seats. According to it the Depressed Classes themselves were to select for every seat a panel of not less than three candidates and then out of those three chosen candidates one was to be selected by the Joint Electorates of the Caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes. After a lengthy discussion, Dr. Ambedkar said that there could be a settlement provided the additional concessions in regard to the

Award were given to make good the loss which would be caused due to giving up the Award. Accordingly a Committee consisting of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Barrister Jayakar, Pandit Malviya, Mathurdas Wassenji and Dr. Ambedkar was formed to evolve an agreeable scheme. In a charter of demands prepared and put up to the Committee by Dr. Ambedkar, he claimed 197 specific seats for the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Legislatures. The method of election should be by Joint Electorates and Reserved Seats, provided that for the first ten years in 56 single constituencies a primary election by the voters of the Depressed Classes should be held for electing a panel of two persons who thereafter should contest on behalf of the Depressed Classes in the joint electorate. After the first ten years the system of Primary Election should cease to be operative and all seats should continue to be filled by direct election on the system of Joint Electorates and Reserved Seats. This system should continue for further period of 15 years after which the matter should be settled on the basis of referendum by the voters of the Depressed Classes. He further demanded adult suffrage for the Depressed Classes, their right to Special Representation in both the houses of the Central Legislature, all Municipalities, Local Boards, District and Taluka, Village Unions, School Boards of Panchayats and Local Bodies on a population ratio. They should also be guaranteed appointments in all the Central and Local Public Services ac-

ording to their population ratio as a minimum. In every Province out of the Education Grant a sum equivalent to the population ratio of the Depressed Classes in that province should be earmarked as a minimum for providing educational facilities to them. There should be a provision in the Constitution allowing the Depressed Classes the right of Appeal to the Governor and the Viceroy for any neglect of their interest (BAWS, Vol.17, Pt.1, pp.150-155).

The demands put up by Dr. Ambedkar were accepted by and large by the Hindu leaders. They apprised Mahatma Gandhi of the scheme. In response to the message received from Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar accompanied by the Hindu leaders and Dr. Solanki met him in Yervada Jail (Poona) on 22nd September. He insisted on compensation in lieu of the Communal Award. Gandhi made an alluring offer as a present from him by suggesting that the panel system should be extended to all the seats instead of the limited seats proposed by Dr. Ambedkar. But he was in favor of 5 years period for the panel system whereas Dr. Ambedkar wanted it to be for 10 years and insisted that the question of reserved seats should be settled by referendum of the Depressed Classes at the end of 15 years after the panel period. In the meanwhile Gandhi's health took a serious turn. His son, Devdas, described the condition of his father to Dr. Ambedkar with tears in his eyes on 23rd September and entreated him to save his father by not pressing for referendum. Dr. Ambedkar with selected leaders saw Gandhi in the jail at 9 P.M. Gandhi agreed to referendum after 5 years of the Panel System. Meanwhile showers of letters threatening Dr. Ambedkar's life started pouring. Murderous looks were cast at him in the street, and some of the leaders insanely reviled him behind his back. A secret plan to kill him by some youth from the touchable classes of Poona was reported in the Press. The overall atmosphere became highly surcharged and there was a grave threat to the life and property of the Untouchables at the hands of violent Hindu crowds. It was also being said that if Dr. Ambedkar was removed from the scene, things would settle and Gandhi's life would be saved. Dr. Ambedkar laughed at it as he was not afraid of such a death. However, the local Untouchable community was worried about the safety of its mentor and savior. The situation would be grave even if a slightest injury happened to him. Thousands of the Untouchable youth were ready to make any sacrifice for their savior and mentor (BAWS, Vol.17, Pt.1, pp.156-163).

Poona Pact Signed

Gandhi saved from sure death

Discussions were resumed on Saturday morning, the 24th September. A meeting between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar again took place to discuss further the matter of seats and referendum. Gandhi told Dr. Ambedkar that his logic was irrefutable; but he said mere statutory guarantee would not root out the disease of untouchability.

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Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

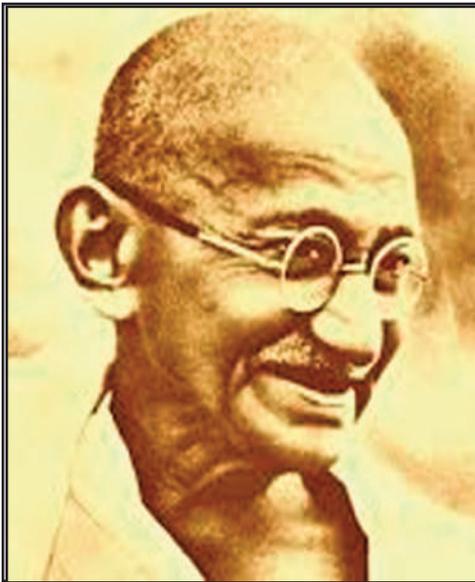
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According to him the caste system was not a bad system. He, therefore, entreated him to give a last chance to Hinduism to make a voluntary expiation for its sinful past and added that there would be a referendum but after the period of five years only. "Five years or my life," said he with a tone of finality. An agreement was ultimately arrived at after lot of hectic discussions and haggling by both the parties. The question of the total number of seats was amicably resolved. A panel of four was fixed for election on the basis of Joint Electorates instead of two proposed by the Dr. Ambedkar and five by Gandhi. The condition of referendum was dropped altogether.

