Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to Punjab what Mahatma Jyotiba Phule is to Maharashtra, just as the andharsha Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. If Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, the famous English-born American political activist, theorist, philosopher and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia learnt his lessons of equality and freedom from the proclaimed democratic and liberal values of the United States of America wherein he came into contact, during his sojourn, with the revolutionary freedom fighters popularly known as Ghadari Babas, of the historic Ghadar Movement. This further cemented his resolve to fight with the British for a dignified life for the masses by liberating India from the clutches of the British Empire and to establish in its place democratic and egalitarian rule with equality and freedom for all irrespective of caste, creed, class or gender.

Like his nineteenth century Maharashtrian counterpart who was also a revolutionary social thinker of the so-called lower castes, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia – from one of the lowest castes in Punjab – established his school of its kind in his native village of Mugowal for the children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated Scheduled Castes. He also faced stiff opposition, like his predecessor in Maharashtra, from the upper dominant castes of Punjab in his struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability - the most egregious one among them. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadrite leadership in the United States of America, he aspired to both fight against the caste-based social evil of untouchability and to replace it with an all-encompassing social freedom, as well as to join the fight to free the subjugated India and return to it its political freedom.

On return to his native village, he immediately decided to dedicate his life for the emancipation and empowerment of the so-called low caste people. In his own words: “While living abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low, and untouchability; and under the delusion returned home in December 1925. The same disease from which I had escaped started tormenting me again. I wrote about all this to my leader Lala Hardyal Ji, saying that until and unless this disease is cured, Hindustan could not be liberated. Hence, in accordance with his orders, a programme was formulated in 1926 for the weakening and upliftment of the Aghachut qaum (untouchable community) of India” (Kaumi Udaran 1986: 23-24).

To give a practical shape to his above-mentioned resolution Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia founded the famous Ad Dharm movement in the first quarter of the 1920s. It was the only way to challenge the world’s largest country’s British Indian subcontinent and to take it through cultural transformation, spiritual regeneration and political assertion, rather than seeking patronage from above. Comprising all the low castes people of the state, the Ad Dharm built its headquarter named ‘Ad Dharm Mandali’ in Jalandhar. Seth Kiswan Das of Bootan Mandi - leather business centre in the vicinity of the British military cantonment at Jalandhar – provided major financial support to the Ad Dharm movement. Babu Mangu Ram literally took the movement forward, the first steps of the untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits (lower castes) in Punjab. Like the Satyashodhak Samaj movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm soon became a household name among the Dalits of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes in the state that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on a common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow travellers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to collectively press their long pending claim for a share in the local structures of power.

In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919 prized from the British Government for the institutionalization of the electoral system, every community was busy in organizing its respective members into well-organized socio-political forces (political parties/organizations); and as a young man freshly-returned from the US, and meticulously chiselled in the superb Ghadariar Babas, Babu Mangu Ram successfully gathered many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with the upper caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindustan Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabha of the Sikhs. This limited election-based legislature-forming process also led to the formation of similar Adi-movements in other parts of the country like Adi-Andhras, Adi-Karnataka in South India and Adi- Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of North India. Though these different Adi-movements emerged almost at the same time in different regions of the country, there is no evidence to prove that they were instrumental in the rise of one and another. Each Adi-movement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given social and political atmosphere.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia formed the Ad Dharm movement in Punjab to fight for land rights of his people who were legally denied to purchase agriculture land by the Land Alienation Act of 1900, which prohibited the lowest castes along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agricultural land. Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as ‘rayit-nammals’, the so-called untouchable peoples were even denied the ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in the segregated neighbourhoods of the mainstream villages and limited by law, they allowed to build ‘puccha’ houses. They were once permitted to build mud/thatched houses and latrines. This was concluded in its mandate was the official provision of education and government employment for the lower castes under the state affirmative action policy.

