



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

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## DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Prem Kumar Chumber  
Editor-in-Chief:

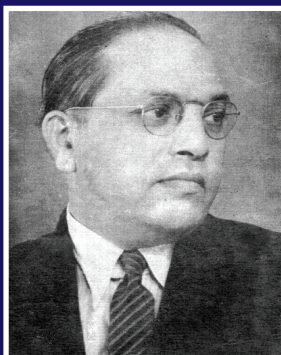
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Democracy and social justice are interrelated social processes. The one is incomplete in the absence of the other. Democracy offers freedom space to realize equality and experience fraternity. Equality and fraternity are the two essential ingredients of social justice, which achieves its true form with the addition of liberty. Thus the trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity constitutes the essence of social justice and the institution of democracy provides the requisite realm for its realization. Though many scholars' boasts of ancient origins of democracy in India but it would be prudent to argue that democracy achieves its roots in the real sense of the term with the adoption of the constitution in independent India. Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Chairman of Constitutional Drafting Committee, worked very hard to incorporate various provisions for the realization of social justice in the Indian society. He was of the firm views that if social and economic parity remains an elusive to the multitude of poor and historically socially excluded people in the country, then the very purpose of having parliamentary democracy would not be served efficiently. He reiterated the seminal point during his engaging discussions at various important forums within and outside the Indian parliament that for social justice to prevail in the country, India needs effective participation of the downtrodden in all the different spheres of the society.

The demand for social justice was also raised at various platforms during the freedom struggle movement in colonial India. Ad-Movements in North and South India, Justice Party in South India, Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia from Punjab, Swami Achhuta Nand Ji from Uttar Pradesh, Baba Ghasi Das Ji from Madhya Pradesh, Thanthai Periyar E. V. Ramasamy (Tamilnadu) promoted the principles of rationalism, self-respect, women's rights and eradication of caste, Sri Narayana Guru from Kerala raised a consistent campaign for the prevalence of social justice in the Indian society. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia presented a number of resolutions to the British Government for the removal of untouchability and special provisions for the inclusion of socially excluded sections of the society in the public realm of power and social domain.

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia joined hands with Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in his struggle for equal rights for the socially excluded people of India. When Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar speeded its movement into the political agile lands of Punjab with the formation of Punjab chapter of Scheduled Castes Federation, there was a tremendous response from the grassroots. That was precisely the contributions of Ad Dharm movement which laid the foundation stone of social justice campaign in the state in the mid-1920s. But the irony of the matter is that even after more than six decades of India's independence, Dalits in the country are still subjected to various types of atrocities and social discriminations. Though the Indian state, while making the optimum use of various anti untouchability clauses of the constitution, is doing its best to bridle the monster of caste, but still is more needed to be done at the social level where the people should come forward to internalize the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to realize the true sense of democracy and social justice.

## LETTER OF HONOUR (27-10-1951)



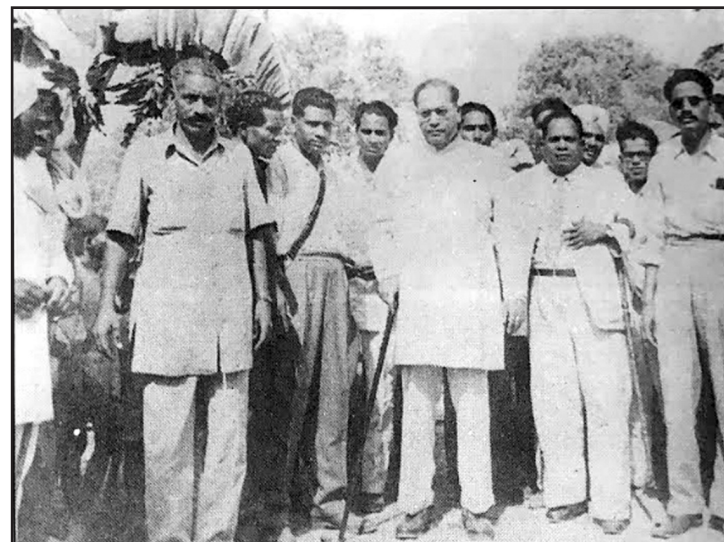
Humbly Presented by  
Sh. Krishan Dass Sahib, President  
Punjab Provincial Scheduled Caste Federation,  
in the honour of  
The Most Revered, Baba Sahib Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar  
On the occasion of a conference organised on  
October 27th, 1951 at Jalandhar

Most Revered Baba Sahib,

This is either the sheer good fortune of the untouchables of Punjab or may I just call it to be a nature's bounty that finally the much awaited celebrated day has arrived when we are actually able to have your august presence amongst us. We are actually in a state of disbelief and our eyes still are enchanted that we are actually having the 'Darshan' (divine view) of our beloved god. Your great saga of

riously tried to find any solution to their basic issues even in this age of enlightenment. In such a hopeless surrounding all this sloganeering about revolution is nothing more than a meaningless and hollow exercise.

We are greatly proud of you sir that while you accorded such high priority to the issues of the untouchables, you did not ignore the collective interests of the country either. Using your God gifted wis-



accomplishments for this hapless and god-damned community in liberating it from the strangulating clutches of the mighty religious and social 'gods' or better be called 'devils', has even surpassed the fables of Hatim Tai.

Like a messiah you have actually re-enlivened our people 'dead' from utter hopelessness, by invoking a new soul in them. By giving out a loud & powerful call "Long Live Humanity" you have actually re-introduced the mission of Guru Ravidass and Maharishi Valmik to their bewildered world. I personally, and on behalf of the untouchables of Punjab extend a very warm and hearty welcome to you and express my heartfelt gratitude that you accepted our humble invitation and honoured us by visiting us in Jalandhar today.