Amidst an atmosphere of joviality, freshness and chat, the agreement was signed at 5 P.M. on Saturday, 24th September which went down in history as the 'Poona Pact'. Some of the members signed the agreement on 25th September. The Pact was signed by Madan Mohan Malviya and other Hindu leaders on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar and others on behalf of the Depressed Classes. In all 41 members signed the Pact. While signing the Pact, Rajagopalachari was so much overjoyed that he exchanged his fountain-pen with Dr. Ambedkar. The Pact was ratified on 25th September at Bombay. Speaking on the occasion to a thunderous applause, Dr. Ambedkar declared that no man a few days ago was placed in a greater dilemma than he was. There was the life of the greatest man in India to be saved and there was the problem for him to safeguard the interest of the community which he was trying to do at the Round Table Conference. There was before him the duty, which he owed as a part of common humanity to save Gandhi from sure death. He responded to the call of humanity, and saved the life of Mr. Gandhi by agreeing to alter the Communal Award in a manner satisfactory to him. He regretted that if Gandhi had shown the same consideration to his point of view at the Round Table Conference, it would not have been necessary for him to go through the ordeal of fast. He said that he and his people would stand by the agreement, and hoped and trusted that the Hindus on their side would look upon the Poona Pact as sacrosanct and work in an honorable spirit. The Hindu leaders promised to abide by the Pact. But Dr. Ambedkar confessed that he remained unconvinced that the Separate Electorates for the Depressed Classes were injurious to the national interest. He did not believe that Joint Electorates were going to be the final solution for the problems of absorbing the Depressed Classes in the Hindu Community. It required more than any political arrangement to make it possible for the Depressed Classes not only to be the part and parcel of the Hindu community, but also to occupy an honorable position of equality of status in the community.

The contents of the Pact were immediately cabled to the British Cabinet and communicated to others concerned. The British Government

announced on September 26, 1932 that it would recommend to Parliament the endorsement of the Poona Pact. In the evening prayers were said in the prison yard. Kasturba then handed Gandhi orange juice, and Gandhi broke his fast in the evening of 26 September amidst a gathering of some two hundred disciples and admirers such as poet Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel and Swarup Rani Nehru (Jawahar Lal Nehru's mother) being conspicuous. Thus, came to an end the epic fast of Mahatma Gandhi. The Poona Pact closed an epoch but not the war which



had been declared at Manibhuvan on August 14, 1931. Babu Mangu Ram also broke his fast at the behest of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, P. 150 - 153, 165-176, 465, Keer, pp. 214, 215, 227 and Swaroop Chander Bouddh, Shere Punjab Babu Mangu Ram, p. 69).

Text of the Poona pact

- (1) There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of the General seats in the Provincial Legislatures as follows: Madras 30; Bombay with Sind 15; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central Province 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30 and United Provinces 20; Total 148 (The number was raised to 151 subsequently).
- (2) Elections to these seats would be by Joint Electorate subject, however, to the following procedure: All the members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll in a constituency would form an electoral college to elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats, by the method of the single vote; the four getting the highest number of votes in such Primary election, would be candidates for election by the General Electorate.
- (3) Representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislatures shall likewise be on the principle of Joint Electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in Clause 2 above for their representation in the Provincial Legislatures.
- (4) In the Central Legislature, 18% of seats allotted to the General Electorate for British India in the said legislature would be reserved for the Depressed Classes.
- (5) The system of primary election to a panel of Candidates for election to

the Central and Provincial Legislatures, as hereinbefore mentioned, shall come to an end after the first ten years, unless terminated sooner by mutual agreement under the provision of Clause 6 below.

(6) The system of representation of the Depressed Classes by reserved seats in the Provincial and Central Legislatures as provided for in Clauses 1 and 4 shall continue until determined by mutual agreement between the communities concerned in the settlement.

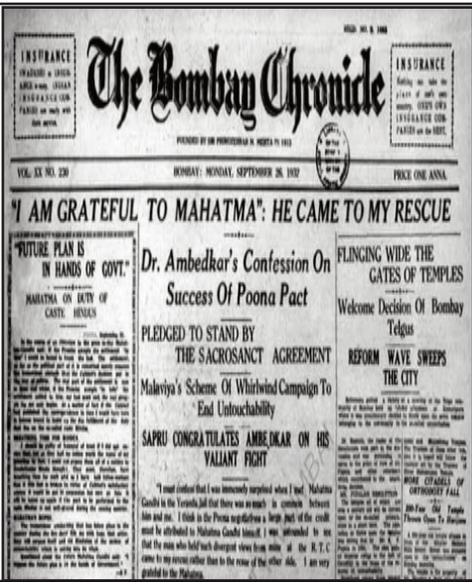
(7) Franchise for the Central and Provincial Legislatures for the De-

election of the caste Hindu candidates, the Untouchables would have been in a position to determine, if not to dictate, the issue of the General Election. No Caste Hindu candidate could have dared to neglect the Untouchables in his constituency or be hostile to their interest if he was made dependent on the votes of the Untouchables. If the Communal Award system of double voting had remained the Untouchables would have had a few seats less but every other member would have been a member for them (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, p. 177 and Vol. 9, p. 90).

Although the Hindus did not celebrate the Poona Pact, they did not like it. Throughout the commotion to save Mr. Gandhi's life there was a definite current of conscious feeling that the cost of saving his life may be great. But they had no courage to reject the Pact. Almost all Hindu leaders who had ratified it now turned out to be its opponents. Tagore, who had come to Poona on the day following the Poona Pact and who had buried his face in the clothes on Gandhi's breast, was now singing a different tune. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders started to feel the necessity of advocating an amendment of the Pact as regards the Punjab where they said no Depressed Classes problem existed. Bengal Legislative Council passed a resolution asking for the annulment of the Poona Pact on the ground that the Bengal Hindu leaders were not party to the Pact. Disliked by the Hindus, disfavored by the Depressed Classes, the Poona Pact was given recognition by both parties and was embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, p. 178, Vol.9, pp.90, 91 and Keer, pp. 240, 241).

