



Invited Editorial Article

British Columbia Government proclaims April as "Dalit History Month" in Recognition of Seminal Contribution of Four Indian Dalit Icons

The New Democratic Party government, in its historic move, on March 31, 2022, has recognized April 2022 as "Dalit History Month" in British Columbia province of Canada. Followers of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a Dalit icon and the architect of the Constitution of India, globally observe the month of April every year to remember the contribution of reputed Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) personalities and events in the history of their communities. In its official communication, the government of British Columbia underlined that the decision to observe the month of April is to acknowledge and fight against discrimination and racism against people of colour and indigenous people, and to bring about justice and equality for all. The British Columbia proclamation not only recognizes the great Dalit personalities but also acknowledges 'the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all'. The proclamation reads:

kind that the Canadian government has recognised the seminal contribution of four eminent personalities hailing from SC community in different parts of India by honouring them officially. In a similar vein, the office of the Mayor, City of Burnaby, proclaimed April 14, 2022 as "Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality" on April 4, 2022. It concludes in saying:

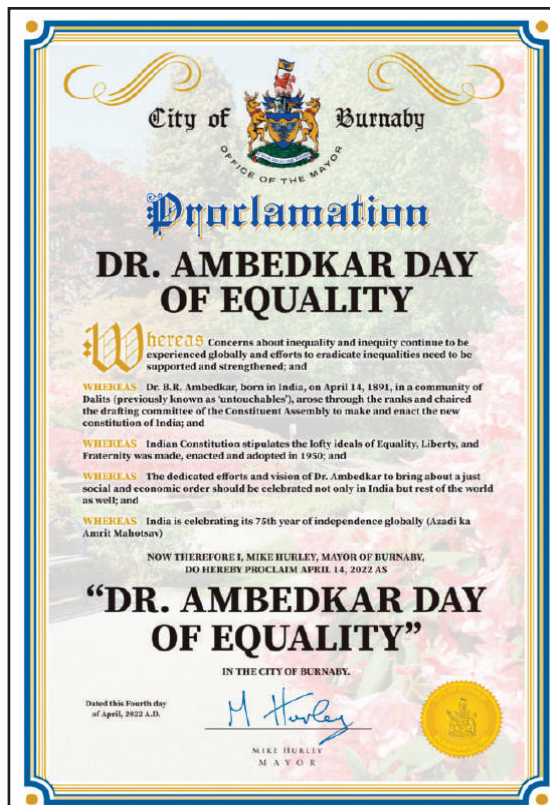
successfully organizing a three day international Dalit Conference – May 16-18, 2003 – in the coastal Canadian city of Vancouver. The Ravidasia community of the SC diaspora of British Columbia, further showcased its strength and commitment in organizing another historic event on February 25, 2008 by celebrating Guru Ravidass Jayanti in the Parliament of British Columbia in Victoria.

April Dalit Month in "in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all ...". The installation of Dr.



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"WHEREAS British Columbia is a culturally diverse province comprising many people and communities, and WHEREAS Indigenous people, black people and people of colour in British Columbia to experience systemic racism, injustices, discrimination and hate, and the government of British Columbia is committed to addressing all forms of racism and discrimination, and WHEREAS April is a significant month for Dalit communities, and this special month includes birth and death anniversaries of important Dalit leaders and social reformers in the movement against systemic discrimination based on caste, such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi, and WHEREAS the government of British Columbia acknowledges the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all, and WHEREAS Dalit History Month is an opportunity to honour, celebrate and reflect on the history, experience and accomplishments of the Dalit community..."

"WHEREAS The dedicated efforts and vision of Dr. Ambedkar to bring about a just social and economic order should be celebrated not only in India but rest of the world as well ..."

The Dalit community in Canada draw its strength from the social consciousness generated by the Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas of Vancouver and other Canadian cities. These religious institutions played significant role in developing and strengthening community life among the SC diaspora in Canada. The community showed its unity and commitment towards missionary zeal in

The Jayanti, the first of its kind to be celebrated in any parliament in North America, was arranged by the Burnaby-Edmonds LMA Raj Chouhan and the New democratic caucus. Apart from these two historic events of the community, many more significant community activities, socio-cultural as well as academic, are being organized regularly by the Chetna Association of Canada and the Indian Buddhist Society of Canada that added to the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community as mentioned in the Proclamation of the Government of British Columbia about the

– a great source of 'social capital' of the community.

It is pertinent to mention here that what gave initial fillip to emergence of social Dalit history was the classic work of Mark Juergensmeyer entitled *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab*, published by the University of California Press, Berkeley in 1982. This book was based on his PhD thesis. It was republished later in India in 1988 by Ajanta (Delhi) under the title *Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchables*, and again a third time by the Navayana press under the title *Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Ad Dharm Challenge* in 2009. Based on his brilliant field-based research work in Doaba Punjab, this classic set the benchmark for future course of research on this almost neglected but most important domain of subaltern social history. The proclamations of "Dalit History Month" and "Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality" will go a long way in reclaiming and nurturing Dalit counter-public in general and an egalitarian social setup in particular.

"Dalit History Month"

It is a matter of great pride and honour that the Government of British Columbia, Canada has proclaimed the month of April as a "Dalit History Month" in recognition of the life-long contributions of the four Indian Dalit icons; Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi and the Office of the Mayor of City of Burnaby declared April 14, 2022 as "Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality". Many congratulations to the entire community.

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies

In the history of Canada, this is perhaps the first instance of its

Rang Layegi Hamari Fakamasti Ek Din - Dalit History Month in Canada

The India Times of Canada has carried a story on 'Dalit History Month' which is observed in Canada and other countries by the dalit communities in the month of April every year. The story is going viral not only in Canada and other countries but also in India. I thought of looking into the matter and share some more information on the subject for the larger interest of the concerned people and the stake holders.

This is for the first time the Province of British Columbia of Canada has officially proclaimed under the hand and seal of the Governor of British Columbia that "April is a significant month for Dalit communities and it includes the birth and death anniversaries of important Dalit

the cardinal principles and ideals of "Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity" so beautifully enshrined in the constitution of India. It also fully endorses to the very edifice of the aims and objectives of the UN and also the foreign policy of India based on the dictum of "Vasudaiva Katumbkam" - the whole world is one family for international peace and prosperity. The honoured dalit icons in the British Columbia proclamation on "Dalit History Month" are the flag bearers of India's 'Soft Power' and as such "We the people of India' must see these developments in this perspective.

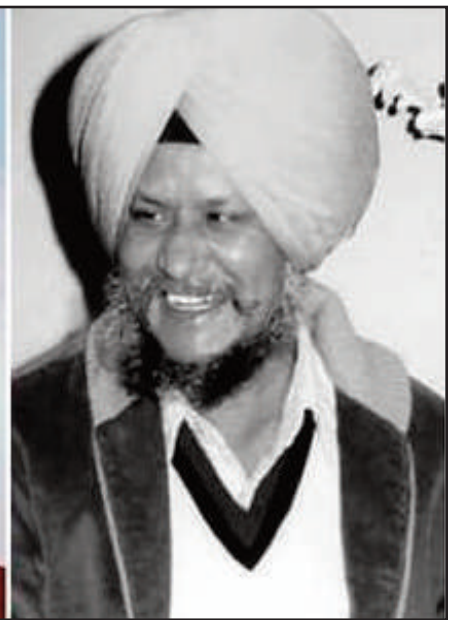
The Administration of the Province of British Columbia deserves full admiration and appreciation for giving a lead to the international com-

hood. I recall that the City of Burnaby took the right decision a couple of years ago and declared April 14, birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar as 'Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality' and last year the Province of British Columbia followed suit in April 2021 and carry forward the tradition this year, 2022 too and pronounced the honour for the greatest son of India by declaring April 14 as 'Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality'. Besides the Administration of the British Columbia - an abode of people with diverse background as stated in the official proclamation, "a culturally diverse province comprising many peoples and communities", the Indian community led by Chetna Association of Canada, Journalist Gurpreet

tion of British Columbia in declaring the month of April as 'Dalit History Month' in honour of the sons of India - Babasaheb Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Babu Mangoo Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi and also in supporting the proposal of April 14 as the International Day of