It is indeed easy to loud-slogan "REVOLUTION" while actually is very difficult to put it into actual deed. We have time & again witnessed this drama not only during these days but since long. And such sloganeering especially becomes the hand maiden of every political party that desires to wrestle out power from the government of the day and establish its own writ. Several political parties have succeeded in their cherished power endeavours by donning this 'revolution' masquerade while several others are eagerly attempting for the same. But no one realizes as to how far have they have actually drifted away in this quest. Can it be denied that for centuries a community of a people have existed, which because of manmade laws only, have been condemned to lead a highly inhuman live and exist merely like some lowly animals and worms. Successive governments have continued to trample them in every possible way and no political party has ever se-

dom you have bequeathed India with such a complete and unique constitution and have thereby rendered a great service to the country. The entire country should be proud of this all the more. Can any enlightened and conscious individual deny the great significance of the useful solutions/ strategies scripted by you by rightly inquiring into the ills of India like a good doctor, in hundreds of the books authored by you? The remedies prescribed therein may have left some people nervous and apprehensive but the day is not far when they too shall realise that these strong remedies of the doctor are only curative in nature and are actually harmless.

What is the narrative of the politics of the untouchables in Punjab? It is nothing more than an unending painful saga of the travails and tribulations evenly dotted with numerous episodes of the excesses and injustices in every nook and corner of their world. India though has become independent but the untouchables are yet to experience the real freedom which is yet miles away from them. Millions of untouchables had to migrate to India as refugees due to the partition of India. What to talk about the issues of their re-settlement and giving financial aid to them? Rather the government of the day often failed to even protect their lives, limbs and belongings. They have been frequently subjected to criminal atrocities and injustice by the high and the mighty communities including some other untouchable communities too. Ninety percent of the untouchables depend upon agriculture for their livelihood – however sadly, they are landless. Till these times this mischievous law "Intekaal-e-Arazi act" (Ownership of the cultivable land act.) was the biggest road bloc in this  
(Contd. on next page)

# LETTER OF HONOUR (27-10-1951)

(Continue from page 1)

regard but now when even the constitution of free India has struck down this unjust colonial law, yet the untouchable, due to his precarious economic condition, can only helplessly look at the millions of acres of land lying unused and vacant due to the apathy of the government of the day. Won't it be better to distribute these vast tracts of unused but cultivable land among the untouchables and also extend economic aid to them? This can probably boost up the "grow more food" movement to some success. Can a famished country be fed only by cultivating the flower pots and the backyards of the government bungalows? Yet the government is unconcerned about it.

Another injustice that is being faced by the untouchables is regarding the government jobs. Though for popular consumption this government has declared fifteen percent reservation for the untouchables in government jobs. In actuality this is nothing but a fraud. Recently the Punjab Provincial Scheduled Casts Federation tried to elicit statistics from all the government offices regarding this. While several offices did not deem it fit to even respond to such queries, the few who responded, depicted a very dismal situation regarding this. How sad it is that while on the one hand loud calls and claims about the welfare of the untouchables are continuously aired while on the other, partisan attitude against them is easily discernible in matters of government jobs. No one is able to precisely lay down the criteria or norms for a "suitable candidate" for employment. Surely, these are clear conspiracies to keep the untouchables beyond the reach of significant government jobs.

Then there is the issue of fee concessions and stipend to the untouchable students. Here too they face innumerable hardships due to crass government apathy and also due to the problems being created by the managements of the schools & colleges. Had some of their representatives in the assembly been focussed & competent and with independent thinking then probably the untouchables would not have had to worry over such issues. Our head hangs in shame and remorse when we watch

our representatives who are adept in hoodwinking their own people and compromising and selling out for the sake of their personal material benefits. They have no concern what so ever about the sufferings of their fellow untouchables. And who is responsible for this kind of a shameless drama that is thus unfolded? It is the same Congress party that is never tired of haranguing about democracy & revolution and never misses out any opportunity to shed crocodile tears for the untouchables. Revered baba Sahib, the world has witnessed umpteen times the severity of pain in your soul for such uncountable misfortunes and miseries of the untouchables. And now, by quitting your cabinet post you have once more reaffirmed the fact that Ambedkar never compromises, zealously guards his independent thought and is ever geared up to fight against tyranny & injustice.

All the treatment that you have received recently at the hands of the 'responsible people of the parliament' in the form of their statements, is nothing new. However this has once again made it widely apparent to the world out there that there has not been an iota of change in their continuing orthodox mentality and that that how such people can, just for the sake of their ego, forsake anyone's sacrifice and great deeds. While we strongly protest against the attitude of the deputy speaker, we assure you that the untouchables of Punjab in unison with the untouchables of the rest of India are fully prepared to go to any extent at the mere wink of your eye. The untouchables of Punjab heart fully welcome all the high ideals and the determination with which you have decisively descended into the battlefield, and are firmly with you.

We are continuously facing enumerable miseries and troubles. The pathway to truth is always risk laden however when the commander of an "army" is a bold & a fearless BHEEM, then we are fearless too & in high spirits. With these few lines I express my faith and gratitude to you.