The signing of the Poona Pact was followed by the appointment of the Hammond Committee to demarcate constituencies, to fix the number of seats for each constituency and settle the system of voting for the legislatures to be set up under the new Constitution. In carrying out its functions, the Committee had to take into account the terms of the Poona Pact and the special sort of electoral plan agreed upon to meet the needs of the Untouchables. Unfortunately, the Poona Pact having been concluded in a hurry had left many things undefined. The most important were two namely: (1) Does the 'panel of four' to be elected at the primary election implies four as a maximum or a minimum? (2) What was intended to be the methods of voting in the final election? It was contended on behalf of the Hindus that the panel of four was intended to be a minimum and if four candidates were not forthcoming, the election to the reserved seat could not take place and the seat would remain vacant and the Untouchables should go without representation. But Dr. Ambedkar contended that four meant "not more than four" and it did not mean 'not less than four'. On the question of voting, the Hindus contended that the compulsory distributive vote was the most appropriate whereas Dr. Ambedkar considered the cumulative system proper to be

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pressed Classes would be as indicated in the Lothian Committee Report.

(8) There shall be no disabilities attaching to anyone on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Class in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to the Public Services. Every endeavor shall be made to secure fair representation of the Depressed Classes in these respects, subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to the Public Services.

(9) In every Province out of the educational grant, an adequate sum shall be earmarked for providing educational facilities to the Members of the Depressed Classes. The terms of the Pact were accepted by Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar, and given effect to by the Government by embodying them in the Government of India Act 1935 (BAWS, Vol.1, pp. 429, 430, Vol. 9, pp. 88-89 and Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 166, 167)

Impact of the Poona Pact

Dr. Ambedkar said though Poona Pact had given the Depressed Classes 148 seats against 78 under the Communal Award but to conclude from this that the Pact gave them more than what was given by the Award was to ignore what the Award had in fact given. The Award had given the Untouchables two benefits; (i) a fixed quota of seats to be elected by Separate Electorate from amongst them; (ii) double vote. The Poona pact took away these benefits. The increase in seats could never be deemed to be a compensation for the loss of the double vote.

The second vote given by the Communal Award was a priceless privilege. Its value as a political weapon was beyond reckoning. The voting strength of the Untouchables in each constituency was one to ten. With that voting strength free to be used in the

Poona Pact - Rind thrown in the face of the Untouchables

(Continue from page 7)

introduced. Hammond Committee accepted the contention of Dr. Ambedkar. The object of the Hindus in demanding four candidates as the minimum was to place the Hindus in a position to capture the seat for an election of such a representative of the Untouchable candidate who would be their nominee and be their most willing tool. The object of insisting upon the system of compulsory distributive vote was to enable the Hindus to capture the seats reserved for the Untouchables. Therefore, it would appear that the Poona Pact was only the first blow inflicted on the Untouchables and that the Hindus who disliked it were bent on inflicting other blows on opportune occasion. The above two contentions of the Hindus furnished the best evidence of their conspiracy the object of which was to make the Poona Pact, as it could not be repudiated, of no benefit to the Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar brought out that the Congress did not hesitate to play a full, might and malevolent part in the elections by putting up Untouchable candidates on Congress ticket pledged to Congress program for seats reserved for the Untouchables in the first elections to the Provincial Legislatures held in 1937 under the Government of India Act 1935. In order to build up its majority and prove the statement of Mr. Gandhi that the Congress represented the Untouchables and the Untouchables believed in the Congress, the Congress played the trick. With the financial resources of the Congress it made a distinct gain. Out of total 151 reserved seats 78 were captured by the Untouchable candidates who contested on the Congress ticket leaving behind just 73 seats to be filled by true and independent representatives of the Untouchables. Thus, the Untouchables got less than what they were given in the Communal Award. The Congress on the other hand had gained by the Poona Pact and thereby made a handsome profit on its political transaction (BAWS, Vol. 9, pp. 91-95).

When the interim Government was formed in 1937 by the Congress Party, no representation was given to the Untouchables in the Cabinet despite the provisions of the Poona Pact and the Government of India Act 1935 and availability of 78 Untouchable members elected on the Congress ticket. Dr. Ambedkar said that the Congress did not include them in the Cabinet because it was a part of the Congress policy not to admit the right of the Untouchables to be represented in the Cabinet and that this policy had the support of Mr. Gandhi. The inclusion of Mr. Agnibhoj, an Untouchable legislator of Congress Party, in the Cabinet on its re-formation by Dr. Khare, the Prime Minister of Central Provinces, was considered an act of indiscipline on his part by Mr. Gandhi. Dr. Khare said it was told to him by Mr. Gandhi that it was wrong on his part to have raised such aspirations and ambitions in the Untouchables, and that it was such an act of bad judgment that he (Gandhi) would never for-

give him. It was evidenced in such and many other cases that Mr. Gandhi and the Congress were determined in principle not to recognize the right of the Untouchables to be represented in the Cabinet (BAWS, Vol. 9, pp. 98-100).

