



Ambedkar Times

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ADAB & SALAM TO AMBEDKAR

The formal ceremony to announce the outcome of the Greatest Indian poll was held on August 14 at the CNN-IBN TV Channel in a filmy style. Shabana Azami who was the member of the Jury pronounced, with a sense of pride and gratification, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the greatest Indian since 1947



(sounds better than saying the greatest Indian after Gandhi) and conveyed her ADAB & SALAM to him. Amitabh Bacchan, Harsha Bogle, Shabana Azami, Madhuri Dixit joined the host Rajdeep Sardesai at the ceremony. Mandira Bedi conducted the show

with great aplomb as the Master of Ceremonies. My congratulations and thanks to all of them particularly Rajdeep Sardesai, the CEO of CNN-IBN. I like a drink in the evening. My sense of elation in joining the celebrations (as Mandira Bedi said that it was not only an announcement but was a celebration too) was so high that with the permission of my wife I took an additional peg while watching the programme on the CNN-IBN



By Ramesh Chander
(Ambassdor, IFS Rtd.)

Yet an unfortunate aspect, as I wrote in my earlier blog, is that the print media of India is totally silent. I have not seen a mention of the fact that Dr. Ambedkar has been declared the GREATEST INDIAN since 1947 with due process in line with an internationally accepted format by an established agency and an eminent jury.

One of the leading dailies, Hindustan Times, on its front page on August 15 carried a story "Recognition at Last – Pak rights historical wrong, confers Nishan-i-Imtiaz on Manto" It speaks of the mindset of the intelligentsia. What a shame ?

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE NORDCORP WORKSHOP - SIKH IDENTITY FORMATION, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK (AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2012)

Ronki Ram (ronkiram@yahoo.co.in)
ICCR Chair Professor of Contemporary India Studies, Leiden University Institute for Area Studies & International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands.

The Nordic Institute of Asian studies (NIAS), Copenhagen, Denmark, organized a two day workshop on "Sikh Identity Formation" in Copenhagen on August 31 & September 1, 2012. The workshop was a part of the annual meeting of the Nordcorp research project entitled "Sikh Identity Formation: Generational Transfer of Traditions in the Nordic Countries". This research project is funded by the Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOSHS). The workshop also organized two open lectures. The first lecture was delivered by Dr. Brian Keith Axel, University of



California, Santa Cruz in the forenoon technical session of the workshop. The title of his well-perceived lecture was: "Traumatic Citizenship: Racial Conflict in Sikh-American Life since September 11, 2001". The second lecture was delivered by me. I spoke on "Confronting Caste in Distant Lands: The Emerging Contours of Diasporic Dalit Identity" in the afternoon technical session of the workshop on August 31, 2012. Apart from these two invited open lectures, there were four interesting research presentations from the four researchers of the Nordcorp research project on "Sikh Identity Formation: Generational Transfer of Traditions in the Nordic Countries". These research presentations were made by Prof. Knut Jakobsen of the University of Bergen, Norway, Dr. Kristina Myrvold of the Lund University, Sweden, Laura Hirvi of the Uni-

versity of Jyvaskyla, Finland, and Dr. Ravinder Kaur of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

During the second day technical sessions of the workshop, Laura Hirvi, doctoral candidate of the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, presented her dissertation draft to seek the feedback from the participants in the workshop. The other important highlights of the second day workshop were the publication plans and the planning for the 2013 forthcoming conference of the Nordcorp research project.

ABOUT THE NORDCORP RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project investigates generational transfer of traditions and identity formation processes among Sikhs, one of the visible minority groups in the Nordic countries. How Sikhs transmit their religious, cultural and linguistic traditions and how the second generation Sikh youth with transnational life-styles negotiates between contradictory perspectives confronting them and gravitates towards religious identification in attempts to carve out a place for themselves in multicultural domains abroad are the two major themes of the Nordcorp research project. The project headed by Dr. Kristina Myrvold, Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University, Sweden, brings together five scholars from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden to critically examine the how the 'second generation shapes understanding of individual and collective identities in relation to many different "cultural others" in the social fields of home, school, religious community and on the Internet'.

Abstract of the invited open lecture Prof. Ronki Ram: Confronting Caste in Distant Lands: (Cont.. on page no 3)

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BABA SAHEB DR. AMBEDKAR AND HIS VISION OF DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

Bodhisattva Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is well known not only in India but the world over. Coinciding with the celebration of the 66th Independence Day on August 15, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was declared the Greatest Indian since 1947 by a well conducted opinion poll organized by the CNN-IBN TV Channel in India.