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leaders and social reformers in the movement against systemic discrimination based on castes, such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia, and Sant Ram Udasi" The India Times story has termed the British Columbia gesture as "The British Columbia proclamation not only recognizes these individuals but also acknowledges "the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all". It is a matter of great satisfaction that the followers of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the icon of the oppressed and suppressed not only in

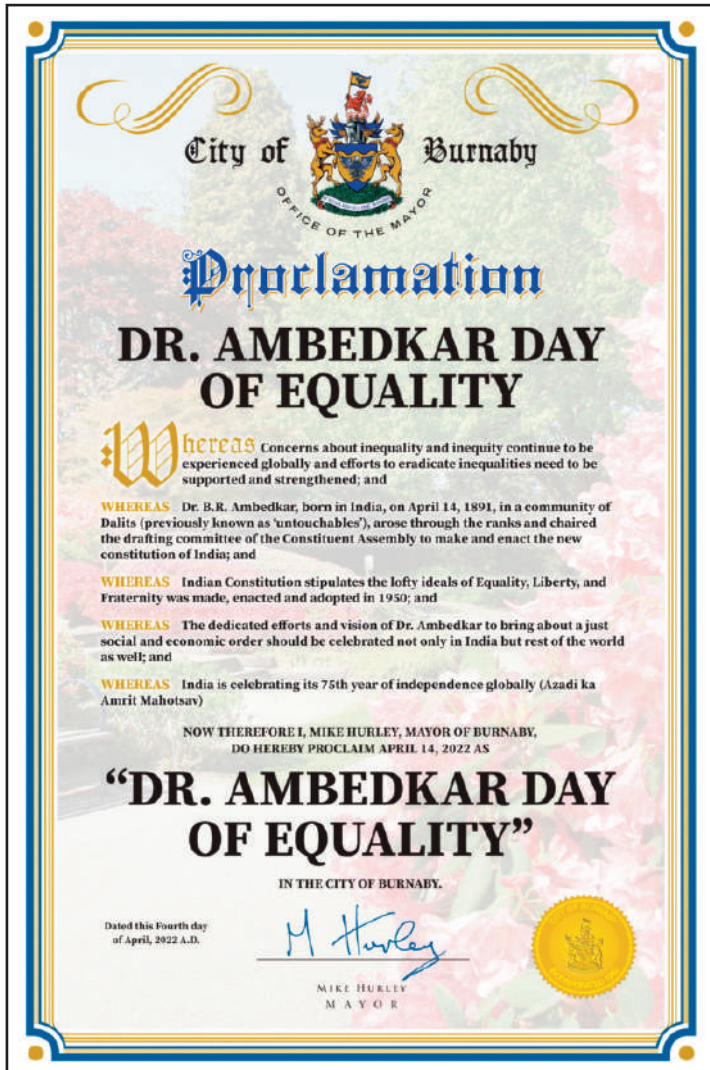
India but throughout the world, were active and awakened in carrying forward the mission and caravan of the visionary leader with a view to contribute positively to the establishment of a just world order on the basis of

community in giving due recognition to the heroes who struggled throughout their lives to improve and transform the social order for the betterment of the society at large and spread the message of harmony and brother-

Singh (Radical Desi) and community activists like Tejpal Ganger of Vancouver Guru Ravidass Sabha, the grandson of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia among others did a good work in taking into confidence the Administra-

diplomatic interaction and soft diplomacy.

The sooner the better. We would remain and that is why I captioned this piece as "Rang Layegi Hamari Fakamasti Ek Din"



Equality under the aegis of the UN. Though the main proposal is awaiting decision of the Government of India yet it is matter great satisfaction that Chetna Association of Canada, Social activists like Tejpal Ganger and media organs like the Ambedkar Times and the Desh Doaba of California could prevail upon their local interlocutors to honour the greatest son of India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other worthy dignitaries.

While I congratulate and admire them, I urge the Government of India to kindly look into the matter and make a demarche to the UN to declare April 14, birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar as International Day of Equality in keeping with the

DAVE JONES FOR STATE SENATE 2022 DISTRICT 6 FUND RAISING

Team Dave Jones organized fund raising event at the residence of Dr. Parmjit Takhar and Dr. Goodie Takhar Sunday March 27, 2022 from 5pm to 8 Pm. Close to 50 members of our community participated. Every one participant contributed and reached

our target in no time. Hon. Dave Tamayo director with Smud was key note speaker. Ram brothers Paul and Jack came all the way from Bay Area. Great event and enjoyable evening with songs and speeches. Our heat felt thanks to Takhar family, chief

guest Hon Dave Jones for state senate 2022 and participate from all walk of life. During this fund raising Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber presented copies of "Ambedkar Times" (English) to Mr. Dave Jones

Note: Media coverage by
1: Prem Chumber "Desh Doaba" & "Ambedkar Times"
2: Hussan Laroya Banga.
Sukh Chain Singh
Team Dave Jones
For State senate 2022 District 6



Pictured: Prem K. Chumber "Ambedkar Times"

DAVE JONES FOR STATE SENATE 2022 DISTRICT 6 FUND RAISING



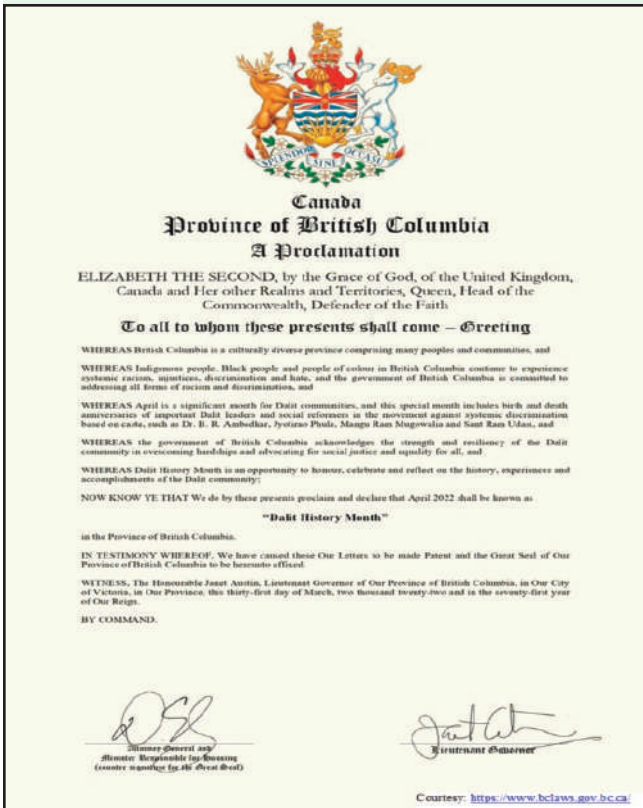
Proclamation of April 2022 as "DALIT HISTORY MONTH"

It was noted with immense pleasure that the province of British Columbia, Canada, has proclaimed the month of April, 2022 as a "Dalit History Day". Since the month of April includes the Birth and Death anniversaries of eminent Dalit leaders and pioneers like Bharat Rattan Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, Jyoti-

Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA congratulates the entire



O.P. Balley (General Secretary) Supreme Council Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA 1-925-252-6085



community for this great and rare honor and expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Province of British Columbia, Canada for this commendable initiative.

It will also inspire our future generations with a spirit of self-reliance and responsibility to pursue and follow the legacy of their preceptors for liberty, equality and fraternity. We also highly appreciate the dedicated

rao Phule, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi, this proclamation commemorates their incessant endeavors, innumerable sacrifices and invaluable contributions for equality and social justice. This unprecedented recognition at such a higher level is a matter of great pride and a badge of honor for the entire Dalit community all over the world. It will go in the annals of the history of Dalits as a rare display of an unforgettable event.

efforts of those who initially took up and coordinated this initiative with the provincial authorities of British Columbia. It is definitely a positive and a sustained effort to bring such a prominent social issue to an international forum.