The policy adopted by the Congress Parliamentary Board in selecting candidates for election was another example which the Congress perpetrated in order to nullify the Poona Pact. Communal principle played a very important part in it. In a constituency where there were two candidates to choose from, the Congress chose the one who belonged to a caste which was more numerous. A wealthier candidate was often preferred to a poor and a better qualified one. The object was to adopt a safe candidate who would pull through. But



there were other principles adopted which revealed a deep-seated plot. Generally the most highly educated candidates from the Brahmin and allied communities, moderately educated from the Non-Brahmins and just about literates from the Untouchables were selected. This system was designed to allow none but the Brahmins and allied castes to form the main part of the ministry and to secure for them the support of a docile unintelligent crowd of Non-Brahmins and Untouchables who by their intellectual attainments could never dream of becoming rivals of the minister-folk but would be content to follow the lead for no other consideration except that of having been raised to the status of members of the legislatures. Mr. Gandhi did not see this aspect of the case when he said that to be a minister the Untouchables aspiring for it must be a qualified person. This scheme of selecting the candidates adopted by the Congress dealt the Untouchables a severe blow by depriving them of Executive power under the cover of there being no qualified men to hold it which it created for itself by clandestine and subterranean means (BAWS, Vol. 9, pp. 100, 101).

The Poona Pact was intended

to devise a method whereby the Scheduled Castes would be able to return representatives of their choice to the Legislature. Every candidate who became successful in the final election owed his success to the votes of Caste Hindus and not of the Scheduled Castes. Comparing the results of the preliminary election with that of the Final election, it was found that the Scheduled Caste candidate who was elected in the Final election was one who had failed in the Primary election (if the Primary election be treated as a Final election and the constituency be treated as a single-member constituency). Owing to the extreme disparity between the voting strength of the Hindus and the Scheduled Castes – disparity which would not disappear even under adult suffrage – a system of joint electorates would not succeed in giving them the chance of returning their true representatives. The Poona Pact completely disfranchised the Scheduled Castes in as much as the candidates whom they rejected in the primary election, which was a true index of their Will, were returned in the final elections by the votes of the Caste Hindus (BAWS, Vol.1, P. 431-432).

Yet another misdeed of the Congress to nullify the Poona pact was to subject the Untouchable Congressmen to the rigors of party discipline. They were completely under the control of the Congress Party Executive. They would not ask a question which it did not like. They could not move a resolution which it did not permit. They could not bring the legislation to which it objected. They could not vote as they chose and could not speak what they felt.

They were there as dumb driven cattle. One of the objects of obtaining representation in the legislature for the Untouchables was to enable them to ventilate their grievances and to obtain redress for their wrongs. The Congress successfully and effectively prevented this from happening (BAWS, Vol. 9, pp. 101, 102).

It is over nine decades that the Poona Pact was signed by Dr. Ambedkar to save the life of Gandhi from sure death, albeit under coercion, on the positive assurance from him and all the Congress leaders that they would abide by the Pact. Dr. Ambedkar believed and trusted that the document would be treated as sacrosanct by them. But both the fast of Gandhi and the Poona Pact in fact proved to be their conspiratorial ploys to deprive the Untouchables of their priceless privilege and empowerment bestowed on them under the Communal Award, and to keep them in perpetual bondage. The elections to the State and Central legislatures held since 1937 are the speaking testimony of this fact. The Untouchables, called Scheduled Castes subsequently, who contested elections against reserved seats on the ticket of the Congress and other Par-

ties won on account of Caste Hindu votes to serve the political designs of their masters against the interests of their own people. Bound hand and foot with the Party discipline, they meekly followed like dumb driven cattle the dictates of their political bosses. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that there were 30 Scheduled Caste members in the Parliament elected on Congress tickets but they never asked any question, never moved any resolution, never submitted a Bill for consideration and never moved any cut motion. Not a single member raised any question in the Parliament about the grievances of the Scheduled Castes (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 418, 432,433).

This situation continues to persist even today. It is not for nothing that Dr. Ambedkar said that the Pact was fraught with mischief, and by its intention and acts the Congress Party and its leaders sucked the juice out of the Poona Pact and threw the rind in the face of the Untouchables (BAWS, Vol.9, p. 102). Instead of proving to be an instrument of uplift, the Poona Pact, thus, has done and is doing a lasting damage to the interests of the down-trodden sections. Dr. Ambedkar himself had fallen victim to the Pact as he was made to suffer humiliating electoral defeat at the hands of his own people in the Parliamentary elections under the system of Joint Electorate and Reserved Seats. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people – the unfortunate deprived and down-trodden sections of the proclaimed culturally and spiritually rich Hindu society continue to reel under the curse of orthodox Hindu mindset camouflaged as Poona Pact. There are 131 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Members in the Parliament (84 SCs and 47 STs) and a large number of their Members in the Legislative Assemblies, who are nothing short of dumb driven cattle. They never opened nor are they opening mouth against perpetual miserable conditions of their people. Had they been the real representatives of their people, the instances of continued injustice, atrocities and discrimination against their people would have been a matter of the past. As the provision for reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes in Parliament and the State Assemblies et al made in the Constitution proved to be rather counterproductive, the Working Committee of the Scheduled Castes Federation presided over by Dr. Ambedkar passed a resolution on 21st August 1955 that it should be done away with. As the ghost of the Poona Pact continues to haunt and impede the true liberation of the marginalized sections even today, the only plausible way to get rid of the monster appears to be a multi-pronged concerted attack on it by the united forces of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes and the liberal elements of other socio-religious groups in the lasting interest of these unfortunate children of the lesser God, and equitable growth and development of the country as a strong nation of one people.

The Aryan race theory is so absurd that it ought to have been dead long ago. But far from being dead, the theory has a considerable hold upon the people.