He was not only the chief architect of the Constitution of Independent India and the Messiah of the downtrodden, but also a great votary of democracy, constitutional methods of conflict resolution and forerunner of peace in the world, a great economist, legal luminary and over and above all a great humanist. His deep thoughts on the water management in India are yet to be harvested.

Another aspect of his great personality was that he never accepted defeat after stiff and continuous oppositions from all quarters of the mainstream in the then emerging electoral arena of the country before as well as after India's independence. For him what was important was not the defeat or victory in the literally sense of the terms but the actual empowerment of the socially excluded sections of the society. It is because of

for this reason that Dr. Ambedkar, quite often, used to say rather vehemently that for what use the Scheduled Castes legislators would be to their people if they were to sit mute and dumb in the parliament and state assemblies while just winning on the party tickets of the mainstream political parties and organizations in the reserved constituencies. What he really wanted to do with the reservation in the parliament was to deploy it for bringing political equality too in the asymmetrical domains of Indian social and economic life.

For the emergence of a true and genuine democracy in India, Dr. Ambedkar gave a clarion call for the 'annihilation of caste' through constitutional and democratic way. His emphasis on the total transformation of 'public sphere' in colonial and Independent India distinguished him from his contemporaries who were interested more in the political freedom of the country than the overall socio-economic transformation of the Indian society and economy. However, as far as Indian freedom struggle is concerned, the contributions of Dr. Ambedkar were second to none. Furthermore, he reiterated that the

struggle for political freedom should be thoroughly embedded in the social democracy, which aimed at bringing social emancipation and empowerment of ex-untouchables

while making their participation in the local structures of power equally active and significant. Thus, for Dr. Ambedkar the struggle for political freedom would not cease to exist with the historic mid-night celebrations at the Red Fort, it will continue rather uninterrupted until independent India achieves equality and fraternity, the two equally important components of the trinity mantra (liberty, equality and fraternity) to liberate the people from the thralldom of ignorance, slavery and poverty. It is in this context, that the social democratic vision of Dr. Ambedkar becomes central to his post independent political discourse and praxis in the country that also distinguished him from his contemporaries.

According to Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar the roots of democracy are to be searched in the domain of social life. On the completion of the Draft Constitution (25 November 1949), Dr. Ambedkar sounded a grave warning in his famous ad-

dress in the Constituent assembly: On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.

It is in the above context of the cited warning of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar that the current policy of inclusive growth in India needs to be implemented in its true spirit lest the new economic reforms further expand the gap between the governed and governing to the detrimental of the health of Indian democracy.

TWO BILLS SIGNED BY CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR

Sacramento: California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed (September 8th) two Bills, 'AB-1964: Workplace Religious Freedom Act of 2012 & SB-1540: Instructional materials: revised curriculum framework: history-social science,' on the northern footsteps of State Capitol building in Sacramento, California. These would acknowledge the religious freedom in work place and authorize the state board to consider the adoption of a revised curriculum framework & evaluation criteria for instructional materials in history-social science respectively.

Governor Brown signed these two Bills at the Peace and



Unity rally organized by North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) where Consul General of India Mr. N.Parthasarathi, partici-

pated. Addressing the gathering, Consul General of India called it a historic day as the two Bills signed by Governor Brown would go a long

way in promoting goodwill and awareness about various communities including the Sikh community. These would pave the way for school children in California to learn about various religions including the Sikh religion. The Bills augur well for hard working and industrious people of Indian origin.

Consul General was deeply appreciative of NAPA led by Mr. Satnam Singh Chahal, President and Mr. Dalwinder Singh Dhoot, Chairman, for taking such an important initiative to organize the Peace and Unity Rally.

www.ambedkartimes.com
Posted on (September 12, 2012)

ACJP LOBBIES FOR DALIT RIGHTS AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS

AMBEDKAR CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, a global NGO based in USA, Mumbai etc. and devoted to the liberation of Dalits through global advocacy including UN for the last 21 years, has continued its advocacy work for the interest of Dalits in European Parliament just recently.