We also admire Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Chief Editor, Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times (Punjabi and English Weeklies) for his coordination in publishing this information of such an important public interest.

BC proclaims Dalit History Month

In a historic move, the NDP government in Victoria has recognized April as Dalit History Month.

Responding to an application moved by Radical Desi, an online magazine that covers alternative politics, the provincial Attorney General and the Lt. Governor signed the proclamation declaring April 2022 as "Dalit History Month".

Dalits are the oppressed community of India, who are often treated as "untouchables" by the so called upper castes of Indian society according to brutal norms practiced by the Hindu priest class.

Since April is the birthday month of a towering Dalit leader and world renowned scholar Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, it has a special significance for Dalits across the globe.

Also, the month of April is important because of the birthdays and death anniversaries of other Dalit icons, such as Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi. Both Ambedkar and Phule were born in Maharashtra.

Ambedkar, who was the architect of the Indian constitution and had fought against caste-based discrimination against his community, was born in Maharashtra on April 14 in 1891. He also stood up for the rights of the women and challenged Hindu supremacy.

Phule, who was a well-respected social reformer who had denounced untouchability, was born on April 11, 1827. He was known as an educator, who believed in scientific

thinking and women empowerment.

Mugowalia and Udasi on the other hand hailed from Punjab. Mugowalia, who had participated in an armed resistance against British occupation of India, was instrumental behind Dalit emancipation movement in



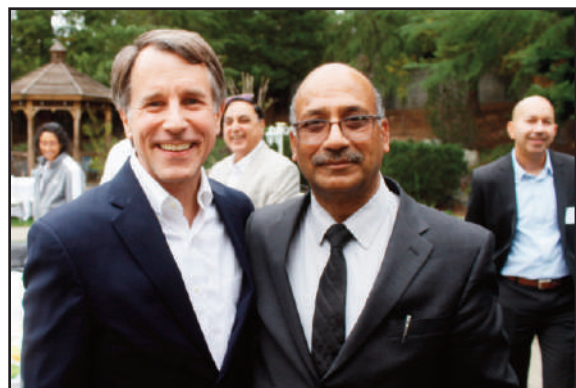
Journalist Gurpreet Singh (Radical Desi)

Punjab. He died on April 22, 1980.

Udasi was a revolutionary poet, who was born on April 20, 1939. He was influenced by communist revolution and later became an inspiration for the poor working class and those resisting repression.

The BC proclamation not only recognizes these individuals, but also acknowledges "the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all".

DAVE JONES FOR STATE SENATE 2022 DISTRICT 6 FUND RAISING



Pictured: Prem K. Chumber "Ambedkar Times"



Pictured: Prem K. Chumber "Ambedkar Times"





Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

The Path to Eliminating Illegal Homeless Camps

We are all aware that the county's homeless population has been growing and we can see the impacts every time we leave our houses. As we continue to tackle homelessness, we run



into challenges at almost every turn including state laws, court decisions, pandemics, and judicial rulings. That being the case, we are constantly adapting our approach and, I am happy to say, enhancing the ways we try to solve the homeless problem.

The solutions we have put forward include increased access to treatment for mental health and drugs and alcohol addiction, and we are increasing our outreach to connect people to those services. While treatment for mental illness and addiction is the best thing we can do to help people get off the streets, it will never be enough on its own. We have to do more than treat the root causes and offer options that help connect people to services and get them into safer environments. For that reason, Sacramento County is moving forward with a plan to establish sanctioned encampments throughout the county, and shutting down the illegal encampments.

A sanctioned encampment is almost certainly what you think it is: an area designated by the county for homeless individuals to live/camp legally and safely. While this may not sound like something you want to get excited about and might even concern you, I believe this is the best thing we can do at this time. First, Sacramento County cannot get back to enforcing ordinances that prevent camping on public land until we can offer an alternative due to a decision at the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Second, a sanctioned encampment is far preferable to unregulated camping.

We have learned from the failures of other sanctioned sites and intend to keep the county's new sites staffed at all times, regulated to prevent drug use and other criminal behavior, and we will put them in the areas that will see the greatest benefit. By areas that will receive the greatest benefit, I mean the areas

currently being the most heavily impacted by unchecked campsites. While many people may jump to the conclusion that the best place to put a sanctioned site is as far from developed areas as possible, the real best approach is to find locations that are near where large groups of homeless people are already dwelling. This ensures we get the most people we can living in sanctioned encampments because it is an area they already have a connection to.

Most importantly, sanctioned encampments are more than just a place for homeless individuals to sleep. We will be using them as an opportunity to connect individuals to the services we know they need to get into transitional or permanent housing and back to a self-sustaining lifestyle. Sanctioned encampments will have the benefit of being staffed by mental health and behavioral health professionals that can get at the issues that are keeping so many people trapped in homelessness. Regardless of whether or not substance abuse or mental illness is the cause of a person's homelessness, for many it has become part of what prevents them from escaping homelessness.

Again, while this may not sound ideal to some, and I am sure there are people who are worried that one of these encampments will be near where they live, shop, or dine, I am confident this is the right move. Fewer homeless individuals making campsites around the county is a good thing. Increasing outreach and connection to drug/alcohol treatment and mental health services is a good thing. And getting the power back to shut down illegal camping sites all over the County is also a good thing. These sanctioned encampments are the balance between compassion and toughness my constituents have been telling me they support for as long as I have been a Supervisor. This is just one of many important steps we must take as part of our comprehensive approach to relieving the County's homeless crisis.

Gifts from the Heart Brings Joy to Thousands

For more than 30 years, thousands of lives have been touched by Sacramento County's Gifts from the Heart program, an annual holiday gift-giving initiative that runs from October until mid-December and serves those within the Child Protective Services and Senior and Adult Services divi-



sions of the Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services.

In 2021, the program provided gifts to more than 2,500 youth, adults and seniors at an estimated cash value of \$152,040.

They got Nerf balls, art supplies, scented candles, Disney princess toys, basketballs, Bluetooth speakers and more! The youngest recipient, Karl, age 1, received finger puppets, wooden puzzles, and a Lego train. The oldest, Quang, age 91, received queen bedsheets, postage stamps and a gift card to Wal-Mart.

Best of all, these foster youth, disabled adults and homebound seniors got a reminder over the winter holidays that they were not forgotten.

More than 80 individuals and corporate sponsors from businesses, government agencies, service groups and families donate gifts that allow the program to continue.

A team of 57 volunteers managed the pick-up, distribution, and delivery of gifts from community and private sponsors. The volunteers, many of whom return year after year, spend three weeks in the warehouse organizing toys and gifts. In 2021, volunteers logged in almost 10,000 hours.

Donations come in other forms, too. Jackson Properties donated warehouse space; and Sourdough & Co., Roma 2 Pizza, Pizza Guys and Subway provided lunches to hungry volunteers.

"This was our second year of taking precautions due to COVID-19, but we didn't let it stop us," said Tonja Edelman, Volunteer and Student Intern Services Coordinator. "We required volunteers to be fully vaccinated and we wore masks, and we got it done. We are so thankful for our volunteers and for the contributions from local community partners that make the program possible."

The total cash value of the program – volunteers, donations, gifts

- is estimated to be \$476,612.

And the look on gift recipients' faces? Priceless.

Gifts from the Heart welcomes everyone who is interested in participating by sponsoring gifts, becoming a community partner and volunteering time during the season. All

donations are tax deductible. To learn more email Tonja Edelman or call her at 916-875-2027.

Sacramento County Project Roomkey Houses Hundreds

Project Roomkey (PRK) was launched in Sacramento County in April 2020 in response to the growing concern of vulnerability to COVID-19 our unhoused population was facing. PRK was introduced as a statewide solution to an emergency situation and the County, City of Sacramento and Sacramento Steps Forward pooled their resources to bring it to fruition.