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enslave us. At one time we reigned over ‘Hind’. We are the progeny of kings, Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Gaum. They deprived us of our property and renounced our seven crores. Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We are registered as Hindus in this country. Indian Government, come together to save who are the butchers of the Adi race. pressed us; sever all ties with them. What justice can we expect from those who are the butchers of the Adi race. The time has come; be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals. With the support of a sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Council so that our Gaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider ourselves as Hindus at all; remember that our religion is Ad Dharm” (Kaumi Udarian 1986: 21-22). Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugovalia have observed that he was conflicted on the issue of the British Raj - on the one hand he feared even greater oppression under Hindu majoritarian rule than under the British - whom he also viewed as possible partners in facilitating a more equal Indian society - but on the other hand he aspired for the dignity of national independence, which necessitated the removal of the British. This remained a recurring paradox in his political approach till the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. In his brilliant articulation of Achut da Swaai (Un-touchability Question), Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system, but at the same time had cautioned them to keep their distance from the British. The leaders of Ad Dharm thus chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating them into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). The long domination by the Aryans, they alleged, made them oblivious of their native religion. In fact, the task of reviving their ancient religion was not an easy one for the Moolnivasis who had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during their long period of persecution under the rule of the outsiders. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theological podium to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. The British Government granted them, as demanded, distinct status of a separate religion - Ad Dharm. The Ad Dharm was based on the teachings and inspiration from the spiritual figures of North India Bhakti movement, particularly Guru Ravidass, Bhagwan Valmik, Sant Kabir and Sant Namdev. In fact, the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement placed the spiritual figure of Guru Ravidass in the centre of their discourse around which the entire socio-political and spiritual paraphernalia of the movement and the separate Dalit religion of Ad Dharm was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram Mugovalia played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, rich cultural heritage. He strengthened their resolve to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million SCs in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion - Ad Dharm. Thereafter, the followers of Ad Dharm took pride in being addressed as Ad Dharmis. Another equally great achievement of the Ad Dharm movement was that it swept the Punjab Provincial assembly elections in 1937 & 1946, which made it an equally important stake-holder in the Punjab legislative, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugovalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab. During Dr. Ambedkar’s struggle for the separate electoral status for the Depressed Classes at the London Round Table conferences, Babu Mangu Ram supported him by sending many telegrams in his favour in a tie with Mahatma Gandhi over the question of the leadership of the Depressed Classes in India. An eminent American social scientist, Mark Juergensmeyer, had also noted in his classic ‘Religious Rebels in the Punjab,’ the tremendous contribution of Babu Mangu Ram Mugovalia towards Dalit upliftment in Punjab, by his founding of the Ad Dharm movement to generate social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discrimiatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of Babupharma of Guru Ravidass.

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Increasing Poverty and Declining Proportion of the Middle Class in India

According to a report released in March 2021 by the Pew Research Center, Washington D.C., the number of people living below the poverty line in India is projected to increase by 75 million during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which is about 60 percent of the increase in the population living below the poverty line in the world. The impact of the pandemic on the economy is expected to reduce the number of middle-income people in India by 32 million which is 60 percent of the decline in the number of middle-income people in the world. The Pew Research Center has estimated the number of people living below the poverty line as poor, with US $ 2 or less per capita income, per day. To estimate the decline in the number of middle-income people, the center has considered those people in this group whose per capita, per day income is between US $ 10.00-$ 21.76.