EU and India have been negotiating FREE TRADE AGREEMENT for

the last two years. like USA Canada Free Trade or USA Mexico free trade where both countries benefit, with total 1.8 Billion population. India has nearly 50 % destitution of the world, with 700 million people having less than \$1.25 a day income. Child labour is nearly half of the global child labour, Therefore to educate EUP, Members ACJP Delegation met senior

staff, Raphael of BARBARA HOCHBUHLER, Chair, EUP Subcommittee on Human Rights, Green Party Germany, staff of Dr. Sayed Kamall, EUP, London, Sakib, PA to Sajjad Karim, EUP, Manchester Area, and discussed the need to pay attention to destitution and dehumanisation of 250 million Dalits and Tribals in India and need to address Child Labour, Bonded

Labour, Atrocities committed against them with 3-6% conviction rate etc.. Since it was a short break for the members, this issue will be brought to the attention of the Trade negotiators when the session starts soon. It is important to note that EU Parliament was the first to condemn CASTE SYSTEM and asking India to be PROACTIVE not long ago.

Ambedkar Times's Pstal Address: 5101 Doe Hollow Pl, Antelope, CA. 95843

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‘ਅੰਬੇਦਕਰ ਟਾਈਮਜ਼’ ਵਿਚ ਛਪੇ ਲੇਖਾਂ, ਖ਼ਬਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ਼ਤਿਹਾਰਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਅਦਾਰਾ ਅੰਬੇਦਕਰ ਟਾਈਮਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਦਾ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ।

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR SIGNS TWO LANDMARK BILLS

Dr. Amrik Singh

Sikh pioneers had great fascination for agricultural land. Their work ethics on the farmlands had impressed many a California landlords who preferred leasing their land to them. It, however, aroused imaginary fears in political circles that led Governor Hiram Johnson to sign California Land Alienation Act of 1913. Sikh pioneers continued to own more and more land taking advantage of some loopholes in the Act. By the time Governor William Stephens plugged the loopholes in 1920 making it virtually impossible to buy land in California, Sikh pioneers had 88,000 acres land in their care and were employers to many Californians. The signing of the two bills marks 100 years of Sikhs' presence in influencing California's legislative measures starting with Governor Hiram Johnson and ending with Governor Brown.

Governor Brown signed two important bills yesterday, in a hurriedly convened gathering of Inter-faith groups at the State Capitol. AB 1964, the Workplace Religious Freedom Act, introduced by Assemblywoman Mrs. Mariko Yamada and supported by a variety of faith groups including Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, Muslims, and Sikhs, is considered the landmark legislation in protecting civil rights of Americans of all backgrounds. The bill defines Civil Rights Act of 1964 more vividly so that employers avoid unnecessary civil law suits by denying Americans equal treatment in employment.

Balbir Singh Dhillon, President of Sikh Temple West Sacramento during a telephone interview said that he was always proud to be American and with the passing of the above bills he felt Sikhs as a minority are more secure in America than they are in their land of birth. History of Punjabi pioneers in California has now a chance to be included in the school curriculum. This will spread awareness among Americans who will remain no more ignorant about their fellow Americans.

SB 1540 History-Social Science Framework was introduced by Senator Loni Hancock. The main purpose of the bill was to remove restriction put by former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in adopting the revised framework. The bill was supported by California Council for the Social Studies, Sikh Coalition, Sikh Council of Central California, Sikh Temple of West Sacramento, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. There was no opposition on record to the bill.

California History and Social Science Framework was revised last in 1998 and adopted in 2005. The school curriculum provided a little or no information about some ethnic groups who had been contributing to the economy and social life of the state for more than 100 years.

The bill requires including historical information about them in revising Academic Content Standards. Dr. Onkar Singh Bindra, an alumnus of UC California who spearheaded the campaign to revise 13 year old History-Social Science Framework faced several obstacles since he took up the matter of eclipsing historical information that is essential for enhancing 'pupil knowledge of, and pride in, our history.' The subject matter of the bill was related with many other bills

such as SB 1325 (Wyland) which required the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education to consider methods of enhancing students' interest in civic participation, including developing new curriculum frameworks and standards.'

Dr. Bindra's watchword was 'Try Try Try Again,' when after years of grueling efforts and public hearings; History-Social Science Framework was revised and submitted for final approval of the former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger who suspended it due to financial constraint with a restriction until 2015. The signature legislation will benefit not only Sikhs but all ethnic groups who carved their niche in California's history by working hard and living their lives to the best of their potential.

Dr. Bindra thanked members of the Sikh community all over California State for extending their unstinting support in writing letters and ringing phones to Governor, assembly members and senators for highlighting the significance of the legislation for their children's education. Dr. Bindra also thanked author of the Bill Senator Lori Hancock, Superintendent of Public Instruction, School Board of Education, Department of Education, Members of the Senate and Assembly, and many others who expressed their unconditional support for the bill.