I remain yours,

**Original Author (Urdu-Nastaliq): K. C. Sulekh**  
Transcribed by (From Nastaliq to Gurmukhi):

**Prof. Arinder Singh**

Transliteration in English: **P. S. Bhogal**

## Welcome Address presented to Dr. Ambedkar on his maiden visit to Punjab

The Ad Dharm Mandal Punjab presented the following Welcome Address to Dr. Ambedkar, M.A., PhD., Bar-at-Law, M.L.C., Member of the Indian Franchise Committee (Lord Lothian Committee):-

"We, the members of the Punjab Adi Dharm Mandal and the Managing Committee, extend a hearty welcome to you on your maiden visit to our Province. We are extremely grateful to you for the services rendered to the Depressed classes as a delegate to the Indian Round Table Conference London from the Bombay Legislative Assembly and as a member of the Indian Franchise Committee (Lord Lothian Committee). You will be surprised to learn that the High castes are denying our existence in our Province. Untouchability is being practiced in our Province like that in other Provinces. A high caste person gets defiled by our mere touch. We are not allowed to take water from the public wells. The Brahmin priest cannot conduct religious recitation and worship for us. The Washerman does not wash our clothes. The barber cannot dress our hair. The water carrier does not supply water to us. We cannot pass through the village with a palanquin on marriage and other festival occasions, nor can we play a band.

We can neither conduct common business nor can we move around together with them. In short we have no commonality with the high castes. The Land Intiqal (Aarji) Act has worsened the condition of the Depressed Classes. To promote education, the Education Ministry has declared some concessions vide its resolution No. 20181 - G, dated 19-11-1929. This is for the first time in the history of Punjab that a member of the Depressed Classes has been appointed on the permanent Franchise Committee. We are heartened to believe that our rights are safe in your hands. We hope that you will bestow your kind attention on the Depressed Classes of Punjab because even our existence is being denied. The coming generation will engrave your name in golden letters as champion of the Depressed Classes. We pray for your long life.

**Courtesy: C. L. Chumber**

(Editor-in-Chief: Kaumi Udarian, Jalandhar)

Punjabi to English translated by

**Col. Prithvi Raj Kumar**

Chief Postmaster General (Rtd.)

Additional Secretary Government of India

## Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Ad Dharm School of Dalit Awakening

**Prem Kumar Chumber**  
Editor-in-Chief:

**Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba**

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was one of founding members of the Ghadar movement, which aimed at building an egalitarian society and polity after liberating India from the British Raj. He participated in the weapon smuggling mission of the movement. He was arrested and awarded capital punishment, but was saved from the death sentence by chance. The news of his supposed death reached his village. According to the tradition of his community, his widow named Piari married his elder brother. After his return to India in

1925, he remarried and had four sons from his second wife, named Bishno.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia did not find any change in the life of his fellow villagers in Punjab after spending 16 years abroad. The social malady of untouchability had continued to torment the Scheduled Castes people. He wanted to overcome the social oppression that his people were undergoing for centuries. While living in USA, he realized what it meant to be equal, free and lead a dignified life. He made his mind to devote his life towards the awakening and uplift of the Scheduled Caste people.

He thought that the most viable way to bring social and political consciousness among his people was to establish schools for the Achhuts. Settling in his native village, Mugowal, he founded a school for the lower caste children in the village. The school was temporarily housed in the garden of Risaldar Dhanpat Rai, a landlord of village Mugowal.

Later on Lambardar Beeru Ram Sangha, another landlord of village Mugowal donated half an acre of land to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia to build the school.

The school had five teachers including Babu Mangu Ram ji. One of the teachers was a Muslim, Walhi

Mohammad, and another was a Brahmin.

Now-a-days, the school land has been declared as Shamlat (common land) and no remnants of the school building exist except the old dilapidated structure of its well.

It was in this historic school founded by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji that the first mammoth meeting of the Ad Dharm movement was held on June 11-12, 1926.

**Excerpted with thanks from Dr. Ronki Ram's article entitled "Untouchability, Dalit Consciousness, and the Ad Dharm Movement in Punjab," Contributions to Indian Sociology, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2004, pp. 323-49].**



**Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD**

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# Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia's led Ad Dharm Movement: A New Vision for the Emancipation and Empowerment of Historically Marginalized People of Punjab

At present Scheduled Castes in East Punjab constitute one-third of the total state population – largest in comparison to their counterparts in all other states and UTs in India. However, their share in the agriculture land in the state is lowest. Less than five percent of them are small time cultivators. Though in terms of administrative set up they are enumerated along with other caste communities in the census records of the villages in East Punjab, actually they live in segregated Dalit settlements situated in the periphery of mainstream villages. The segregated Schedule Castes' peripheries are contemptuously called *Chamarlees* in Doaba, *Thathees* in Malwa, and *Vehras* in Majha: the three distinct spatial-cultural regions of the state. Nevertheless, Scheduled Castes in East Punjab, like all other communities, are Punjabi first and their religion and caste and domiciliary location come later. Like all other integral segments of the syncretic Punjabi qaum, Scheduled Castes are too valourous and well known for their praiseworthy role during the fights of the Khalsa armies of Guru Gobind Singh against the regimes of injustice and social oppression. To live with dignity prompted them in the second half of 1920s, to organise themselves under the Ad Dharm movement (11-12 June, 1926), the maiden Dalit movement of pre-partition Punjab. The Ad Dharm movement was parallel but independent of various other contemporary Adi/Dalit movements (briefly discussed below) emerged almost at the same time in the South India.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980) was the precursor of the Ad Dharm movement. He belonged to a Dalit family of leather workers of village Mugowal indistrict Hoshiarpur. His father wanted him to educate so that he could him in his leather business by reading transactions written in English. Despite his relatively well off family background, Mangu Ram faced social exclusion, for his so-called low birth, at the school in a nearby village Bajwara. He was forced to leave the studies abruptly without completing his matriculation. Thereafter, in search of easy life, like the early emigrants from the Doaba, Mangu Ram too landed in America in 1909 and earned his livelihood while working in lumber industry and agriculture farms. That was the time when Punjabi emigrants in North America were planning to form a radical organisation for the liberation of colonial India. Eventually, Mangu Ram became an active member of the Ghadar *Lehar* (movement) founded in 1913. He was one of the five proud members of a Ghadarite group who were assigned

the herculean task of ferrying weapons to India for an armed rebellion against the British rule. But *SS Maverick*, the ship that was bought to transport weapons was caught in route and destiny took Mangu Ram into the Philippines, where he spent the next twelve years of his prime life incognito. Finally, hereached his native village in 1925, to the surprise of all, as everyone already knew the news of his alleged hanging.