The program was intended to be short-term, to allow for the COVID-19 virus to run its course and then ramp down the sheltering efforts as community efforts lessened. As we now know, the program has been



running for nearly two years and has served more than 2,000 people— having provided isolation for persons who contracted the virus and private units for people to safely shelter in place. As a result, of these efforts, hundreds of people have exited to stable and safe locations.

Due to the unexpected duration of COVID response, state and federal dollars were made available for use to extend local PRK efforts. With state and federal funding running out, the threat of COVID-19 waning due to increased vaccination rates and lower transmission rates, Sacramento County and its many partners are ramping down the prevention and isolation units and working closely with community providers to transition PRK participants into long-term housing solutions.

The PRK program was never
(Contd.. on next page)

(Continue from page 6)

intended as a long-term solution to homelessness and is not a sustainable sheltering model as the program is incredibly expensive – more than \$4000 per person a month, and relies on resources that were only available due to the community-wide shut-down. Hotels that offered up their space need to resume their place in tourism, and Goodwill employees reimagined as shelter staff need to return to their chosen field of work.

Project Room Key by the numbers (Through January 2022)

- Total sheltered: 2,051
- Total exited to stable housing: 425
- Total exited to temporary housing or emergency housing: 361
- Still in PRK motels: 335
- Average length of stay: 7.5 months
- 88% have been there for more than a month
- 63% have been there more than 3 months
- 27% have been there over 6 months
- 21% have been there over a year

For a full report on the demographics, numbers and exits from the PRK program through January, read the latest report on the Sacramento Steps Forward website.

PRK Program ends at La Quinta

The PRK program at La Quinta closed on March 15 and all participants were provided shelter or housing options; with many having received many options over the course of their stay. While the County has taken the lead on managing operations and funding the shelter components, re-housing involves many public and private partners.

Over the last month, housing efforts have intensified across PRK to ensure connectivity to community-based programs that will carry them well beyond their time at PRK. With the closure of the first site, County staff and partners have ensured all participants had a safe place to transition to. At the February presentation of the ramp-down plan there were 121 participants at La Quinta, of those:

- 55 participants have moved to the two remaining PRK motels
- 53 participants will receive 21-day motel vouchers (which will be extended when housing has been identified

and participants have continued to work on next steps with their community-based housing provider) 6 have moved into housing 2 chose to exit voluntarily 5 were exited for egregious program rule violations

Federal reimbursement funding extension

DHA was recently informed that FEMA’s non-congregate shelter reimbursement will be extended until June 30, 2022 (formally scheduled to

- Mather Interim Shelter: 140 individuals
- North A Street Shelter: 80 adults
- Scattered Site Shelters: 115 people
- Domestic Violence Shelter: 162 women/children

Transitional Housing (Capacity per night)

- Adolfo Transitional Housing for Foster Youth: 68 youth households
- Mather Family Transitional Housing:

vide outstanding care for the shelter animals and animals in the community, the public was not able to access the shelter for services including adoptions. Furthermore, social distancing mandates and essential worker guidelines called for understaffing and loss of volunteers. This resulted in overcrowding of the animal population, which was temporarily resolved by the shelter’s foster program and the implementation of a new adoption by appointment process.

For the next two years and as mandates began to loosen up, the shelter operated in this capacity but began to host walk-in adoption events on weekends and with rescue partners. These events were very successful and helped animals get out of the shelter and into homes quickly – lessening the shelter population impact and increasing positive outcomes.

“We are very excited and proud to reopen without adoption appointments. It is time to achieve even higher lifesaving results and the feedback from the public has been very positive,” said Bradshaw Animal Shelter Director, Annette Bedsworth. “We welcome

everyone to stop in and visit our shelter pets and beautiful facility. Help us continue our lifesaving mission and adopt today!”

Here is what you should know before you go:

The shelter is open Tuesday-Sunday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. (excluding holidays).

The shelter is located at 3839 Bradshaw Rd, Sacramento, CA 95827.

Adoptions are first-come, first-serve. Consider arriving early. You are free to browse the shelter without assistance from staff.

Adoption applications and specials are available on the shelter’s website.

You can view adoptable animals before you arrive by visiting the adoptable animals webpage. Pet licensing is available in-person, online and via mail.

If you cannot adopt, please consider volunteering, fostering or donating.

To learn more about the Bradshaw Animal Shelter and its lifesaving mission, visit animalcare.saccounty.gov.



County Animal Shelter Reopens to the Public

end March 31, 2022), and the CA Department of Social Services has also confirmed that Counties can request additional Emergency Solutions Grant funding for continued PRK efforts. As such, DHA will be reevaluating the closure dates of the final two motel locations in concert with our partners from the City, Sacramento Steps Forward and SHRA, who provide critical re-housing supports for those in PRK, and will determine how best to use the funding options now accessible for this purpose.

Shelters and housing programs

The programs, services and funding offered through the County of Sacramento is dynamic, but below is a partial list of the programs the County funds to help shelter, house and care for our community members experiencing homelessness. The programs are often a collaboration between many County departments, including Human Assistance; Health Services; and Child, Family and Adult Services.

Sheltering (Capacity per night)

- Emergency Family Shelters: 40 families

- 25 families
 - Youth Transitional Housing: 12 Youth Permanent Housing (Yearly Capacity)
 - Flexible Housing Program: 300 households
 - Flexible Supportive Rehousing: 250 households
 - MHSA Built Permanent Supportive Housing Units: 221 households
- For a full picture of county-funded homeless outreach, shelter and housing services, as well as mental health and addiction services, review our Homeless Program Matrix.

County Animal Shelter Reopens to the Public

Sacramento County’s Bradshaw Animal Shelter has now made the transition to fully reopen to the public – doing away with adoption appointments and restricted hours.

Like many businesses, Sacramento County’s Bradshaw Animal Shelter has been closed to the public due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The shelter initially closed its doors in March 2020 in response to state-mandated health regulations. While shelter staff continued to pro-



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

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Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Goodie Takhar, PhD



"Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" forum fondly remember 13 April; on this day in 1699, Tenth Master Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji baptized the five beloved (Punj Pyare) at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Ji infused a new spirit in them - the spirit of freedom, equality, justice - and put to an end for all times the oppressive social system of caste-based binaries of purity and pollution. *Manas Kee Jaat Sabhe Akay Pehchanbo - Equality of Mankind. We wish to all Very Very Happy Khalsa Sathapan day and Happy Vaisakhi!*

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Vivekananda on Guru Gobind Singh

Speaking of the great powers that used to be infused in those days into the initiates of Guru Gobind Singh, Swamiji recited a popular doha (couplet) on Khalsa. Sava Lakh Se Ek Ladaun Tabi Gobind Singh Nam Kahaun.

The meaning is - When Guru Gobind Singh gives the Name i.e., initiates, a single man becomes strong enough to triumph over a lakh and a quarter of his

foes. Each disciple, deriving from his soul filled with such wonderful heroism. While holding forth thus on the glories of this religion. Swamiji's eyes dilated with enthusiasm seemed to be emitting fire, and his hearers dumb-stricken and looking at his face kept watching, the wonderful sight. After a while the disciples said: "Sir, it was very remarkable that Guru Gobind Singh could unite both Hindus and Mus-

salmans with the fold of his religion and lead them both towards the same end. In Indian history, no other example of this can be found. Swamiji: "Men Can never be united unless there is a bond of common interest. You can never unite people merely by getting up meetings, societies and lectures, if their interests be not one and the same. Guru Gobind Singh made it understood everywhere that the

men of his age, be they Hindus of Mussalmans, were living under a regime of profound injustice and oppression. He did not create any common interest. He only pointed out to the masses. And so both Hindus and Mussalmans followed him. Yes, in Indian history, such an example is indeed very rare.