"What is it that is noteworthy about this book? Undoubtedly the conclusions which I have reached as a result of my investigations. Two questions are raised in this book: (1) Who were the Shudras? and (2) How they came to be the fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan society? My answers to them are summarised below :

(1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race. (2) There was a time when the Aryan society recognized only three Varnas, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

(3) The Shudras did not form a separate Varna. They ranked as part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan society.

(4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.

(5) As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras.

(6) Owing to the denial of Upanayana, the Shudras who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth Varna.

XXX XXX XXX

The Aryan race theory is so absurd that it ought to have been dead long ago. But far from being dead, the theory has a considerable hold upon the people. There are two explanations which account for this phenomenon. The first explanation is to be found in the support which the theory receives from Brahmin scholars. This is a very strange phenomenon. As Hindus, they should ordinarily show a dislike for the Aryan theory with its express avowal of the superiority of the European races over the Asiatic races. But the Brahmin scholar has not only no such aversion but he most willingly hails it. The reasons are obvious. The Brahmin believes in the two-nation theory. He claims to be the representative of the Aryan race and he regards the rest of the Hindus as descendants of the non-Aryans. The theory helps him to establish his kinship with the European races and share their arrogance and their superiority. He likes particularly that part of the theory which makes the Aryan an invader and a conqueror of the non-Aryan native races. For it helps him to maintain and justify his overlordship over the non-Brahmins.

The second explanation why the Aryan race theory is not dead is because of the general insistence by European scholars that the word Varna means colour and the acceptance of that view by a majority of the Brahmin scholars. Indeed, this is the mainstay of the Aryan theory. There is no doubt that as long as this interpretation of the Varna continues to be accepted, the Aryan theory will continue to live. This part of the Aryan theory is therefore very important and

calls for fuller examination. It needs to be examined from three different points of view: (1) Were the European races fair or dark? (2) Were the Indo-Aryans fair? and (3) What is the original meaning of the word Varna ?

XXX XXX XXX

Enough has been said to show how leaky is the Aryan theory expounded by Western scholars and glibly accepted by their Brahmin fellows. Yet, the theory has such a hold on the generality of people that what has been said against it may mean no



more than scotching it. Like the snake it must be killed. It is therefore necessary to pursue the examination of the theory further with a view to expose its hollowness completely. Those who uphold the theory of an Aryan race invading India and conquering the Dasas and Dasyus fail to take note of certain verses in the Rig Veda. These verses are of crucial importance. To build up a theory of an Aryan race marching into India from outside and conquering the non-Aryan native tribes without reference to these verses is an utter futility.

XXX XXX XXX

I have shown what strength there is in the thesis I have presented. I will now proceed to show that the thesis is a valid one. There is one test which I think is generally accepted as the right one by which to appraise the validity of a thesis. It is that a thesis which demands acceptance must not only suggest a solution, but must also show that the solution it proposes answers the riddles which surround the problem which it claims to have solved. It is this test that I propose to apply to my thesis.

Let me begin by listing in one place the riddles of the Shudra. The

following include the most important of them :

(1) The Shudras are alleged to be non-Aryans, hostile to the Aryans, whom the Aryans are said to have conquered and made slaves. How is it then that the rishis of the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda should wish glory to the Shudras and express a desire to be in favour of the Shudras?

(2) The Shudras are said not to have the right to study the Vedas. How is it then that Sudas, a Shudra, was the

Sayana?

(8) If the Shudra had no right to study the Vedas, if he had no right to Upanayana, if he had no right to sacrifice, why was he not given the right to have his Upanayana, to read the Vedas and to perform sacrifice?

(9) The performance of Upanayana of the Shudra, his learning to read the Vedas, his performing the sacrifices, whether they were of any value to the Shudra or not, were certainly occasions of benefit to the Brahmins in as much as it is the Brahmins, who had the monopoly of officiating at ceremonies and of teaching the Vedas. It is the Brahmins who stood to earn large fees by allowing the Shudra the right to Upanayana, the performance of sacrifices and the reading of the Vedas. Why were the Brahmins so determined to deny these concessions to the Shudras, when granting them would have done no harm and would have increased their own earnings?

(10) Even if the Shudra had no right to Upanayana, sacrifices and Vedas, it was open to the Brahmins to concede him these rights. Why were these questions not left to the free will of the individual Brahmins? Why were penalties imposed upon a Brahmin if he did any of these prohibited acts?

How can these riddles be explained? Neither the orthodox Hindu nor the modern scholar has attempted to explain them. Indeed they do not seem to be aware of the fact that such riddles exist. The orthodox Hindu does not bother about them. He is content with the divine explanation contained in the Purusha Sukta that the Shudra was born from the feet of the Purusha. The modern scholar is content with the assumption that the Shudra in his origin is a non-Aryan aboriginal, for whom the Aryan quite naturally prescribed a different code of laws. It is a pity that none of these classes of people have cared to acquaint themselves with the riddles which surround the problem of the Shudra, much less have they thought of suggesting a theory of the origin of the position of the Shudra capable of solving them.

With regard to my thesis it will be seen that it can explain everyone of these riddles. Postulates (1) to (4) explain how the Shudras could be kings and ministers and why the rishis should praise them and desire to be in their good books. Postulates (5) and (6) explain why there was a controversy over the Upanayana of the Shudra, also why the law not only denied the right to the Shudra but imposed penalties upon a Brahmin, helping to make it effective. Indeed there is no riddle which the thesis does not solve. The thesis, if I may say so, is a close and a perfect fit. Few theses can therefore have a better title deed than this.