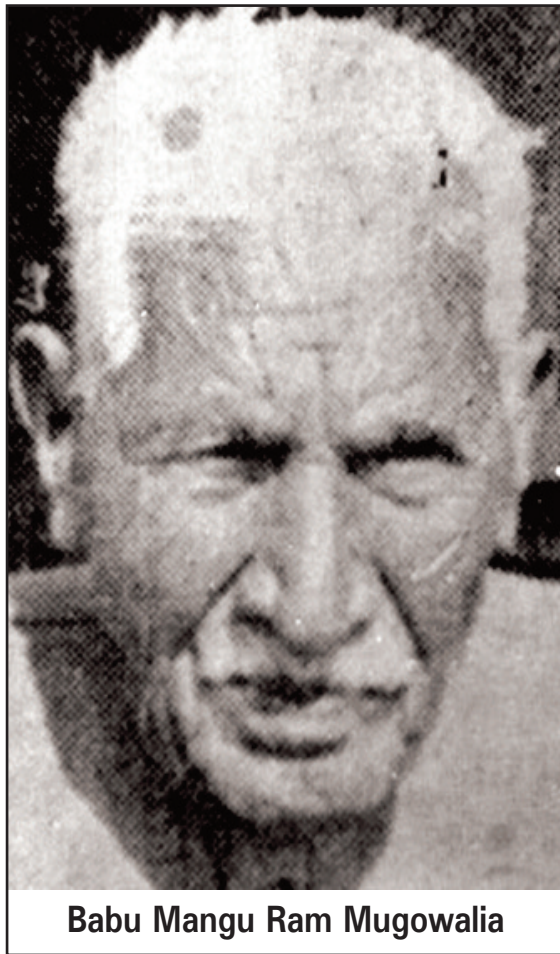
Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to the Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra, and just

as the Maharashtra Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. If Mahatma Jyotirao 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 Lehar. This further cemented his resolve to fight 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 home rule with equality and freedom for all irrespective of caste, class, creed, language, gender and regional differentiations.

On return to his native village, after spending 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram did not find any change in the predominance of untouchability. In his own words: "While living abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low, and untouchability; and under this 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 awakening and upliftment of the Achhut qaum (untouchable community) of India" (*Kaumi Udarian* 1986: 23-24). Consequently, he decided to dedicate rest of his life for the emancipation and empowerment of his fellow so-called low-caste people. He established an elementary school in his native village for the lower caste



**Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia**

children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated Scheduled Castes (SCs) under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936, which contained a list (or schedule) of castes throughout the British-administered provinces. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadarite 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. Like his predecessor in Maharashtra, he faced stiff opposition from the so-called upper castes in his fierce struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability – the most egregious one among them.

The Ad Dharm movement, pioneered by Mangu Ram, soon became a household name among the Dalits of the Punjab like the Satyashodak Samaj movement of Phule in Maharashtra. Seth Kishan Das of Bootan Mandi – a well-known local leather merchant – helped build its headquarter named 'Ad Dharm Mandal' in Jalandhar. Mangu Ram with his untiring efforts literally took the movement to the doorsteps of all the untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits. Under the flag of Ad Dharm movement, he fought for the long de-

nied land rights of the lower castes who were legally debarred along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agriculture land under the Land Alienation Act of 1900. Moreover,

under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammas', the lower castes were also deprived of ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in the segregated neighbourhoods. They were not allowed to build pucca houses in these separate Dalit localities. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to perform some *begar* (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of their residential plots.

Another important task towards the material empowerment of the lower castes that was undertaken by the Ad Dharm movement was special legal provision of education and government employment reservation for the lower castes under the state affirmative action. Like the *Satyashodak Samaj* movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm movement 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 prised 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 companionship of the proud Ghadarite Babas, Babu Mangu Ram able bring together many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with that of the upper

(Contd. on next page)



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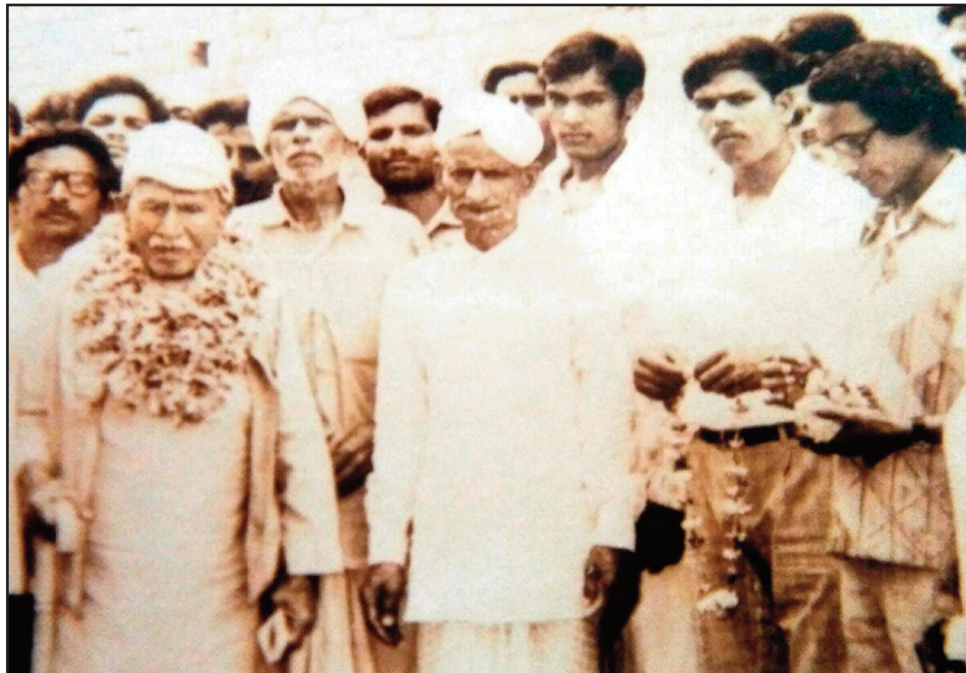
# Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia's led Ad Dharm Movement