During the pendency of the bill, Oak Creek shooting shook the Sikh community for being targeted by a white supremacist Wade Michael Page. Since 9/11 more than 700 cases of attacks on Sikh community were mainly ascribed to the absence of information about Sikhs and their history in the school curriculum. The journey of Land Alienation Act of 1913—that targeted mainly Sikhs from owning land in their names—to AB 1964 Workplace Religious Freedom Act of 2012 and SB 1540 of 2012 is spectacular and eventful. It may be considered the best tribute to the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society of Stockton that was incorporated in 1912 and for which the Centennial Conference is being held on September 22, 2012 in University of the Pacific Stockton.

The invitation to the conference is open and free to the public. Participants will also enjoy free snacks and lunch.



FUND-RAISING MEETING IN THE HONOR OF DR. HARMESH KUMAR

I appreciate the initiative taken to organize a fund-raising event to support the drive for election of Dr. Harmesh Kumar for the position of a council member in the city of concord. Dr. Kumar has given a very vivid description of his credentials and bio-data in the enclosed attachments which are quite self-explanatory and undoubtedly speak for his suitability for the position, he is seeking. During the last 20 years of my close association with Dr. Harmesh I had the opportunity to observe his involvement in various activities of social, religious and cultural nature to advance the interests and the welfare of the entire community,

including the mainstream American community. As we see in our day to day life, some parts of the world are badly gripped by unabated acts of violence and mutual discord which makes it very important for us all to understand and respect the dignity of all ethnic groups and religious faiths. Dr. Harmesh, being an active member of contra costa county inter-faith council, has been very instrumental in his attempts to foster a spirit of harmony and goodwill.

With improved demographic



presence of Indian community in U.S, it becomes all the more imperative for all of us to encourage political participation and assimilation in American heritage, while maintaining our own cultural identities. Moreover, Dr. Harmesh's professional experience as a psychologist in the field of assisted living for over 20 years has contributed to making him an affable figure of the community at large. I hope Dr. Harmesh's success in this election for city council will be very inspirational for future generations, a remarkable choice and

a stepping stone for his future endeavors to be a strong voice at state and national levels. We should encourage this fund raising event being arranged in his honor, with a very healthy and generous participation. Please contact Mr. Tavinder Kazla at 916-300-5398 for any further information about this event, scheduled as under.

Date:-September 30th (Sunday)
4:00 p.m,

Location:-Namaste Nepal Indian Cousine, 380, Roseville Square (West Douglous

Blvd) Roseville CA 95678

-O.P. Balley

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE NORDCORP WORKSHOP - SIKH IDENTITY FORMATION, COPENHAGEN...

(Cont.. from page no 1)

The Emerging Contours of Diasporic Punjabi Dalit Identity. Among the Non Resident Indian (NRI), Punjabi Dalits are a sizeable diasporic community. Way back home they are compelled to grapple with caste in their daily routine life. As usually thought about, that was primarily because of the highly segmented and hierarchical character of the Indian society. But what is there in their much sought after diasporic locations that forced them to organize for similar struggles against caste discriminations that used to be their daily routine affair way back home. Is it that

caste is not only specific to a particular location but tied rather inextricably with certain communities so much so that where ever such communities travel they carry the virus of caste with them? Or what is there in caste that helps it survive even in altogether different and to large extent socially egalitarian foreign lands? This study aims at critically unraveling the dilemmas of caste abroad and the trajectories of the emerging diasporic Punjabi Dalit identity. How the Punjabi diasporic Dalit identity affects Dalit movement back home and in what way it draws sustenance from it would be yet another major concern of this study.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar- The greatest Indian after independence

As we all know that after an extensive research and long debates among the most distinguished and elite members of the jury, Bharat Rattan Babasahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been chosen by popular vote of the people of India to be the greatest Indian after independence. This unique honor unequivocally bears testimony to the fact that his greatness has been adjudged not only as the architect of free India's constitution and for completing his illustrious academic pursuits but for his unrelenting efforts and crusade for equality and social justice. This is all the more significant that he earned this honor in spite of other contemporary and great Indian leaders like Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Balabhai Patel.

The people of India and particularly the millions of those socially neglected segments of society are grateful to CNN/IBN media for taking the gigantic initiative for this unprecedented and soul searching campaign providing them the opportunity to speak their mind to find the long-awaited truth to adorn the pages of the history of India in particular and that of the world in general with the greatness of Babasahib.

The most adorable and lasting impact of this distinct honor and recognition for Babasahib, transcending all political, social and religious barriers is that an enduring link between the present and the past has been created by reckoning him as a great political philosopher and genius of rare originality and versatility.