Governments from time to time provide definitions of the poverty line to determine the number of people living below the poverty line and raise their living standards by initiating welfare schemes for these people. The definitions of the poverty line given by various governments in India have been the subject of criticism. The definitions suggested by the Tendulkar Committee (2005), the Rangarajan Committee (2012), the Panagariya Committee (2015) and a few other committees have been sharply criticized and to date no such definition has been given which has been accepted without criticism. At the international level too, many given definitions of the poverty line are not flawless. The definition of poverty line given by the World Bank is used in many countries. One of the aims of this bank is to eradicate poverty, the number of people living below the poverty line is about 85 percent of the population. The World Bank uses the international poverty line as poor, with US $ 2 or less per capita income, per day. Purchasing power parity is used to calculate the country’s currency equivalent to US $ 1 when calculating income. Using the Singh Minhais had resigned as a member of the Planning Commission of India. Indira Gandhi was known for her hot-tempered nature but regarding Dr. Minhais’ resignation, she had said that the Planning Commission had lost a top economist. After resigning, Dr. Minhais wrote a book, “Planning and the Poor”, in which he made it clear that plans for the well-being of the poor could not be made in air-conditioned rooms. Government of India and state government institutions are full of economists. These economists are deliberately giving foolish arguments, they are trying to equate the high economic growth rate with the development of the common man and while they know that this eventually goes in favour of the corporate world and against the common man. These economists are deliberately ignoring the problems that arise from the current corporate economic model of the country, such as unequal distribution of resources and income, inequality, poverty, debt, and hunger, and the resulting social problems and unethical acts such as suicide, looting, murder, hooliganism, drugs, theft, robbery, corruption. They do not miss any opportunity to sing the praises of the country’s high economic growth rate in the hope of fulfilling their petty meaningless self-interests. In addition, emphasizing beyond their normal capacity, these economists fabricate data and go for conclusions-oriented studies to show their ‘sympathy’ for the common man. They leave no stone unturned in making and preaching nonsensical statements. The country’s middle-income group continues to be the victim of many misconceptions. One of their biggest misconceptions is that they are bearing the brunt of taxes and concessions/subsidies being given to the upper-income group. In fact, very few people from the middle-income group are allowed to enter the upper-income group and more people are pushed into the lower-income group. They are seen playing a snake-ladder game.

The policies of liberalization, privatization, and globalization have been implemented by the Government of India since 1991 under the policy guidelines of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These policies have been dubbed ‘New Economic Policies’. The agenda of these policies is to strengthen the grip of the capitalist/corporate world on the country’s economy. The hidden agenda behind the definitions of the poverty line given by ‘scholars’ at different times is to reduce/eliminate not only the economic concessions/subsidies already given by the government but also the taxes on the corporate world and against the common man. They are trying to equate the high economic growth rate with the development of the common man. The solution to this problem is to get rid of the corporate economic development model and adopt a people-friendly and pro-nature economic development model that ensures expansion and growth of the public sector and monitoring and regulation of the private sector. Capital-intensive production techniques must be replaced by labour-intensive production techniques. The scope of MGNREGA needs to be widened and other similar schemes need to be implemented in villages and cities. Grass growing on the graves of the poor warns capitalists and governments that growing poverty anywhere in the working class is a serious threat to the well-to-do people everywhere. To address the problem of poverty, financing can be done by raising the existing tax rates and imposing new taxes on the capitalist/corporate world, imposing and ensuring their collection. In this regard, it is important to define and implement ‘the poverty line’ as well as ‘the prosperity line’.

The recent wave of the COVID-19 pandemic will further weaken these working classes. Poverty in India’s working class people will not go away on its own. This requires pressure and intervention from the working people as well as strong political will-power. The solution to this problem is to get rid of the corporate economic development model and adopt a people-friendly and pro-nature economic development model that ensures expansion and growth of the public sector and monitoring and regulation of the private sector. Capital-intensive production techniques must be replaced by labour-intensive production techniques. The scope of MGNREGA needs to be widened and other similar schemes need to be implemented in villages and cities. Grass growing on the graves of the poor warns capitalists and governments that growing poverty anywhere in the working class is a serious threat to the well-to-do people everywhere. To address the problem of poverty, financing can be done by raising the existing tax rates and imposing new taxes on the capitalist/corporate world, imposing and ensuring their collection. In this regard, it is important to define and implement ‘the poverty line’ as well as ‘the prosperity line’.
Laura’s Law in Sacramento County

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I do not know how I will vote on this issue when it comes before me as I want to have an open ear to both sides as well as be able to fully comprehend the fiscal impacts, but I do know this is a growing problem and we should be handling this problem better than we are right now.

Thank you for reading—and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.net.

Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murieta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks.
When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gave his final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjab youth, who had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in the emission of smuggling suns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1895. His father was a merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the next village Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too, he was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somewhere, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too, he was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained heavily so that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. When the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having spoilt the classroom. Hearing the beating, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram went to the school the next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tarts on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahm in teacher cried out, “Oh Chandal, you have come again”. Feeling upset, another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education. Hearing the story, Mangu Ram’s father being to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he, however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India’s freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking part in the Ghadar plot. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for India. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers. For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram’s elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were merely suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram’s association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery. Encouraged by the response to his ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Gau, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shawls; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, “So- hang” and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its other object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm. The headquarters of Ad Dharm Mandals were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner. The organized methods spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Raovadas Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamaras, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of ‘Ad Dharm’. At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in the central part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Abolishing the untouchability was an integral part of their agenda. The Three Commandments of ‘Education, Agitation and Organization’ to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the key to progress for the untouchables, lay in three kinds of power: “Qaumiyat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)”. Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the poor for three more years. This created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharm candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions.”

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir
Babu Mangu Ram Muguwalia, a staunch patriot, a devoted crusader against social evils and above all a true humanitarian through. Born and brought up in Ceylon, he had crossed all social barriers dauntlessly and suffered all sorts of indignities of life and made his way to reach the pinnacle of greatness.

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

As a Ghadrite, he took part in the organizational activities at first but in 1915 A.D. an occasion came when he volunteered to be one of the five Ghadrites in a dangerous mission involving smuggled weapons shipped from California to the Punjab. Babu Mangu Ram Muguwalia was chosen by the leader of the Ghadar Party at that time, Mr. Sohan Singh Bhakna, the Secretary of Ghadar Party, whom Babu M.R. Muguwalia remembered as "Godha" sent the five to Los Angeles, where they boarded an inter-island boat, after depositing all of their personal identifications known by a pseudonym, and travelling through Secrorro Islands, again to Manila where he stayed for sometime and finally to India where he reached in 1925 A.D.

Throughout his career as a crusader against untouchability and casteism began. As he travelled from Ceylon to Punjab through Madurai, Madras, Bombay, Poona, Bengal, Singapore and again to Manila where he stayed for sometime and finally to India where he reached in 1925 A.D.

And on the occasion of his birthday anniversary, he was told to be careful not to touch Achut (Untouchables) since they assumed by Babu M.R. Muguwala to be the Untouchables of the caste. By the time Babu M.R. Muguwala had reached the Punjab, he was convinced that there was need for social change.

Babu M.R. Muguwala wrote to the Ghadar Party headquarters in San Francisco about the difficult conditions of the Untouchables in India. He wrote that their freedom was more important to him than Indian freedom. According to Babu Muguwala, leaders of the Ghadar Party did not discharge him to work with Scheduled Castes (Untouchables), and wrote him that they would support him in his tasks. Thus, in a new context, the old revolutionary from Babu M.R. Muguwala became the Ghadr spirit. This clearly shows that even Ghadrites had realized the need to awaken these slaves of Indian Society -the then Untouchables.

The moment he started his task of social reform i.e. establishing schools for untouchables poor, he began to look for an altered way in which may provide a lever for the unity of the untouchables poor and then to demonstrate by a practical interview the alternative the political presence of the untouchables in the politics of Punjab of those days. It must be rem em bered that Punjab was already witnessing political upheaval and each class was trying to reap at political harvest. Babu Mangu Ram Muguwalia, along with other con -scientious men, from his class, then founded on June 11-12, 1926 A.D. at his village Muguwol Ad-Dharma as the alternative.

Ad-Dharmas main aim was to create a feeling of identity among the untouchable class which numbered at that time about one fourth of the entire population of India. Babu M.R. Muguwala and the early leaders of the Ad-Dharma perceived their first task to be the creation of a new religion. In their initial meetings, even before they had adopted an organisational structure, they labored over a basic ideological theme upon which they could build a system of religious ideas and symbols. Its central motive was that the untouchables are the poorest people of Punjab and constitute a quam, a distinct religious community similar to those of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and that the quam had existed from time immemorial. They could not escape the power of thought, but if you asked them to work without power. It was intended to communicate the sense of strength that Babu M.R. Mu- guwala had birthed to his caste- men by law. As he explained, "The untouchables have their powers: communal pride (qamait), religion (mazhab), and organisation (mazla)."