**Swami Vivekananda's Works
Vol. VI P. 469,
Conversations and Dialogues**

The Kashmir Files

The treatment meted out to our co-citizens called Pandits in Kashmir cannot be acceptable in a civilized society, and is worthy of condemnation in possible strong terms. It is thirty years now and the miserable plight of these homeless citizens in their own motherland continues to haunt them, and continues to be the hot topic of public debate. Is the period of three decades too short to rehabilitate the unfortunate citizens in their home and restore them their fundamental rights? Are the ruling dispensations so powerless that the simple problem of its citizens is beyond their control and capacity particularly when they are proclaiming with drum beats that they are fast moving on the path of making the country an enviable strong world power?

I have intently watched the film from shot one to the end to the utter shock of my life at the way the facts have been projected with an obvious ulterior motive. Depiction of gory scenes of violence such as sawing of the human body and shooting the lined up citizens including children from close range one after the other et al is a beastly but emotion provoking rather than a healing act. It is more divisive in its content than an attempt to provide succour to the displaced families and children rotting in the tents or shanties on forced displacement from their sweet homes due mainly to the indifference or help-

lessness of the toothless ruling dispensation.

When the unfortunate and innocent citizens were being exposed to all kinds of humiliations, atrocities and



tortures, were not the rulers sleeping like the Nero while Rome was burning? The unbridled perpetrators are shown to have the field day and the administration being at the receiving end! One finds objectivity missing and ulterior motive pronouncedly conspicuous in the narrative. The film does not apply balm on the bleeding wounds of the victims; it rather aggravates the vulnerable situation in the society and the country.

The BJP was an active and strong partner of the Central Govern-

ment when the tragic event of Pandits' unfortunate flight from their home took place. What stopped it from putting its foot down on the issue to bring the Government on the knees?

If that is a history now, what is the present dispensation up to? If it could remove the so called controversial historical Art 370 at the stroke of a pen, why could it not with all the resources at its command get back the Pandits to their homes even after eight years of its reign?

Have its blaming, cursing, criticism and condemnation of the past ruling dispensations helped in any manner to rehabilitate the Pandits or can it be a solution to their problem? How many more elections do

they need to win to resolve this issue?

The way the film is publicized, marketed and supported publicly by the ruling dispensation, leaves no doubt as to its ulterior motive. The most of the audience in the cinema hall where I watched the film was sponsored illiterate or semi-literate work force of some factories or business companies. Some videos are viral in the social media in which 'House Full' sign boards are shown outside the cinema houses running this film but halls are actually almost empty. Is it difficult to know the designs of the Producers and the promoters of the film?

Had the film been produced by some other person, the Censor Board would certainly not have allowed screening of such gory scenes which are fraught with potential threat to the peace and harmony in the society and the country. There are umpteen instances in the recent past when the films were not allowed to see the light of the day on the ground of being not conducive to amity in the society though depicting the naked truth. I hope and pray for the rehabilitation of our co-citizens and restoration of their fundamental rights without losing further time. It is not such a herculean task as made out to be if the Government has the will and determination to handle it with deserved seriousness and sincerity. Amen.

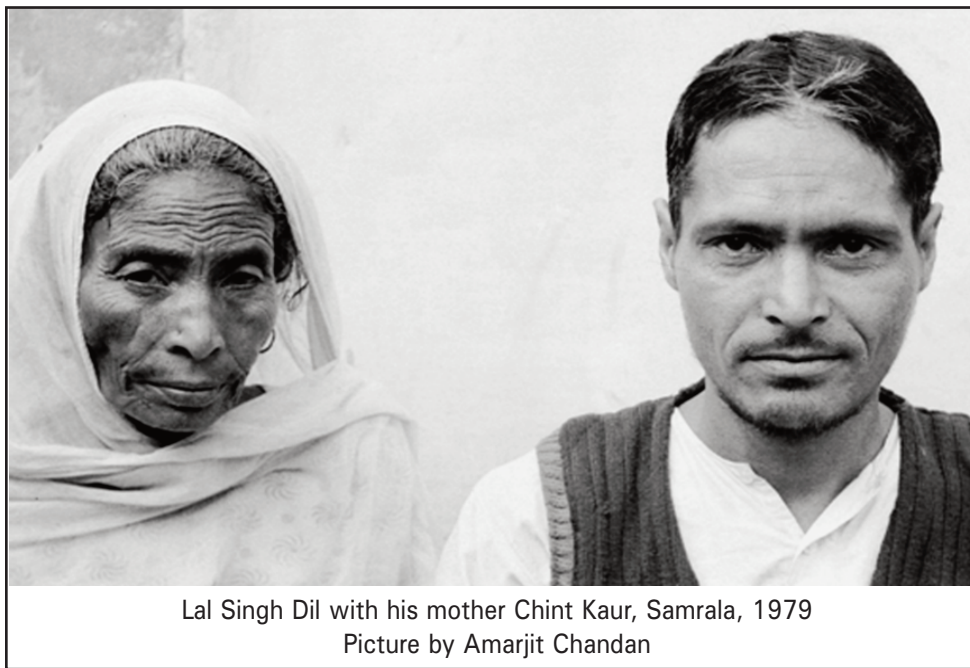
LAL SINGH DIL: POET OF PEOPLES

Lal Singh Dil (April 11, 1943 – August 14, 2007), revolutionary poet, left an indelible mark through his poetry on the struggle for equality, social justice and freedom that began in late 1960s in Punjab, popularly known as Naxalite lehar (movement). He was born at his maternal village, Ghungrali Sikhān, near Samrala, a small town in Punjab on the Chandigarh-Ludhiana highway. He belonged to a Dalit family, Ramdassia Chamār (an ex-untouchable community of tanners). Dalits were mostly deprived of agricultural land and other sources of livelihood. Like other community members, the mainstay of Dil's family was manual labour on the agricultural lands of their village farmers. During off-seasons, landless Dalits earn their livelihood through various forms of manual wage works, such as labouring at construction sites or other manual-intensive daily-wage work. His father Raunqi Ram worked as a daily wager throughout his life. During a conversation with Gayatri Rajwade, Dil recalled a time when his grandmother used to sit and grind wheat the whole day for a single paise. And in Dil's own words, "[a]t the end of the day, we would dust our clothes, collect the wheat stuck on our clothes and mix that with water and drink it before sleeping" (based on forwarded (April 7, 2021) email from Nirupama Dutt to Amarjit Chandan dated August 13, 2007).

Despite extreme poverty at home, Dil's mother Chint Kaur sent him to school at Samrala. The atmosphere at the school was not very congenial to Dil. He wrote: "When I graduated to the higher classes, I started picking up some skills which thrilled me. I especially liked to trace out a picture and then shade it. I traced an image of Ravidas Bhagat, which showed him standing. Below the image was a pair of shoes and some cobbler's tools. The teacher in charge of the class was intrigued looking at the drawing and then laughed at it with disdain that was shared by the students. I brought the picture home in my satchel." (Simran Kaler available at: <https://poetlalsinghdil.wordpress.com/category/simran-kaler/> accessed on April 8, 2021). Against all odds, Dil became the first matric qualified member of his clan. His mother sold her ear-rings to enable him to reach college to become a schoolteacher. He studied for a year in A.S. College, Khanna, close to his hometown. Thereafter, he got enrolled in Junior Teachers' Training course at SHG College in Behlolpur, again near his hometown, but had to leave after two years without completing the course. He also joined a Gyani, an honours course in Punjabi literature, but again had to quit without completing it. From his school days, Dil had to support his studies along with by working part-time as a manual wage labourer/herder as well as providing tuition; this was likely one of the main reasons behind the repeated

failures to complete several study courses which he had joined after successfully qualifying in the matriculation examination.

Along with extreme poverty, Dil also experienced social exclusion and caste-based oppression during different intervals in his life. He recalled various instances of such bitter experiences in his autobiography *Dastan* (The Story). How as a small boy of five or six, he was whip-lashed and driven out of a landowner's fields in his village for daring to bathe at his well was just one such instance which expressed the gruesome scale of the prevalence of caste-based oppression in a society that otherwise boast of its casteless social



Lal Singh Dil with his mother Chint Kaur, Samrala, 1979
Picture by Amarjit Chandan

order. He also narrated how a comrade, a senior dominant caste writer, took away a jug of water when he tried to reach it at a party meeting, and how he felt deeply humiliated to learn that the mother of his female classmate, whom he was very fond of, had 'purified' the tumbler in which he had given tea, by casting it in the fire of the household hearth. Amarjit Chandan, a close comrade of Dil, writes in his "A Complete Story of an Incomplete Journey", an introduction to the *Dastan*, how Dil had suffered and exposed graphically the prevalence of the arrogance of caste superiority in his locality, at his school, and in the Naxalite organizations and even in police custody.