Source Courtesy:

Select Passages from Who Were The Shudras in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol.7

composer of the hymns of the Rig Veda?

(3) The Shudras are said to have no right to perform sacrifices. How is it that Sudas performed the Ashva-Medha sacrifice? Why does the Satapatha Brahmana treat the Shudra as a sacrificer and give the formula of addressing him?

(4) The Shudras are said not to have the right to Upanayana. If this was so from the very beginning, why should there be a controversy about it? Why should Badari and the Samskara Ganapati say that he has a right to Upanayana?

(5) The Shudra is not permitted to accumulate property. How is it that the Maitrayani and Kathaka Samhitas speak of the Shudras being rich and wealthy?

(6) The Shudra is said to be unfit to become an officer of the State. How is it then that the Mahabharata speaks of Shudras being ministers to kings?

(7) It is said that the duty of the Shudra is to serve, in the capacity of a menial, the three Varnas. How is it then that there were kings among the Shudras as testified by the case of Sudas and other cases mentioned by

Guru Ravidass: Harbinger of Social Harmony

Guru Ravidass, 16th century mystic saint and social reformer of the Bhakti Movement was the harbinger of equality, fraternity and harmoy in the society. The leadership of the main-stream of the society, these days, calls it 'Samrasta'. The great Guru's egalitarian thoughts stood against the birth based caste-system and pleaded for brotherhood as stipulated in his lofty Vani -

Keh Ravidass Khalas Chamara; Jo Ham-Sehri So Meet Hamara

Guru Ravidass was a widely recognized and revered personality of his times not only spiritually but also as a revolutionary social reformer. As a voice of the underdog and discriminated segments of the society on account of the Varna Vibastha, Guru Ravidass resolutely stood against all these inhuman and anti social practices. Guru Ravidass's teachings and philosophy, obviously, got wide spread acceptance and recognition throughout India and proved itself revolutionary to reform the society. His contemporaries like; Guru Nanak, Sant Kabir among others fully supported Guru Ravidass ji who became the flag bearer of egalitarian society with the lofty ideals of democratic socialism as stipulated and propounded in his Vani:

Begumpura Sehar Ka Naon; Dukh Andoh Nahin Jis Ke Thaon

It was a matter of great satisfaction that the Sikh Gurus, fully understanding the social philosophy of Guru Ravidass, thoughtfully, included

his Vani in the Guru Granth Sahib. As such the teachings of the great Guru got further currency and acceptance as a potent voice to reform the society and live a pious life as dignified citizens and good human beings. It is a matter of satisfaction that the very principles of having a healthy society as followed and preached by Guru Ravidass found place in the 'secular, socialist and democratic' constitution of India written under the stewardship of Babasaheb Ambedkar who was greatly impressed by the thoughts and legacy of the great Guru to establish an inclusive society. Babasaheb Ambedkar dedicated one of his books, The Untouchables, to Guru Ravidass and rightly so.

Guru Ravidass clearly laid the foundation of democratic socialism in the present parlance of good governance and said:-

**Aaisa Chahun Raj Mein; Yahan Mile Saban Ko Ann;
Chot- Bade Sab Sam Vashen; Ravidass Rahe Prasan**

Guru Ravidass's message of freedom of thought and expression and also of equitable social order was candidly conveyed in his Vani. It certainly set the ball rolling to establish a just order for the mankind. He fought against dominance and subservience in the society. The revolutionary Guru said-

**Pradheenta Paap Hai; Jan Lyo Re Meet,
Ravidass Dass Pradheen Se Kaun Kare Hai Preet.**

Guru Ravidass was dead against the caste based discrimination prevailing in the society. He said - **Ravidass Janam Ke Karne Hot Na Koi Neech**

It is a matter of gratification to note that, in spite of all odds, our forefathers led by Babasaheb Ambedkar stipulated and codified the lofty ideals of Guru Ravidass and others in the constitution of India to abolish caste system and even provided for 'affirmative' actions in the form of Reservations to the weaker sections of the society. One can safely say that India is on track and has come a long way and perhaps has arrived. But still it has to go a long way to reach. Guru Ravidass ji's message of brotherhood, fraternity and harmony is the only way to go ahead with our 'Tryst with Destiny'. The great Guru's vision is fully conveyed in the poetic assertions of one of the renowned Hindi poets, Maithli Saran Gupt -

Mein Nahin Sandesh Swarag Ka Laiya; Iss Bhutal Ko Hi Swarag Banane Aaiya

I referred to the Samrasta agenda of the main stream of the society in the opening paragraphs. Let me touch the subject with a view to say that Guru Ravidass was the harbinger of Samrasta to transfer the society and bring about a harmonious social order, the first requisite of a cultured and humane society. I have no hesitation in registering my candid support to the lofty idea of Samrasta in my own humble way as I am a firm believer in 'fra-

ternity, harmony and brotherhood' as a humble Ravidassia and an Ambedkarite. We need to come out of the 'lip service' phase and do something concrete to reform the society. The sooner the better. Guru Ravidass ji's teachings and philosophy is as relevant and potent today as it was in the medieval times. India is passing through challenging times with increasing strife and communal tensions all around. If we really intend to transform and reform of our society, we should study and practice the lofty Vani of the great Guru. We are still to do a lot in this regard. I am reminded of Allama Iqbal -

**Iqbal Bada Updeshak Hai; Man Batton Se Moh Leta Hai
Giffar Ka To Yeh Gazi Bana; Kirdar Ka Gazi Ban Na Saka**

With this, I take this opportunity to pay my hearty tributes to the great social reformer, revolutionary Guru and harbinger of a just and equitable social order and also social harmony.