A glimpse of his rare contributions:- I have no words and the capability to elucidate the penetrat-

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



ing intellect of Dr. Ambedkar in drafting the constitution of free India which has kept the nation welded together in spite of the diverse intricacies in Indian social order. He believed that political equality without social equality is meaningless and thus made him the spearhead and symbol of resurgence, the upheaval of social justice for the people of India who have venerated him from their heart and soul. He was able to see the in-built inadequacies in the entire social spectrum of India which kept him awake to fight like a giant till the last breath of his life. His intellect, vision, creativity and farsightedness reinforced the truth that it is the worth and not the birth which is the right yardstick to measure one's contributions to society.

Education:- Babasahib firmly believed that importance of good education is the same as the importance of eyes to a blind person. If the moon, sun, wind and water are meant for the use of all the living human beings then why should the education be limited to the privileged classes only.

Guardian of women and human rights:- Dr. Ambedkar was one of great thinkers India has produced. But for his visionary ideas, perhaps India would not have a strong judiciary with powers to strike even the laws repugnant to

the spirit of the constitution. It is its strong judicial system envisaged by Babasahib which always stood as a strong vanguard against violation of human rights. The Hindu code bill, considered as a Magna Carta of Women rights, was introduced by Dr. Ambedkar as the first law minister of free India which had to face heavy odds and opposition leading to Ambedkar's resignation from the union cabinet of free India. The bill was subsequently passed in different phases.

Personal Meetings:- In the year 1956, I had the honor and the privilege to see and listen to Babasahib in person many times at his residence in Delhi through Mr Nanak Chand Rattu, his private secretary. In spite of his ongoing health concerns caused by overwork and heavy responsibilities of drafting the constitution within the limited span of time I saw him working hard day and night to pursue his vision to fight social suppression and inequality. I heard him loud and clear in a public meeting at Ambedkar Bhawan in 1956 saying, "Ask Jawahar Lal Nehru how many times he offered me to become the president of India but I declined" Babasahib was right in that assertion because the grace and honor he has achieved now would never have happened.

Vision still not fulfilled:- The

foremost vision of his life was to rid the society of the monster of caste-system but it is still alive in the psyche of those who created it. Manusmriti which gave legitimacy to Chaturvarnya and the caste system is the main contributor to this dehumanizing practice.

As suggested by Dr. Ambedkar in his treatise "Annihilation of Caste" inter-caste marriages as remedy to destroy caste need to be encouraged with a refined, sincere and dedicated conscience and not with words only.

Education and the financial clout gained by the depressed classes after the dawn of independence emanates directly from life-long struggle and sacrifices of Ambedkar which have put a little dent in the rigidity of the caste system in the urban areas but a lot needs to be done in rural India.

Own Media a Must:- The real and a honest change in the outlook of the people and establishment of a strong, unbiased and honest media among the suffering classes both in and outside India will be a colossal step in the right direction to rid the society of caste system which has been eating into the very vitals of unity and strength of India for centuries. I admire the role played by Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba Newspapers in USA for a crystalised portrayal of Guru Ravidass Ji, Babasahib and Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia who supported and stood by Babasahib during Poona-pact crisis. In the end I again salute this jewel of India for his meritorious services and the most befitting homage to his acknowledged greatness is to keep his vision alive till it is realized.

THE STORY OF SB1540 (HANCOCK)

(Cont.. from page 8)

To seek support of the 17 members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, one day I visited 20 offices at the Capitol. Further, I testified at all committee meetings that considered SB1540 and the bills that preceded it. Some of my local friends also testified at my request. No one opposed SB1540 (Hancock), either in writing or orally and no one voted against it. It had a smooth sailing until Aug. 8, 2012, when the Assembly Appropriations Committee placed it in their Suspense File. California's Sikh and Korean communities went into action at my request. Lots of letters and phone calls, from throughout California, to the Assembly Speaker and the Chair of the Assembly Committee for Appropriations helped the bill get out of the Suspense File

with a 16/0 vote on August 16. It reached the Governor's desk on Aug. 30 at 4:00 P.M. In anticipation of the same, I requested numerous friends to write to the Governor and phone Governor's office requesting the Governor to sign the bill. Sikhs from Los Angeles in the South to Reno in the North sent about 3000 letters to the Governor. Also, his telephone was kept ringing.

Sikh Coalition, SALDEF, United Sikhs, SCCC, WSC-AR and several Gurudwaras helped with the letter/phone campaign. Some used Face Book and on-line signature campaign.

I and my friends reached out to the Governor. Ultimately, listening to all, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. announced on his website on Sep. 7, 2012 that he would sign SB1540 and AB1964 on Saturday,

Sep. 8, 2012.