They were that these powers could be fostered and spirited through force of ideology. Ad-Dharna was almost Babu M.R. Muguwala's show of power. It was the lowliest of the low to fight for equality, economic, social and political in a converted way. The Ad-Dharna, under the dynamic leadership of a true revolutionary like Babu Muguwala, was an aggressive and autonomous movement or compared to similar movements that took birth in other parts of India. Within a short span of time, it hit the 'haves-not' through its rallies, publications, deputations and demonstrations to demand new government policies or to protest against the existing discriminations. The most influential political action of the movement that could list as one of the great achievements, was to get Scheduled Castes registered as a separate identity of new religion. In 1931 A.D. census, almost half a million of them registered as "Ad-Dharna" rather than Hindu or Muslim or Sikh. Mr. Mark Juergensmeyer writes as, "Later in the 1930, their political influence turned towards electoral politics, in alliance first with the predominantly Muslim Unions and then with the Congress. It was the logical consequence of the political awakening created among them by Ad-Dharma Movement in Punjab, whose undisputable leader was Babu Mangu Ram Muguwalia.

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

Cultural and humanistic aspects of the personality of Babu M.R. Muguwala were even more glaring. As a humanist his vision of the world was near to rationalist view of the universe (we can even say materialistic as well though in rudimentary form), he believed in the inherent equality of all human-beings; he was against all sorts of caste-system and race. As Babu M.R. Muguwala, a successful strategist and, above all, a humanist, his life, all his life, stood like a rock against social evils such as untouchability, caste-system, women slavery, exploitation etc. His life in cultural side symbolized with the creation of new social virtues such as women's rights, the value of education, abstinence from alcohol and drugs - which were 'nothing less than a new concept of moral order'. Thus Babu M.R. Muguwala, a Ghadrite revolutionary, social crusader, political activist and strategist and as a humanitarian fought for the establishment of an ideal society till he breathed last. The noble way of combating the caste-system, by celebrating the untouchability of the Untouchables, by admiring the untouchables of all castes, by promoting them. The untouchables of every race, country and colour, is to emulate him. Therefore, let us resolve to emulate him in the noble path of Babu M.R. Muguwala - patriot, social revolutionary, a successful strategist and, above all, a humanist.
Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s 130th Jayanti is being celebrated all over the world today with enthusiasm. The authority of the Constitution, the results of the second surge of Covid-19 in the country, the enthusiasm of Babasaheb’s followers continues to be sky high in paying tributes to their messiah and paving up the march to achieve his avowed mission. According to Babasaheb, the problem of the marginalized sections is political, which cannot be solved unless political power comes in their hands. The political power is a key to all social progress and to bring salvation to them. In his landmark speech at the First Round Table Conference at London on 20th November 1930, he said: “…We feel that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political power in our own hands.” Speaking to his people at Nagpur on 18th July 1942, he said: “…The only thing we can depend upon for our continued progress is the political power without which we will perish. It is a question of life and death for us.”

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The Brahmical forces are mentioned being predominantly controlled and being predom inantly controlled and being predom inantly controlled and crim inal victim ization continue to be the destiny of these unfortunate people at all levels in the country. The un- fortunate downtrodden sections are, therefore, always at the receiving end due to the Government machinery being predominantly controlled and run by such people. Resultantly per- petual poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, marginalization, deprivation and the criminalization continue to be the destiny of these unfortunate citizens of India. One can refer to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Reports to realize the gla- mory picture in this regard. As a result, the constitutional ideals of liberty, equal- ity, fraternity and justice, and Babasaheb’s ideals of ‘annihilation of caste’; ‘Everyone being inhuman and victims of atrocities should be treated as saints and Gurus who have unim- peachable dedication to the cause of humanity’; ‘educate, agitate and organize’; ‘its immor- tal’; ‘one India people one’ and egalitarian social order remain more or less to be the ideals only so far. Babasaheb’s ideals have been transferred not only to the downtrodden sections, as they are related to the downtrodden sections, but also to the masses of the country, and the philosophy and principles embodied in the Constitution. Throughout the country, the downtrodden sections have been fighting for betterment, education and political power, which has been the focus of Babasaheb’s struggle for so many years. Babasaheb’s ideals have been imbibed by the masses, and they have been working towards the realization of these ideals. Babasaheb has left his indelible mark on the country, and his ideals have been guiding the country towards a better future.