Let us transform India that is Bharat into Begumpura - country and society without sorrow and exploitation as visualized by the Great Guru.



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
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Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Birth of Dalit Movement in Punjab

Prem Kumar 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 Muslim 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 (BSO) 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 deprivation 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 the United States of America (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.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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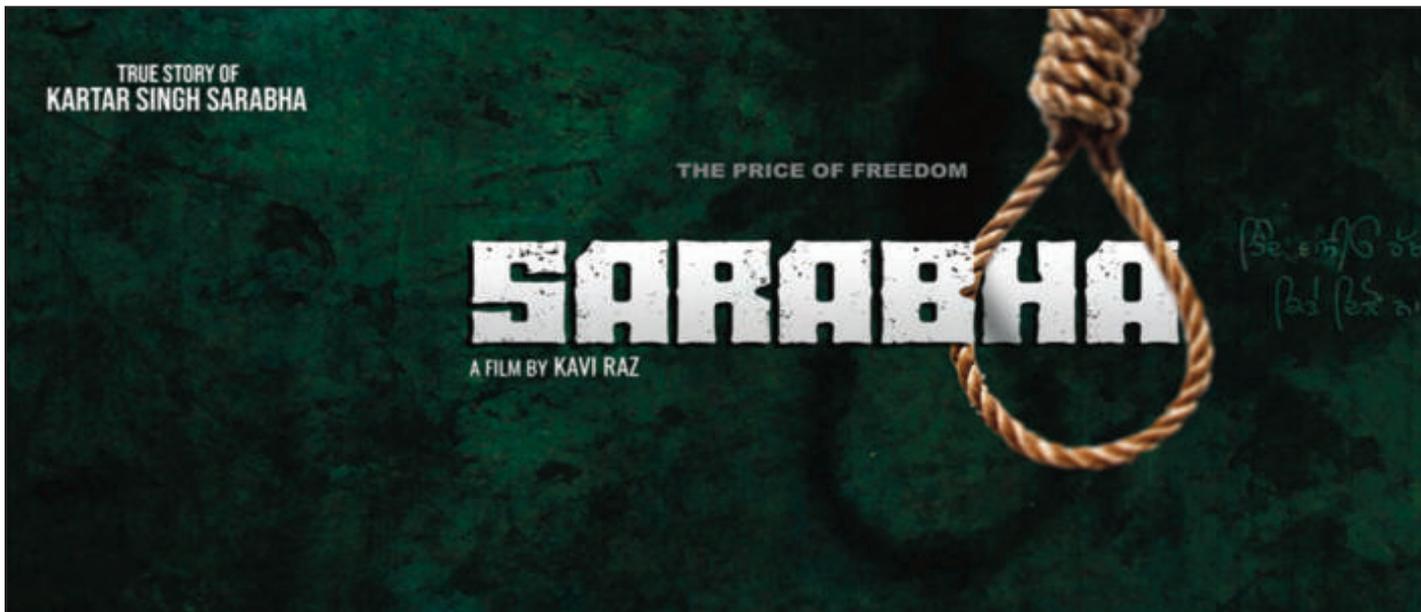
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Kavi Raz

"If you dare to Dream,
Then be ready to Sacrifice.

Sarabha is my Dream,
Sarabha's Dream was Freedom... Our Freedom."

Kavi Raz

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"What is our name? Ghadar."

"What is our work? Ghadar."

"Where will this Ghadar (Revolution) take place?.....In India."

"The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pens and ink." The Ghadar movement was launched in the USA, in the year 1913, in a small milling town of Astoria, Oregon.

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That destiny steered him towards becoming a forceful voice against the British.

He was hanged by the British in Lahore Central Jail at the age of Nineteen years and Two months for his leadership part in the Ghadar Movement.

It was Kartar Singh Sarabha's sacrifice that inspired Shaheed Bhagat Singh to fight for freedom of our motherland.

STARRING

Japtej Singh
(Young Milkha from Bhaag Milkha Bhaag)
Mukul Dev
Kavi Raz
Malkeet Rauni
Mahabir Bhullar
Jaspinder Cheema
Kanwar Garewal
Jasbir Jassi
Malkiat Meet
SONGS BY

Ninja

Kanwar Garewal
Hans Raj Hans
Rummy and Prince Randhawa
Javed Ali
Shahid Mallaya
Dya Singh
SONGS LIST

1. Faqira – Singer Kanwar Grewal - Music Video - Sufi
2. Vaar – Singer Ninja – Music Video – Uplifting, high pitch, Inspiration
3. Mulak Mahi Da Vasda – Javed Ali – Music Video – Qawali
4. Hind Vasyo Rakhna Yaad Sanu – Javed Ali – Music Video – Patriotic, emotional, inspirational
5. Mirza – Singers – Prince Randhawa and Rummy Randhawa – Music Video – Folk, Vibrant
6. Sewa Desh Di – Singer – Shahid Mallaya – Music Video – Patriotic, emotional, inspirational, motivational
7. Challo Desh Nu – Singer – Hans Raj Hans – Music Video – Vibrant, uplifting, inspirational
8. Shabad – Singer Dya Singh – Religious
9. Itfaq Di Perna – Singer – Dya Singh – Religious, motivational, inspirational

WRITER/DIRECTOR

KAVI RAZ

Kavi Raz is an internationally recognized award-winning actor, writer and director who previously gave us the much loved and honored film The Black Prince Kavi has won over 50 international awards as an actor, writer, director. Has appeared in over 250, TV shows, films and major plays. Became

the first South Asian/Middle Eastern actor to appear as a regular on a Hollywood TV series as a regular cast member on the popular show, St Elsewhere. Breaking barriers in the early eighties and opening doors for many more, who followed in his footsteps.