About 500 interested Americans, primarily Punjabis and Sikhs, but including other ethnic and religious groups gathered and watched the Governor sign the two bills. The time-line of major legislative actions of this bill is given below.

TIME-LINE OF MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS:

2012-02-24 - Introduced. To Com. on RLS. for assignment. .
2012-03-28 - From committee: Do pass as amended and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 8. Noes 0. Page 3034.) (March 28).
2012-05-01 - From committee: Do pass. (Ayes 7. Noes 0. Page 3388.) (April 30).
2012-05-07 - Read third time. Passed. (Ayes 38. Noes 0. Page 3430.) Ordered to the Assembly.
2012-06-19 - From committee: Do

pass as amended and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 8. Noes 0.) (June 13).

2012-08-08 - Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. suspense file. {CAMPAIGN TO GET IT OUT OF SUSPENSE FILE}

2012-08-16 - From committee: Do pass as amended. (Ayes 16. Noes 0.) (August 16).

2012-08-22 - Read third time. Passed. (Ayes 77. Noes 0. Page 6131.) Ordered to the Senate

2012-08-30 - Enrolled and presented to the Governor at 4 p.m. {CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE}

2012-09-08- Signed by the Governor Gerry Brown around 1:30 P.M. Read his more articles on www.ambedkartimes.com <http://www.ambedkartimes.com/Onkar%20Singh%20Bindra.htm>

Poona Pact and Beyond

(Arun Kumar,
Bedford, UK)



24th September is a very significant day in the history of Dalit movement. It is the day when after thousands of years of slavery, an agreement between the representatives of the indigenous people of India and the ruling Aryan class was signed to give legitimate representation and share to the members of Depressed Classes. After successful argument in the Round Table Conferences, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was able to convince the British government for a separate electorate for the Untouchables by which they were to elect their own representatives in the Lok Sabha and the provincial legislative assemblies as similar provisions were already available for the other minorities, including Muslims, Christians, Anglo Indians and Sikhs. But Gandhi bitterly opposed this award and began fast unto death. A huge pressure was put on Dr. Ambedkar to change his mind. The people of Depressed Classes (Dalits) were being threatened. Had Gandhi died as a result of fast, there would have been a huge bloodshed. To avert the danger to the lives of his people, Ambedkar withdrew his demand of separate electorate and an agreement was reached at Yerwada Central Jail, Poona on 24th September, 1932. Now this agreement is popularly known as Poona Pact.

This Pact was incorporated in the government of India Act 1935 and later on in the Constitution of Independent India.

Dr. Ambedkar was never happy with this agreement. He complained of blackmail by Gandhi as he was forced to sign the pact under the impact of coercive fast. Ambedkar denounced it the very next day expressing his views, "The untouchables were sad. They had every reason to be sad." He kept denouncing it till the end of his life in 1956. He denounced it in private discussions, public meetings, relevant writings, in fact on all the occasions that demanded denunciation. Commenting upon Gandhi's fast, he said "There was nothing noble in the fast. It was a foul and filthy act. The fast was not for the benefit of the Untouchables. It was against them and was the worst form of coercion against helpless people to give up the constitutional safeguards of which they had been possessed under the Prime Minister's Award and agree to live on the mercy of the Hindus. It was a vile and wicked act. How can the untouchables regard such a man as honest and sincere?"

Ambedkar was well aware of the loss suffered by the Scheduled Castes by losing separate electorate. He made clear, "If the Poona Pact increased the quota of seats for the

untouchables it took away the right to the double vote given to them by the communal award. This increase in seats can never be deemed to be a compensation for the loss of the double vote. The second vote given by the Communal award was a priceless privilege. Its value as a political weapon was beyond reckoning."

The Joint Electorate is a form in which the Hindus get the right to nominate a member of Scheduled Caste to set nominally as a representative of the Scheduled castes but really as a tool of the Hindus. There a sizeable number of Dalit MLAs and MPs, most of them feared they would not get re-elected if they aggressively raise their voices against Dalit oppression. Though we have got constituencies reserved for Dalits, it is unfortunate that those who act like rubber stamps, without aggressively opposing any oppression, are being preferred by caste forces. Babu Kanshi Ram explained this phenomenon in his much acclaimed book, 'The Chamacha Age' in which he says that Poona Pact has produced stooges not the real representatives of Bahujans.