The Moolmanta given by Babasaheb to capture political power is the ‘unity’ of all the downtrodden sections. According to him, it is the unity of the downtrodden sections that can lead to the seat of power. He strongly and repeatedly reminded the people of this and emphasized in his writings and speeches right from the begin- ning. Addressing the All India De- pressed Classes at Nagpur on 19th July 1942, he said: “If we have not so far achieved the position in the Con- stitution which is due to us, it is be- cause we have not been united.” In his speech there on 20th July 1942, he said: “I want assurance of strength, of unity, of will on our part and stand for our rights, fight for our rights and never to return until we win our rights. My final words of ad- visory to you are: ‘Educate, Agitate and Organize’ never lose hope.” In his speech at Jallandhar on 27 October 1951, he said: “… we can achieve something only if we unite. United we stand and divided we fall.” In his speech at Agra on 18th March 1956, he asserted: “I have got for you reservation and other safeguards and proper provision for education, but if you do not do away with the abominable thrall- dom and inhuman injustices under which the class, into which I was born, has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet in the hearts and minds, and on the lips of true Ambedkarites and well-wishers of the community, the task cannot be insurmountable.

The mission ‘unity’ to accom- plish Babasaheb’s ultimate mission is possible if his people take refuge in him and his philosophy. They have to put the ‘Bhiman Sharnam Gachhami’ always in their hearts, and minds and on lips. Imbibing Babasaheb’s spirit, they need to join heads, hearts and hands to fight together ahead fearlessly chanting “Bhiman Sharnam Gachhami”. This can only be their true tribute to the great son of India, messiah of the humanity and the leader of the downtrodden sections Jayanti. The destiny will surely be- stow smile on them and the destina- tion – mission will kiss their feet sooner than later.

Jai Bhim, Jai Bharat.
Ambedkar Jayanti, 2021—Solute to a Potent Legacy

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The tragedy of the matter is that Ambedkar never got his due in the media, school curriculum, academia and other socio-political activities of the society willingly or voluntarily. He remained a crusader throughout his life for the causes concerning the weaker sections of the society and also women folk. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought with Mahatma Gandhi, Congress party and its leadership, Manuwaad and Manuwadis single handedly as a most qualified and competent person of the time for equality and justice to the marginalized sections of the society. Due recognition and support was hard to come by only because of his low position in the caste hierarchy. With great reluctance, he was allowed to enter the Constituent Assembly and later made Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Assembly as he had already proved himself in the early sittings of the Constituent Assembly which composed of the likes of Ram Vivas Paswan who were in the minority. Ambedkar himself also guarded the interests of all the lower castes, not only in India but abroad too to relate to the weaker sections of the society. The visionary stipulation of ‘One Vote – One Value’ in the democratic edifice of India so aptly introduced by Ambedkar himself made all political forces to fall on each other to claim the legacy of Ambedkar. Even social organizations like RSS etc. are keen to own Ambedkar. They needed to shed inherent inconsistencies in their agenda and reconcile with Ambedkar and his mission, if they really intend to make a dent in the societal structures to bring about their much publicized idea of ‘Samrasta’. There is no other way. Ambedkar will remain a force to reckon with in the years to come. Ambedkar’s fragrance would spread as Allama Iqbal said in some other context:

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

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

My story is scattered around everywhere in the garden

Uthaye Kuch Waraq Lale Ne Tootyon Ne, Andleebon Ne
Ambedkar Jayanti, 2021—Solute to a Potent Legacy

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

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

In this regard, it will not be out of place to mention and appreciate the role and efforts of Chetna Association of Canada. Similarly Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (FABO), Global Ambedkarite Convention of the UK, inter alia, are fully engaged in the proposal. Hopefully, some of entities in the UK would soon come on board and honour Dr. Ambedkar as the Province of British Columbia did. We are confident that the day is not too far when countries would take due note of it and the proposal will be firmly routed to the UN by the stake holders worldwide. We hope GOI would understand and wake up in time to get Ambedkar’s fragrance and its momentous legacy.