He has worked with the likes of Denzel Washington, David Morris, Howie Mendel, Kieffer Sutherland and many other top international stars such as Shabana Azmi, Sanjeev Kumar and Akshay Kumar icons of the Bollywood film industry.

Kavi divides his time between Hollywood and Bollywood projects as actor, writer and director.

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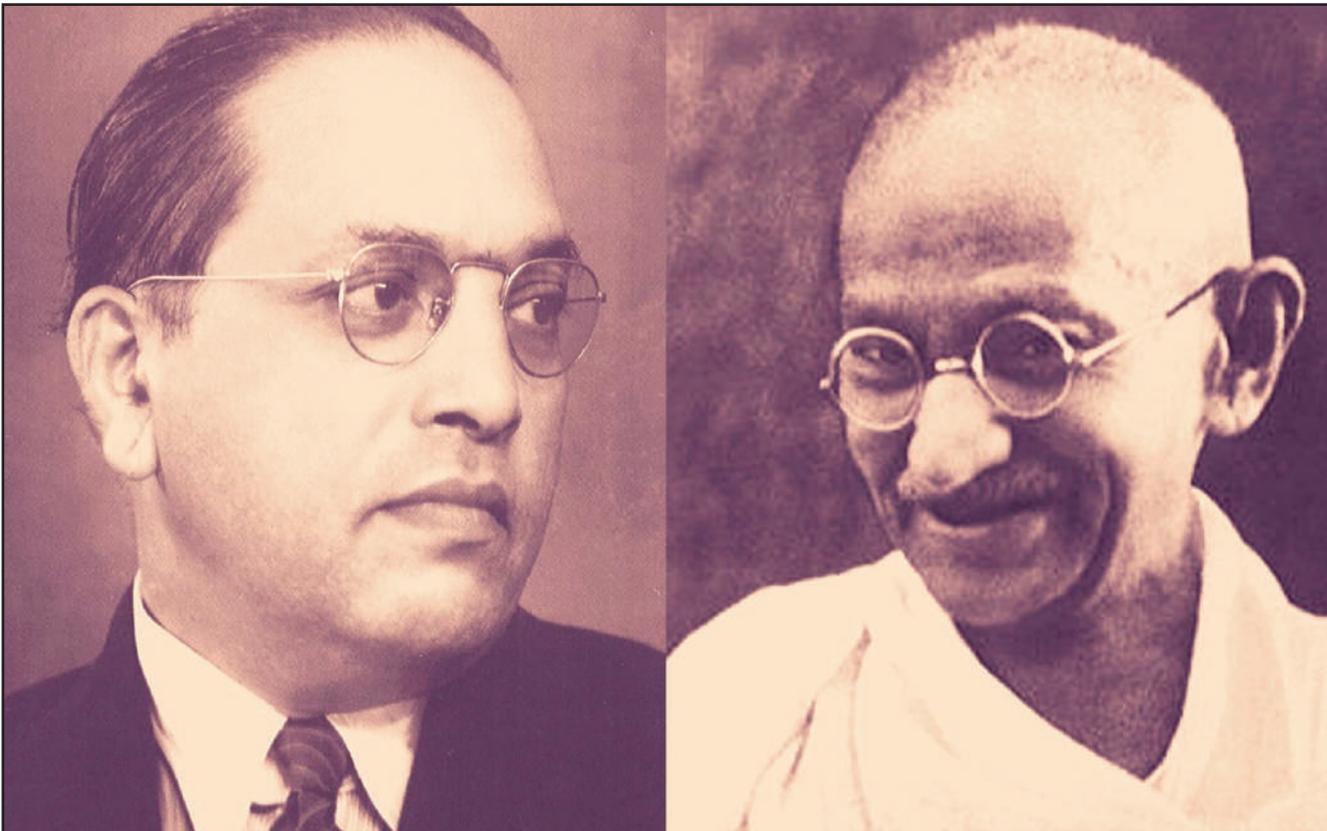
1. BAREFOOT WARRIOR
2. KARRA
3. KIKLI
4. RUKH
5. EK ONKAR
6. MERA WATTAN

We do not want on our register and on our census Untouchables classified as a separate class. – M.K. GANDHI

I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities, but the claims advanced on behalf of the Untouchables, that to me is the "unkindest cut of all". It means the perpetual bar-sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the Untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself in my own person to represent the vast mass of the Untouchables. Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim

that I would get, if there was a referendum of the Untouchables, their vote, and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the Untouchables that separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar-sinister, which is the shame, and not of them, but of orthodox Hinduism.

Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today



there is a body of Hindu reformers who are pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census Untouchables classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muhammadans, so may Europeans. Will Untouchables remain Untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. Therefore, with all my regard for Dr.

Ambedkar, and for his desire to see the Untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say in all humility that here the great wrong under which he has laboured and perhaps the bitter experiences that he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgement. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of the Untouchables, which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bar-

gain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world.

I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility, and I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the Untouchables of India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind the Untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam and Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages. Those who speak of the political rights of Untouchables do not know their India, do not know how Indian society is today constructed, and

therefore I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist this thing I would resist it with my life. – Mr. M.K. Gandhi

Source Courtesy: Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) 7th September, 1931 - 1st December, 1931 Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee



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