(Continue from page 3)

caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas 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-Dravidas, Adi-Karnataka in the South India, and Adi-Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of the 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 state.

In the poster announcing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the *Moolnivasis* at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the *Moolnivasis* to come together to chalk out a programme for their liberation and upliftment. Addressing them as brothers, he said:

*We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and 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 Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us no madic. They razed our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. ... Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago, Hindus suppressed 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 Councils so that our Qaum 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*



Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and members of Ad Dharm

*our religion is Ad Dharm (Kaumi Udarian: 1986: 21-22).*

Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia 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 the meantime, he along with other leaders of Ad Dharm movement chose to restore the lost dignity and freedom of 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.

Thus, what made the Ad Dharm movement the most politically noticeable and popular of its time was the farsightedness of its visionary leaders in setting the goal of bringing divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform them into a distinct single community at par with other separate communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians etc and to become an appropriate part of the Punjabi qaum. This was the most crucial political move on the part of Babu Mangu Ram, the master strategist, who intervened at a vital moment when limited direct elections were scheduled to be held in the state. He pressed for a separate religion for the lower castes of Punjab to be recorded in the 1931 Census, who in his opinion were neither Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans nor Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram, were the original inhabitants – *Moolnivasis* (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he

continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them, and finally enslaved them. In his brilliant article entitled *Achhut da Swaal* (The Question of Untouchability) published in the *Kirti* monthly of the *Kirti Kisan* party in 1929, penned under the pseudonym of Vidrohi, Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system and for a separate religion, but at the same time also cautioned them to keep their distance from the British.

The Ad Dharm movement, under the leadership of Babu Mangu Ram, aimed at restoring the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). However, the task of reviving their ancient religion, in fact, was not an easy one. To revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the native people. *Moolnivasis*, the natives of this region, 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 theology. In order to establish their hegemony and legitimacy over the enslaved *Moolnivasis* of Bharat, the Aryan invaders successfully metamorphosed themselves into upper castes of the first three Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) – the fourfold Hindu social order based on *Chatur-Varnavyavastha*. The natives of the conquered land were allegedly pushed into the fourth Varna of Shudras – consisting of artisan castes and still other further reduced into lowest of the low castes, contemptuously dubbed as Untouchable peoples.

The assertion by Babu Mangu Ram that Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on them. It provided a theological podium to them 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 saints of the 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 was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, and rich cultural heritage. He imbued them with the yearning to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million Scheduled Castes in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion – Ad Dharm. Thenceforth, 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 reserved Provincial assembly elections in Punjab in 1937 & 1946, which made it an important stakeholder in the Punjab legislature, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb Dr 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 Mugowalia 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, documented in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab: *The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste*,' the incredible contribution made by Ad Dharm movement in generating social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discriminatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of 'Beghampura' of Guru Ravidass.

**Reference:**

\* Juergensmeyer, Mark, Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste, Delhi: Navayana, 2009.

\*\* Kaumi Udarian (Punjabi), vol. 1, No. 2, January 1986, pp. 21-24 (Jalandhar, C.L. Chumber, ed.).



D. C. Ahir

# The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

**W**hen in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a 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 out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,

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 meekly 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

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

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 another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion. Both believed in self-

help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiya (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 problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Juergensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi 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



however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, 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 Manila. 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

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 Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they 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 shashes; 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 another 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

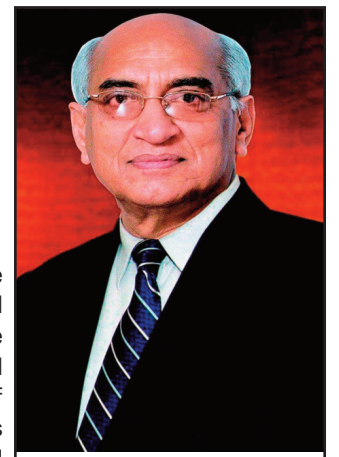
youth, who had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather 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 nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too 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. Somehow, 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 so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And 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 come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school 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 mats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming 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

# Random Subjects

## Style and charming personality defined S.K.Chander



Ambesdor V.B. Soni

My first introduction as a 15 year old shy boy, to Sudurshan Kumar Chander (SKC) was in 1957, when he got engaged to my elder sister Asha (then named Maya). On his selection to the Indian Revenue Service (IRS), my father took me to the Delhi Railway Station for a sendoff, while he was on way to the Income tax Training Institute in Nagpur. He noticed me, hiding in a corner, moved forward, engaged in a conversation to put me at ease.

In due course of time, he became lifelong friend and a mentor.

tion of 200 odd families. Majority of population comprised of land owning Jats, cattle breeders, low caste labourers called 'kamis' and carpenters. It was not well developed then. The village did not even have basic facilities, school or medical centre. A small group of students were taught in basic subjects like Maths and Urdu. This is where he had his earlier education. He was good at picking up things and became a favourite of the headmaster of the school.