Chaman Walon Ne Mil Kar Loot Li Tareef-e-Faghan Meri
The turtle doves, parrots, and nightingales pittered away.

The garden’s denizens jointly robbed away my plaintive way

The month of April this year started with a befitting tribute to Ambedkar on his birth anniversary on April 14. In pursuance of our proposal to get declared April 14 as International Day of Equality under the aegis of the UN which is lying in the Ministry of External Affairs of GOI, the Province of British Columbia of Canada proclaimed to observe April 14 as “Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Day of Equality” taking the cue from the City of Burnaby of Canada which made a similar proclamation last year, 2020. In this regard, it will not be out of place to mention and appreciate the role and efforts of Chetna Association of Canada. Similarly Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (FABO), Global Ambedkarite Convention of the UK, inter alia, are fully engaged in the proposal. Hopefully, some of entities in the UK would consider this as my humble tributes to the greatest son of India, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.
April 14, 1891, Ramji Sakpal's wife, Bhimabai, gave birth to a son. Look at his face! It's so radiant. Let's call him Bhim—a name befitting one destined to be great.

In high school, Bhim was often treated shabbily because of his caste, but he found an oasis of affection in one teacher named Ambedkar. He is the only one who will let me come near him.

Good! You have solved all the sums correctly.

Once, they were eating together—Bhim, I would like to give you my surname of Ambedkar. As you wish, sir.

After some time, Ramji moved with his children to Bombay. He took up a room in a chawl in the mill area at Parel. The room served as a kitchen, bedroom and study room.

Bhim studied hard while the others slept.

How are your studies going, Bhimrao?

He used to go to the Charni Road Gardens to study. There, he often met K.A. Keluskar, a scholar and social reformer.

I am studying hard, sir.
Bhim was the first in his community to pass the matriculation examination. His community convened a meeting to honour him. Shri Keluskar was also present to felicitate him. Shri S.K. Boile, a well-known social reformer, presided.

As a token of my blessings, I present you with my new book on the life of Buddha.

After graduation, Bhimrao was selected by the state of Baroda to study abroad. In July 1913, he joined Columbia University in New York.

The freedom and equality in the USA was a novel experience for Bhimrao.

In 1915, he attained his M.A. degree and later was awarded his PhD.

I will save money to buy books and take back to India.

Having completed his studies in the USA in less than the stipulated time, he proceeded to London.

I must have a degree in law from Gray's Inn, London, and undertake further studies in economics from London School of Economics. Post that, I'll head to Bonn University, for still further studies.
He secured a job as a lecturer in Sydenham College, Bombay (now Mumbai) in November 1918.

He is a brilliant scholar. Yes, he is the best teacher too.

Two years later, Ambedkar resumed studying economics in London, and also law, but his allowance was not enough to buy all the books he needed.

I must study from morning till evening at the British Museum Library.

In 1923, he returned to India, qualified as a barrister and scholar in economics, but—

My qualifications mean nothing. Untouchability is an obstacle even in my professional practice. I must work for the upliftment of my community.

Back in India, Ambedkar founded an association called Bahishkrit Hitakarni Sabha and under its auspices, opened hostels, schools and free libraries. Then one day—

Congratulations on your nomination to the Bombay Legislative Council! I know you will do good work.

I will do everything I can to improve the lot of the untouchables.
ON 24 SEPTEMBER 1932, AMBEDKAR SIGNED THE POONA PACT, UNDER WHICH, INSTEAD OF SEPARATE ELECTORATES, MORE REPRESENTATION WAS TO BE GIVEN TO THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

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

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

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

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