It is true that Poona Pact lacks the spirit of proper and real representation, but it cannot be denied that it played a vital role in transforming the economic and social conditions of Scheduled Castes/Tribes. Today whatever the progress is seen in their conditions, Poona Pact is a contributory factor. The policy of reservation has helped Dalits to achieve high positions. Mr. K.R. Narayanan became the President of India, highest office in India. K.G. Balakrishnan served as the Chief Justice of India, Meera Kumar as Speaker of Lok Sabha, Ms. Mayawati as a Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's biggest and most populous state. There are numerous administrative officers in Central and state governments which was unimaginable without the Poona Pact. Enlightened government employees helped political leadership. Prime example is Babu Kanshi Ram who was able to organize them and his leadership emerged as a result of Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF). Even the emerging middle class in the Dalit communities is a consequence of Poona Pact. The government employees are giving their children a good quality education. Consequently they either get good employment or start their own small businesses which help them to improve the economic condition of their families which raise their social status in the society.

With the introduction of privatisation, liberalisation, globalisa-

tion and disinvestments, many government industries and public sector undertakings have already been sold off. As a result, thousands of jobs in the public sector have been lost. The technology has also reduced the job market. Privatisation has an adverse effect on Dalits. There is no clause for reservation being added into the disinvestment deals struck between the government and the private sector. It is a clear subversion of caste-based reservation and keep the Dalits away from jobs. Reservation in the government service is not only the way for empowerment; Dalits must think and act beyond that. It doesn't matter how much we oppose globalisation and privatisation, it is going to stay in future and we will have to adjust ourselves into the new system. We have to change our strategy and adapt ourselves accordingly. In the latest study, 97% of executives or board members in the listed companies belong to the upper castes. Private companies are either owned or managed by the family members or a particular caste group, Dalits have no chance to get opportunity in those positions.

Educated Dalit intellectuals are beginning to realise that Dalits will have no place in the market economy. To find a new strategy to overcome this situation, in January 2002, a Dalit conference was held in Bhopal. Over 300 Dalit intellectuals unanimously adopted the Bhopal Declaration containing 21 points identifying the area of intervention for uplifting of Scheduled Castes/Tribes and their participation in the public and private sector. On 26th January 2002, in his Republic Day address to the nation, the then President of India, Mr. K.R. Narayanan endorsed this declaration, which generated a serious debate throughout the country. The concept of diversity came into forefront for the first time. The main theme of the Bhopal Declaration is that there must be an equal participation of all sections of the society in the activities of all key institutions be it governance, education, institutions and trade. Every government and private organisation must implement Supplier Diversity from socially disadvantaged businesses and Dealership Diversity in all goods and services. The reservation must be compulsory in the private and corporate sector in the same proportion as in the public sector and in the government institutions and develop the capacities and skills of Dalits to help them cope up with the demands of these different sectors.

To accelerate this momentum, another International Dalit Conference took place in Vancouver,

Canada on 16-18 May 2003. Endorsing the Bhopal Declaration, the Conference asked for rightful and proportionate share of Dalits in India's national institutions, wealth and capital. The community should have equitable access to means of production and economic empowerment. Because of the Bhopal and Vancouver Declarations, the reservations to Dalits in the private sector were given prominence in the minimum common programme of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) but unfortunately it remained in the manifesto. Most of the industry houses opposed and gave emphasis on quality education to Dalits so that they are able to compete with others. But Dalit intellectuals such as Chander Bhan Parsad, Mr. D. Shyam Babu and others were also stressing upon the need to implement contract/suppliers/dealership diversity, giving surplus land to landless labourers and diversity into educational institutions. Some of the Dalit entrepreneurs came together and established their own Dalit Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). On the demand of DCCI the Central government decided that all ministries would make 4% of their annual purchase from micro, small and medium enterprises run by SCs/STs. Dalit activists believe that mandatory purchases from Dalit units would boost entrepreneurship among poor classes with assured state clientele and without the fear of competition from entrenched businessmen. Dalits are well under represented in the main stream media. There is hardly any recognisable Dalit face on television, films or in English national newspapers. Poona Pact has helped in many ways but there is lot to be done to alleviate poverty, eradicate caste and set up society based on equality, liberty, fraternity and equal justice-the dream of Babashaeb Ambedkar. Dalits must give importance to education, organising themselves and struggle for their rights. Unfortunately, a lot of Dalits give first priority for organising and hence jump into the process of organising themselves at the cost of their education. This will impact the growth of the community. Education should be the top priority for them.

Since the introduction of Indian Constitution, a number of amendments are made for the empowerment of Dalits, but these provisions are never implemented. It is only possible if Dalit representative capture the temple of power, Parliament and state assemblies and enforce laws enshrined in the constitution. Poona Pact has served its purpose and now it is our duty to work beyond that.