SKC's earliest memory of adventure goes back to when he was

SKC's next stage of schooling was in Jalandhar. For his graduation studies, it was his sister-in-law who pawned her ornaments to make available the required funds. Rising to the occasion, he acquitted himself creditably, gaining merit scholarship.

At the time of the partition of the country in 1947, SKC witnessed wide spread violence, killings, rape of innocent women, wanton destruction, indiscriminate looting all around. Estimates point to about 14 million people being displaced and more than 2 million people losing their lives or going

Delhi. He travelled through the length and breadth of India by his personal car. His first vehicle

FIAT, was followed by the robust work horse AMBASSADOR. During the long drives, the description of scenes, along the way in his travelogue, makes fascinating reading. His encounter with the outlaws, while driving with the



Gift of golf set to Chander by VBS, Kiev, 2001



S.K.Chander and Asha in a boisterous mood



Chanders with Shant Bua. 1960s

We shared common interest in politics, society's evolution and evil practices like the caste system, in addition to sports. Our love for golf brought us closer still. During his visit to Kiev in 2001, where I was posted as Ambassador, he was touched by my gesture

out in the neighbourhood for grazing, he found that the animals refused to go past a particular bush, because of the lurking fear in the form a snake. It was a providential escape There being no facilities for games in the village, his group of friends would run and play



From right Chanders, Vikram & Prabha, Roopa & Hans Raj, Shila & Anant Ram, Saroj 1977

of gifting him a Cobra brand golf set. Chander Sahib helped me prepare for joining the Foreign Service. He advised me on how Government department works.

SKC's life's experiences and challenges make a fascinating study. His autobiographical chronicle: "Follow Your Dreams" captures those moments graphically. It is well worth recounting these, which begin with strange supernatural experiences, and encounter with King Cobra, a mysterious image that, makes appearance at various stages of his life, ending up as a savior and protector.

Chander was born in a family of modest means, amidst rustic surroundings, in a hamlet on Nakodar-Jalandhar Road in Punjab. Though his official date of birth was given as April 4, 1930, he claimed to have been born on Diwali, a few years earlier. Village TAJPUR then had a small concentra-

barely 4 years of age. Herding the family cattle around the open spaces, orchards, uncultivated land with thick foliage. In pre-teen age years, he mentions about the next encounter with the reptile, in a less frequented park. He came out of

it unscathed. He became convinced that a guardian angel was protecting him. The vivid description of the village scene in its natural habitat is stunningly captured in his imagery.

During growing up years, he was upset by the social issues around. Injustice to the poor people, the pernicious caste system, low position of the women in the society, rape of dalit girls, inadequacy of educational institutions, and the lack of hygiene etc. troubled him. He was unable to understand, why were there separate taps of drinking water at the Jullundur Railway station, one each marked for the Hindus, the Muslims and the for achhuts (untouchables).



Sutta classic, the indulgence

missing. He must have been traumatized by those gory scenes, observing the mayhem on the trains passing through his backyard in Punjab. But he felt helpless. He did some voluntary work to alleviate the sufferings of the fleeing refugees. That gave him solace. This part of oral history, covering such heart-rending scenes is touching.

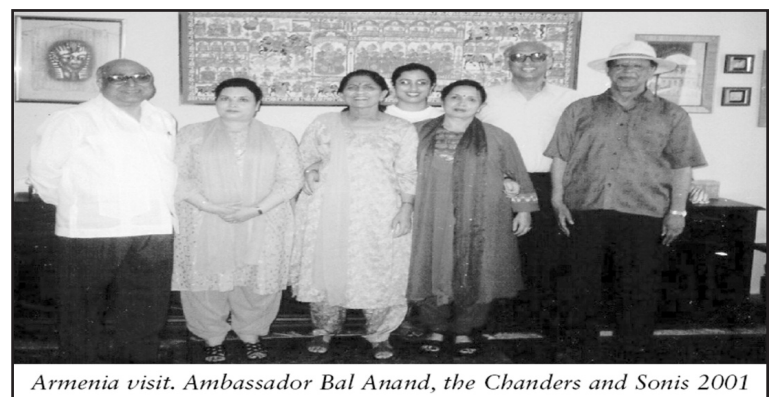
SKC then moved to Delhi, to pursue higher studies, as also to explore job opportunities. He got a clerical job, landing up as Inspector in the Income Tax Department.

During this period his elder sister and brother-in-law posted in Delhi, hosted him. Eventually, he was selected for the Indian Revenue Service (I.R.S.) in Nagpur, SKC's on job postings took him to Bombay, Akola, Poona, Surat etc. The latter part of the career was spent in Chandigarh, Guwahati and

1957. When the time came for settling down in life, SKC found in Asha, from a distinguished family from Delhi, as his ideal life partner. They got married on February 13, 1958.

family, through the dacoit infested area in Madhya Pradesh, shows his presence of mind, in bravely getting out of tricky situations.

An experience happened, not far from Indore, in the evening hours is



Armenia visit. Ambassador Bal Anand, the Chanders and Sonis 2001

worth recalling. Half way through the drive on the highway, Asha sitting in the vehicle next to him, smelt of petrol wafting in. On checking the petrol tank, its cap was found missing. With overflow through the outlet, not much stock of the fuel was left in the tank. In the wilderness, at that twilight hour, no petrol station could be located. They decided that, instead of staying exposed to the dangers in the open at the night time, it would be preferable to drive on, as far as it would take them, leaving the rest to the divine force.