Though Dil was forced to withdraw from his studies, he continued to reflect critically on his surroundings. He continued to capture subtle nuances of the exploitative system around him till his last moment. The medium that he chose to give expression to his experiences and observations during his struggleful life was the subtlety of poetry. He was one of the most popular poets of the Naxalite movement in East Punjab, with a gravitas to match. As narrated in his autobiography, Lal Singh Dil was subjected to many inhuman tortures during police custody, and remained in jail for a long period of time. It was during his imprisonment that his first collection of radical poetry entitled *Satluji di Hava* (The

Satluji Breeze) was published in 1971. His poetry immediately became an icon of the revolutionary struggle in Punjab as well as of the sorrows and sufferings of the poor and Dalits in the state.

After his release from the jail, Dil went underground where he spent about 15 years of his active life. He did all sorts of labour to keep himself and his struggle going on. He did not ask any help from any quarter. During free time from his hard manual labour, he continued to write and penned two more books: *Bahut Sāre Suraj* (So Many Suns), 1982; *Satthar* (A Sheaf), 1997; and an autobiography *Dastān*. His entire poetry is available in a collection entitled *Naglok* (The World of the Nagas) published in 1998 and 2008.

Nagas were the sons of the soil. It is commonly believed that Nagas were snake worshippers and the sovereign rulers of their land before the alleged arrival of the alien Aryans. He talked about them nostalgically in some of his poems. Two of them – *Sham da Rung* (The Shades of Evening) and *Lamma Larra* (The Long Caravan) are reproduced below. A narrated long poem called *Billa Aj Phir Aaya* (Billa Visited Again Today) was published posthumously in 2009.

Dil had started writing poetry at his early age, while he was still studying at school. That some of his poems were published in reputed vernacular magazines like *Preetlari*, *Nagmani* and *Lakeer*, even before the publication of *Satluji di Hava* (The *Satluji Breeze*) in 1971, his maiden collection of poetry, proved his hold over intricacies of poetry writing. His life and poetry, writes Nirupama Dutt, a writer and journalist: "... became grist to the mill of revolutionary politics, which worked happily for Dil, as he envisioned a new order free of caste and creed" (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019. Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/927571/i-saw-how-he-sought-to-break-the-chains-of-caste-nirupama-dutt-on-translating-lal-singh-dil> accessed on April 7, 2021).

Though familiar with Dil's poetry earlier, Nirupama came to know about the man himself only in the 1990s, when Dil returned to Samrala after spending many years out of Punjab (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019). By that time the spring thunder was almost over and many of the activists had resumed their normal course of life. Some of them had settled into respectable positions in the higher eche-

lons of government, media, academic and even business. A few of them settled abroad. However, for Comrade Dil, the only refuge was his mud house in his caste ghetto at Samrala, and the citadel of his thoughts and philosophy;

he was quintessentially a gyan yogi. He was a lonely fellow, Gulzar Mohammad Gorla, one of the closest associates of Dil in Samrala, told me during an informal conversation a few days after his passing away. He also mentioned that with the financial support from some of his comrades abroad, Dil opened a small tea-stall near the bus terminal close to his home in Samrala. It was also during this time that Dil used to spend long periods in solitude in the cremation grounds of his hometown for reasons best known to him. Nirupama met him at this stage, and since then she has been writing intermittently about Dil in newspapers and journals.

After Dil's death in 2007, Nirupama translated his autobiography and selected poetry that introduced him widely beyond his Punjabi speaking region. In 2017, Trilok Chand Ghai, an academic of Delhi University, translated 100 poems of Dil, entitled *Lal Singh Dil: Selected Poems – exclusion, deprivation and nothingness / translated from Punjabi* (Delhi: LG Publishers). Five of these poems were published in the reputed translation magazine MPT (Modern Poetry in Translation), 3 (18) – *Transitions*, Oxford UK, 2012, and two of them were reproduced in MPT's golden jubilee anniversary publication *Centres of Cataclysm*, Blood Axe Books in 2016. Writing about Ghai's translation David Constantine, poet editor, MPT observed 'And Trilok Chand Ghai's English serves that cause. Translators carry fraternity across the frontiers of space and time. Again and again, in these translations, there is a tone, an accent, a phrase as in music, that will touch readers of English as the poet himself does through his mother tongue.' Harbhajan Singh, Punjabi poet and critic expressing his opinion about Dil's poetry writes: 'These poems don't give us joy; they shame us. The poems that give us pleasure work to stabilize the already established values. The shaming poems uproot a person from his fixed position and challenge him to renew himself.' On the same back cover flap of the book, Amarjit Chandan wrote: 'Contemplating the word images of the people portrayed by Lal one is reminded of Amrita Sher-Gil's paintings'. His poetry is full of images of hard life, poverty, isolation, struggle, grief for the hapless, and faith in the victory of the toiling people. He wrote extensively on the *Ghandilasand Tapprivasi* (ever roaming vagrants



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LAL SINGH DIL: POET OF PEOPLES

(Continue from page 9)

(itinerants) and fuel-gatherer nomad girls. Below are reproduced two of his poems Sham da Rung (*The Shades of Evening*) and Lamma Larra (*The Long Caravan*) that crisply depict the life of the *Ghandilasand Tapprivasi*:

The Shades of Evening

*The shades of evening like many before
The paths are heading for settlements
The lake turns back from offices
thrown out of work
The lake is drinking its thirst
Some city has set off on the road to
the village
Throwing off all wages someone is
leaving*

*the long caravan moves on
along with the lengthening
shadows of evening
Children on donkeys' backs,
fathers cradling dogs in their arms
Mothers carrying cauldrons
on their backs
their children sleeping in those caul-
drons
The long caravan moves on
carrying on their shoulders
the bamboo of their huts
Who are these
starving Aryans
which India's land
are they headed to occupy
Dogs are dear to young men*



From left: Lal Singh Dil, Amarjit Chandan and Prem Parkash, Samrala.

*Someone comes wiping on his dhoti
the blood of weak animals on his goad
The shades of evening like many before*

The Long Caravan

*Leaving behind another's land
Loaded with the humiliation of rebukes*

*fancying loving faces in palaces
is not for them
These starving ones have left behind
yet another's land
The long caravan moves on*