The onward journey was continued with prayers on lips. In that hour of crisis, he was reminded of the prophecy heard in childhood: Not to fear and keep going. Lo and behold, the prayers were answered. He was somehow able to drag the car right up to a petrol station, miles away. The attendant there could not believe the miracle of the car driven with virtual bone-dry petrol tank, such a long distance. King Cobra makes appearance as saviour, yet again.

(Contd. on next page)

# Random Subjects

(Continue from page 6)

A fascinating picture of the rising professional career graph at various stages, ends up by SKC, reaching to the top position of Judge Member at the Appellate Income Tax Tribunal. Along the long journey, Chander faced challenges. The adversarial situation pertained to, sensitive cases of dreaded smugglers of gold and contraband items, active during the 1970s,

Chander loved good things in life. He had his own distinctive style and grace. His wardrobe was full of well stitched suits and clothes, large range of neck ties and a wide collection of hats and caps. At a social occasion he would stand out because of the signature head gear.

As a person with refined cultural interests, he was very fond of Urdu shayiri and would come up with

She sacrificed her comforts and sleep, never letting him out of sight. He could be heard mumbling, that without her personal attention, he would have left the world much earlier.

That 65-year-old bond between Chander and Asha was sadly broken with his passing away on January 4, 2023.

Let me conclude by saying that his delightfully written autobiographi-

University, which is what he did. He then joined Hindu College for the Inter (FA) level. As his heart was not into studies he dropped out, dreaming of entry in to the world of cinema. As a confused young man, he did not know what to do and where to go. In that state of mind, without informing anybody, one day Inder got on to a train to the ancestral village of Achnera, on Rajasthan border. He did not have



Chanders and Sonis celebrating a special occasion in Kiev. August 2001



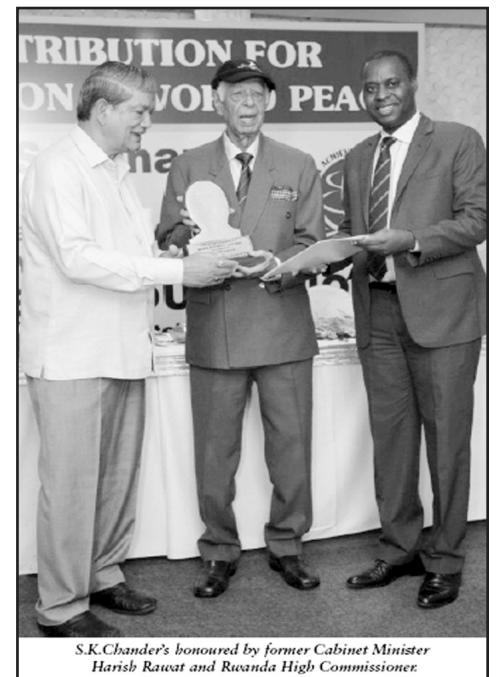
Kamlesh with the Chanders, shortly before he passed away. December 2022

on the western coast of India. There was real danger to his life but he carried on courageously, with many close shaves, in encounters with anti-social elements. He came out triumphant,

appropriate couplets, of which he had a repertoire, relevant to the occasion, from the pantheon of the leading poets. Ghalib was his favourite. To return to his passion for golf, though a

cal account: "Follow Your Dreams", was released at a glittering function in 2019 by the former Central Cabinet Minister Shri Harish Rawat and Rwanda High Commissioner H.E. Mr. Ernest Rwa-

mucyio. The function was organised by Global Achiever's Foundation. He was also conferred the Nelson Mandela Memorial Award for

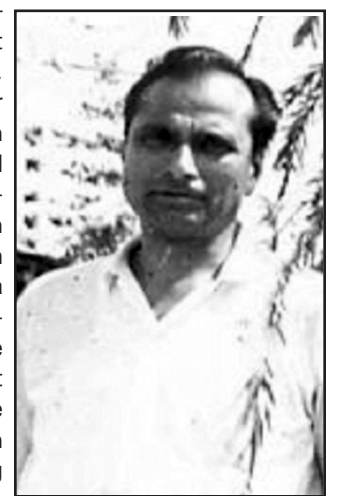


S.K. Chander's honoured by former Cabinet Minister Harish Rawat and Rwanda High Commissioner.

money in pocket and no ticket. From his suspicious activities, sitting alone in the railway compartment, two fellow passengers were convinced, that he had run away from home. They acted friendly, gained his confidence, and persuaded him to get down at their destination of Mathura Station. Taking him home, he was given food and shelter. The following morning, Inder made good his escape, without informing his hosts. He boarded a Delhi bound train.

Around 1945 Inder saw a film

"Khanzanchi" shot in Lahore, centre for production of small budget Punjabi films. In the film there was a song sequence shot at Lawrence Garden in the bustling city. He



was mesmerised by its surroundings, during a brief visit to the city with an uncle. The city drew him back soon, to check out the possibility of a film career. On arrival he made a straight dash to his infatuation- Lawrence Garden. On an elevated mound in the park, he sat atop, gazing in the horizon, soaking in the atmosphere, oblivious of the concern and anxiety he had left behind for worried parents.

It so happened that his mausaji Kanshi Ram, was posted in Lahore with Punjab Agriculture Department at that time, whose address Inder did not know. During lunch break, Kanshi Ram happened to pass by that way. He saw

(Contd. on next page)



getting commendation for filling the Government's coffers with his effective tax collection drive, without resorting to coercive methods. The only thing that rankled him was the deep-rooted caste prejudices he faced, within the department. Mercifully his career graph did get affected.

The couple raised a fine family, as ordained by the prophecy. All his three children made him proud, earning laurels. The first-born Rajiv joined the Indian Foreign Service, becoming a key player on the high table of international diplomacy, at the Geneva headquarters of the United Nations. Sanjay rose to the top position of Director General of Police, Railway Protection Force. Third born, Anita trained as fashion designer at National Institute Fashion of Technology. She moved to the U.S. Prophecies do turn out to be true.

S.K. Chander was a tall, good looking, well rounded, charming personality. He was generous at heart, supporting worthy causes, offering monetary help, where needed. He was committed to helping the cause of spreading education among the down-trodden, especially the girl child, paying tuition fees for many deserving cases. In his ancestral village he helped open a school for them. For the marriage of daughters of the poor, he would gift a tidy sum of money, to supplement the expenditure. His personal staff was the beneficiary of his bountiful nature.

late starter to the game, he lived and breathed the game. NOIDA Golf Club was virtually like a place of worship for him. He used to play thrice week in the afternoon, with his regular group. His routine involved the well laid out rituals.

Towards the latter part of his innings, when he was unable to swing the golf club smoothly, his past time was to sit in the Club House, soak in the atmosphere there, enjoying the animated conversation among golfers, about how a birdie was missed. In that ambience, he enjoyed browsing through magazines and newspapers in the reading room library. Above all, enjoying golden fried prawns/pomfret fish, washed down with a round of Bloody Mary or gin and tonic, for day time drink.

My bonding with SKC was deep rooted. We looked forward to enjoying each other's company over a drink, as and when the opportunity arose. Over extended sessions we would discuss issues under the sun, especially international relations.

S.K.Chander and Asha were a perfect couple, fully devoted to each other. When he fell gravely ill, it was Asha who nursed him back with her loving care and attention. Towards the last stage of life when he was bed-ridden for long period, Asha withdrew herself from the social scene and was at his bedside 24x7.



Sohan Lal family. May 1967

# Random Subjects

(Continue from page 7)

a young man sitting in the distance, whose face looked familiar. He stopped to have a closer look and was surprised to find that it was none other than the son of his wife's elder sister. He quietly moved, darted forward, grabbing Inder from behind and brought him home.

The runaway young man's worried parents were duly informed. He was escorted back, to face the inevitable harsh treatment from his concerned parents. And yet his attitude did not improve one bit, still day dreaming about the tinsel town.

Inder wanted to have another go at a career in the film industry. It next drew him to the city of dreams, Bombay. Barely a year after the Lahore escapade, he left home once again, without informing anybody, to the ultimate film city. Travelling by train ticketless, he was lucky not to have been apprehended. On arrival in Bombay, he did not know a soul. With only eight annas in pocket, no place to stay, he ended up sleeping on a bench at the railway station. Not being able to afford a proper meal, he satisfied his hunger on roasted gram (chanas).

The following morning, he somehow found his way to a famous film studio. Reaching the destination, he could not penetrate the security cordon, at the entrance. All he could do was to wait outside the gate, watching the activities going on inside, with brief glimpse of the artists moving around. A couple of days of frustrating wait convinced him of the futility of hanging around. With no prospects in

sight, hardly any money in pocket, going without food and no roof over head, he decided it was time to head back home.

On the return train journey his luck ran out. The ticket collector was in no mood to listen to his plea that he



Inder with wife Santosh

got separated from his father, who had his ticket, seated in the accompanying compartment. That ruse did not work and he was offloaded at a wayside small station, where only passenger trains stopped. Inder had to walk along the rail tracks to the next station, 15 odd miles away. On reaching there he learnt that the train for Delhi was not expected before midnight. Being tired and hungry, he dozed off on the platform bench, and was woken up just in time to get on to the Panjab Mail, during a couple of minutes of stopover. He reached Delhi, much to the relief of the mother, who shielded

him from the father's wrath.

The next few years were wasted by Inder, doing nothing concrete for career pursuit. In 1951 Sohan Lal had to visit Bombay, in connection with a match for his daughter Pushpa. The prospective groom, Bishan Lal, in-



Standing from left Inder, Virender, Asha, Renu, Sohan Lal, Manju, Mahinder and Rajinder. Seated Santosh, Natho and Pushpa with Rakesh. 1954

come tax officer, was posted there. During this visit he took Inder along, in order to get him started with an independent business. Realising that he had limited chance of success as an actor, he thought of trying his hand as Assistant Director. That experience turned out to be equally disastrous. The final effort was as a financier/distributor, with his father's clout and backing. Initial discussion took place with a film producer.

Back in Delhi, a film distribution branch office was opened at Bhagirath Place, Chandni Chowk, the centre point for activities pertaining to

the film industry. The following year, father-son duo went back to Bombay and signed a contract with producer of a film. Some money was invested by Sohan Lal. Inder joined as Assistant to the Director and made brief appearance as a police inspector in a scene. In the beginning, he stayed with the cousins Kamla and Shakuntala, married in Bombay, and later with his own sister Pushpa, who had joined her husband. In the meanwhile, the film for which distribution rights were obtained, turned out to be a flop at the box office, resulting in loss of money. Inder had to return home disappointed. He was married off to Santosh on June 22, 1953. Eldest son Sunil was born on July 20, 1959, daughter Madhu on August 13, 1963 and Sudhir on October 26, 1969. He continued to be dependent on his father financially for bringing up his family, till he got job as Manager at Alpana Cinema, retiring from there in 1977. The family shifted from ancestral home at 53, Hanuman Road to the newly built house at Hauz Khas. He led an uneventful life, passing away on October 11, 1997.

Inder was a fine gentleman, quiet and soft spoken, rarely raising his voice. He dressed smartly. He liked good things in life, including drinking, smoking and gourmet food. He did not succeed in what he set out to do. Despite failures, he never gave up and kept at it. His Bollywood dream remained unrealised, like that of thousands, who try their luck in the film industry. But that's life. Not all dreams become real.



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