His poetry valiantly confronted the deeply entrenched caste-based so-

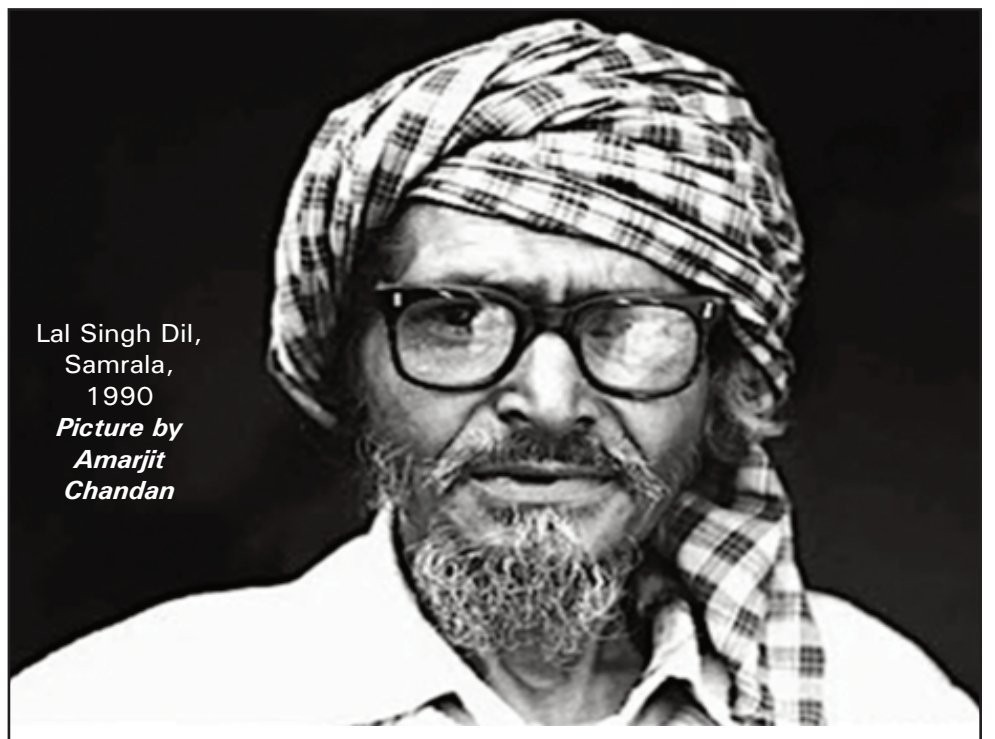
cial exclusion and other variants of oppressive dominant social structures. Dil sarcastically touched the subtle nerve of caste that followed its victims even after death in his often quoted poem *Zāt* (Caste) reproduced below:

Caste

*You love me, do you?
Even though you belong to another
caste. But do you know
Our elders do not even cremate their
dead at the same place*

His poetry also boldly communicated the vivid expression of his verbal revolt against the oppressive dominant social structures. Dil auda-

ideals within his frail physical frame. He wanted to see radical political transformation during his lifetime, and was impatient to put an end to the sufferings of those considered the lowest of the low. Nirupama said that 'Dil was looking for the revolution that would break all shackles. In his poetry he became the sensitive spurned child and engaged with god, empowered as he was by hopes of thundering spring.' How sweet are these words dedicated to god. I wish my last words would be, "I have complete faith in you!" I want to steal this line and dedicate it to the Revolution' (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019).



Lal Singh Dil,
Samrala,
1990
Picture by
Amarjit
Chandan

ciously underlined the presence of rebellion beneath the repression in another widely lauded poem *Shabad* (Words):

Words

*Words have been uttered long before
us,
And for long after us,
Chop off every tongue if you can,
But the words have still been uttered*

(Translated from the Punjabi by Nirupama Dutt. Available at: [https://parchanve.wordpress.com/category/authors/lal-singh-dil/accessed on April 8, 2021](https://parchanve.wordpress.com/category/authors/lal-singh-dil/accessed-on-April-8-2021)).

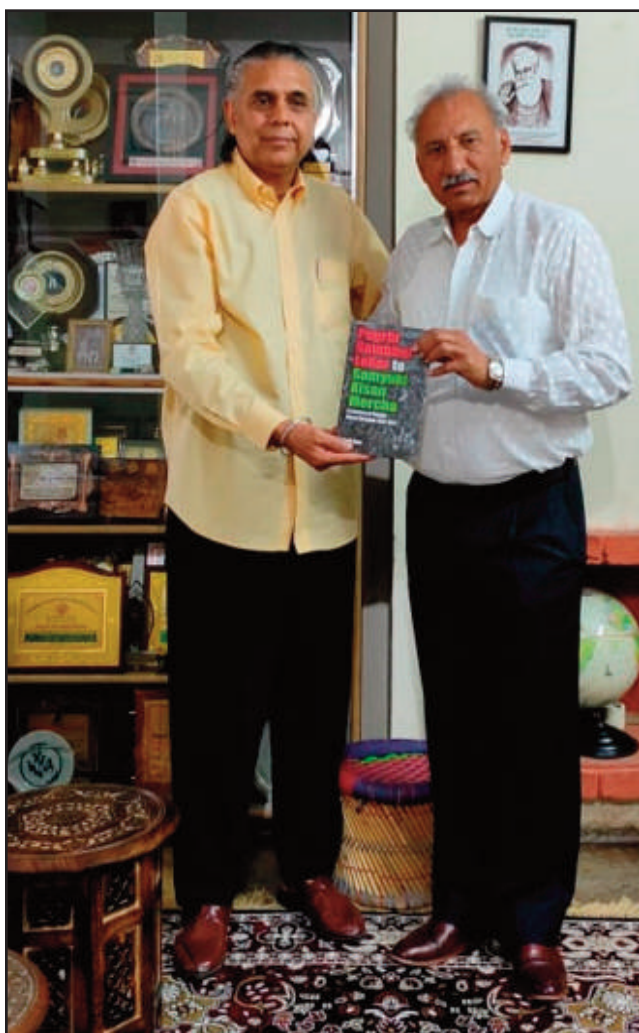
Dil was a humble and visionary poet never hankered after fame, and was happy to work incognito. He was often present in progressive programmes in different parts of the state, but never made efforts to make his presence felt. I vividly remember him once standing so unassumingly on a side of the entrance to the seminar hall of Amardeep Singh Shergill memorial College, Mukandpur (SBS Nagar, Punjab). Neither did he made any gesture nor did any of the visiting dignitaries take notice of him. One of the participants whom I was accompanying, conveyed this to me about him. Dil used to keep himself busy in his own unique way and was never heard indulging in self-propagation as well as complaining about his personal concerns.

He was reticent to the core, but at the same time there existed a volcano of revolutionary thoughts and

Available at <https://scroll.in/article/927571/i-saw-how-he-sought-to-break-the-chains-of-caste-nirupama-dutt-on-translating-lal-singh-dil> accessed on April 7, 2021).

What distinguished Lal Singh Dil from his contemporary revolutionary poets was his sole concern not only for the lowest of the low, but also for those who were severely marginalised and thrown out of the society in toto, and forced to live vibrant life. He deeply sympathised with the landless manual workers, daily wagers, nomadic men and women, especially the black cloth-donning girls who gathered fuel to keep the fire burning in the hearths outside their thatched huts under the open blue sky.

Though he was not able to continue his study and reach higher education, his deep association with the existential harsh situations at the grassroots level taught him precious lessons about the varied dimensions of life – his bitter experiences at school and college, in the Naxalite movement, police custody, and day-to-day social interaction across religions, imbued and enriched his poetry with subtle nuances, anecdotes, signs and symbols, which enabled readers to see beyond the immediate and catch a glimpse, however fleeting, of life as seen through very different eyes, the eyes of the oppressed and the wretched of this earth. Dil's poetry, in fact, is the voice of the voiceless and the cradle of struggle for an egalitarian social order.



Dr. Harmesh Kumar meets Dr. Ronki Ram

Dr. Harmesh Kumar, Chairman, Indian Overseas Congress, State of California, USA, during his visit to Panjab University, Chandigarh, receives a copy of the latest book entitled *Pagrhi Sambhal Lehar to Samyukt Kisan Morcha: A Century of Punjab Kisan Struggle 1907-2021* from Prof. (Dr.) Ronki Ram (author), his college-time onwards friend and co-academic from Govt. College Hoshiarpur (Punjab) India.

UNPUBLISHED PREFACE THE BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA

Source Courtesy: Columbia University
www.columbia.edu

April 6, 1956

[Text provided by Eleanor Zelliot,
as prepared by Vasant Moon]

A question is always asked to me: how I happen[ed] to take such [a] high degree of education. Another question is being asked: why I am inclined towards Buddhism. These questions are asked because I was born in a community known in India as the "Untouchables." This preface is not the place for answering the first question. But this preface may be the place for answering the second question.

The direct answer to this question is that I regard the Buddha's Dhamma to be the best. No religion can be compared to it. If a modern man who knows science must have a religion, the only religion he can have is the Religion of the Buddha. This conviction has grown in me after thirty-five years of close study of all religions.

How I was led to study Buddhism is another story. It may be interesting for the reader to know. This is how it happened.

My father was a military officer, but at the same time a very religious person. He brought me up under a strict discipline. From my early age I found certain contradictions in my father's religious way of life. He was a Kabirpanthi, though his father was Ramanandi. As such, he did not believe in Murti Puja (Idol Worship), and yet he performed Ganapati Puja--of course for our sake, but I did not like it. He read the books of his Panth. At the same time, he compelled me and my elder brother to read every day before going to bed a portion of [the] Mahabharata and Ramayana to my sisters and other persons who assembled at my father's house to hear the Katha. This went on for a long number of years.

The year I passed the English Fourth Standard Examination, my community people wanted to celebrate the occasion by holding a public meeting to congratulate me. Compared to the state of education in other communities, this was hardly an occasion for celebration. But it was felt by the organisers that I was the first boy in my community to reach this stage; they thought that I had reached a great height. They went to my father to ask for his permission. My father flatly refused, saying that such a thing would inflate the boy's head; after all, he has only passed an examination and done nothing more. Those who wanted to celebrate the event were greatly disappointed. They, however, did not give way. They went to Dada Keluskar, a personal friend of my father, and asked him to intervene. He agreed. After a little argumentation, my father yielded, and the meeting was held. Dada Keluskar presided. He was a literary person of his time. At the end of his address he gave me as a gift a copy of his book on the life of the Buddha, which he had written for the Baroda Sayajirao Oriental Series. I read the book with great interest, and was greatly impressed and moved by it.

I began to ask why my father did not introduce us to the Buddhist lit-

erature. After this, I was determined to ask my father this question. One day I did. I asked my father why he insisted upon our reading the Mahabharata and Ramayana, which recounted the greatness of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and repeated the stories of the degradation of the Shudras and the Untouchables. My father did not like the question. He merely said, "You must not ask such silly questions. You are only boys; you must do as you are told." My father was a Roman Patri-



arch, and exercised most extensive Patria Pretestas over his children. I alone could take a little liberty with him, and that was because my mother had died in my childhood, leaving me to the care of my auntie.

So after some time, I asked again the same question. This time my father had evidently prepared himself for a reply. He said, "The reason why I ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana is this: we belong to the Untouchables, and you are likely to develop an inferiority complex, which is natural. The value of [the] Mahabharata and Ramayana lies in removing this inferiority complex. See Drona and Karna--they were small men, but to what heights they rose! Look at Valmiki--he was a Koli, but he became the author of [the] Ramayana. It is for removing this inferiority complex that I

ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana."

I could see that there was some force in my father's argument. But I was not satisfied. I told my father that I did not like any of the figures in [the] Mahabharata. I said, "I do not like Bhishma and Drona, nor Krishna. Bhishma and Drona were hypocrites. They said one thing and did quite the opposite. Krishna believed in fraud. His life is nothing but a series of frauds. Equal dislike I have for Rama. Examine

was the only religion which a society awakened by science could accept, and without which it would perish. I also pointed out that for the modern world Buddhism was the only religion which it must have to save itself. That Buddhism makes [a] slow advance is due to the fact that its literature is so vast that no one can read the whole of it. That it has no such thing as a bible, as the Christians have, is its greatest handicap. On the publication of this article, I received many calls, written and oral, to write such a book. It is in response to these calls that I have undertaken the task.

To disarm all criticism I would like to make it clear that I claim no originality for the book. It is a compilation and assembly plant. The material has been gathered from various books. I would particularly like to mention Ashvaghosha's Buddhavita [= Buddhacharita], whose poetry no one can excel. In the narrative of certain events I have even borrowed his language.

The only originality that I can claim in [=is] the order of presentation of the topics, in which I have tried to introduce simplicity and clarity. There are certain matters which give headache[s] to the student of Buddhism. I have dealt with them in the Introduction.

It remains for me to express my gratitude to those who have been helpful to me. I am very grateful to Mr. Nanak Chand Rattua of Village Sakrulli and Mr. Parkash Chand of Village Nangal Khurd in the district of Hoshiarpur (Punjab) for the burden they have taken upon themselves to type out the manuscript. They have done it several times. Shri Nanak Chand Rattu took special pains and put in very hard labour in accomplishing this great task. He did the whole work of typing etc. very willingly and without caring for his health and [=or] any sort of remuneration. Both Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu and Mr. Parkash Chand did their job as a token of their greatest love and affection towards me. Their labours can hardly be repaid. I am very much grateful to them.

When I took up the task of composing the book I was ill, and [I] am still ill. During these five years there were many ups and downs in my health. At some stages my condition had become so critical that doctors talked of me as a dying flame. The successful rekindling of this dying flame is due to the medical skill of my wife and Dr. Malvankar.

They alone have helped me to complete the work. I am also thankful to Mr. M. B. Chitnis, who took [a] special interest in correcting [the] proof and to go [=in going] through the whole book.

I may mention that this is one of the three books which will form a set for the proper understanding of Buddhism. The other books are: (i) Buddha and Karl Marx; and (ii) Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India. They are written out in parts. I hope to publish them soon.

B. R. Ambedkar
26 Alipur Road, Delhi
6-4-56

his conduct in the Sarupnakha [= Shurpanakha] episode [and] in the Vali Sugriva episode, and his beastly behaviour towards Sita." My father was silent, and made no reply. He knew that there was a revolt.

This is how I turned to the Buddha, with the help of the book given to me by Dada Keluskar. It was not with an empty mind that I went to the Buddha at that early age.

I had a background, and in reading the Buddhist Lore I could always compare and contrast. This is the origin of my interest in the Buddha and His Dhamma.

The urge to write this book has a different origin. In 1951 the Editor of the Mahabodhi Society's Journal of Calcutta asked me to write an article for the Vaishak Number. In that article I argued that the Buddha's Religion

114th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

On the auspicious occasion of 114th Birth Anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, we, on behalf of Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA, share our hearty congratulations and pay our homage to this dynamic leader.

Babu Jagjivan Ram dedicated his entire life for the upliftment of the socially suppressed and exploited segments of society. Some of the glimpses of his struggle and achievements are shared as under.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was born in Chandwa, near Arrah in Bihar State, on April 5th, 1908 in an untouchable

(Now Dalit) family. Babu Jagjivan Ram, being a very bright student attained his BSc degree from Banaras Hindu University. He, himself, being a Dalit, grew up in the midst of harsh and severe social disabilities of untouchables at that time. He stood like a rock against social discriminations and segregation. In 1935 he contributed to the establishment of All India Depressed classes' league. Because of his intellect, wisdom and patriotism, Netaji Subhash Chander Bose, was attracted to him and drew him into the field of politics at a very young age. He became an active participant in the

freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi including the Quit India Movement in 1942.

He remained as a distinguished and uninterrupted parliamentarian for fifty years from 1936 to 1986. He was also a member of the Constituent

Revolution in India.

It was during his tenure as Defence Minister that Bangladesh was liberated and established as an independent country with the help of India.

In deference of his adorable accomplishments his birth Anniversary is celebrated as "S A M T A DIWAS" (Equality Day) in India and his cremation place has been made into 'SAMTA STHAL'. The states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana observe regional holidays on his birth Anniversary day.

His illustrious daughter, Shrimati Mira Kumar, a five-time member of parliament, is accredited to be the first woman speaker of Indian parliament during the tenure of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Though Babu Jagjivan Ram was an iconic figure in the entire political spectrum of India with all the deserving qualifications, he, because of in-built caste distinctions and political maneuvers, he was obstructed twice from becoming the Prime Minister of India.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is overwhelmingly remembered as an ardent freedom fighter, an undaunted champion of human rights and crusader for social justice.

Read more: www.ambedkartimes.com



O.P. Balley
(General Secretary)
Supreme Council,
Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA



Assembly and advocated passionately for the rights of the exploited and the voiceless sections of society.

He joined the interim cabinet of Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1946 as the youngest member of his cabinet and held many key portfolios in his long political career.

Due to his astute political acumen and administrative skills he was dear to stalwarts like Jawahar Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

As Food and Agriculture Minister, he is best remembered to have successfully led the "Green



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