AMBEDKAR ON POONA PACT

DISADVANTAGES OF THE POONA PACT

SAHIB SHRI KANSHI RAM JI, THE CHAMCHA AGE (An Era of the Stooges)

On 15th March 1947, on behalf of the Scheduled Caste Federation, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar submitted a lengthy Memorandum to the constituent Assembly which was to draft the future constitution of India. The memorandum demanding the safeguards for the Scheduled Castes was quite long and exhaustive. One of the chapters of the Memorandum dealt with the Poona Pact, especially the disadvantages of the Poona Pact. It being most relevant to this book, (THE CHAMCHA AGE (An Era of the Stooges) expressing Baba Saheb Ambedkar's views 15 years after Poona Pact, it therefore reproduced below:

1- The Poona Pact was intended to devise a method where by the Scheduled Castes would be able to return to the Legislature representatives of their choice. This intention has been completely nullified as will be seen from the following series of statistics. The series have been constructed from the results of the last elections, which took place in February, 1946.

2- The statistical data is arranged in four series of tables:

First series show the votes secured by the successful Caste Hindu candidate and the successful Scheduled Caste candidate in the Final election.

Second series show in how many cases did reliance on reservation clause become necessary for the success of the Scheduled Caste candidate in the Final election and in how many he succeeded without

the benefit of reservation.

Third series show the relative voting strength of the Caste Hindus and the Scheduled Castes in constituencies in which seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

Fourth series show the position in the Primary election of the Scheduled Caste Candidates who became successful in the Final elections.

3. The conclusions that follow from these figures will not escape those who care to examine them. The figures prove the following propositions:

(i) That every of the Scheduled Caste candidate, who became successful in the Final election, owed his success to the votes of the caste Hindus and not of the Scheduled Castes. A great many of them came to the top of the poll and secured votes equal to and in some cases larger than those obtained by Caste Hindu candidates (See Tables in the First Series). Secondly, in very few constituencies was the successful Scheduled Caste candidate required to rely on reservation (See Tables in the Second Series). This is a most unexpected phenomenon. Anyone who compares the voting strength of the Scheduled Castes with the voting strength of the Caste Hindus in the different constituencies (See Tables in the Third Series) would realize that the voting strength of the Scheduled Castes is so small that such a phenomenon could never have occurred if only the Scheduled

Castes voters had voted for the Scheduled Castes candidates.

That they have occurred is proof positive that the success of the Scheduled Caste candidate in the Final election is conditioned by the Caste Hindu votes.

(ii) That comparing the results of the Primary election with those of the Final election the Scheduled Caste candidate who was elected in the Final election was who had failed in the Primary election (if the Primary election be treated as a Final election and the constituency be treated as a single-member constituency).

(iii) Owing to the extreme disparity between the voting strength of the Hindus and the Scheduled Castes- Disparity, which will not disappear even under adult suffrage system of joint electorates will not succeed in giving the scheduled castes the chance of returning their true representatives.

(iv) The Poona Pact has completely disfranchised the Scheduled Castes in as much as candidates whom they rejected in the Primary elections-which is a true index of their will have been returned in the Final election by the votes of the Caste Hindus. The Poona Pact is, thus, fraught with mischief. It was accepted because of the coercive fast of Mr. Gandhi and because of the assurance given at the time that the Hindus will not interfere in the election of the Scheduled Castes.

DENUNCIATION OF THE POONA PACT

SAHIB SHRI KANSHI RAM JI THE CHAMCHA AGE (An Era of the Stooges)

The Untouchables were forced to sign the Poona Pact under the impact of the coercive fast of Gandhiji. Dr. Ambedkar denounced it the very next day expressing his views, "the Untouchables were sad. They had every reason to be." He kept denouncing it till the end of his life in 1956. He denounced it in private discussions, public meetings, relevant writings, in fact on all the occasions that demand denunciation.

As an illustration of the denunciation by Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar, some quotations from his two books (1) What congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables, published in 1945 & (2) States and Minorities, published in 1947, are given below:-

1- "There was nothing noble in the fast. It was a foul and filthy act. The fast was not for the benefit of the Untouchables. It was against them and was the worst form of coercion against helpless people to give up the constitutional safeguards of which they had become possessed under the Prime Minister's Award and agree to love on the mercy of the Hindus. It was a vile and witched act. How can the Untouchables regard such a man as honest and sincere?"

2- The Communal Award gave the Untouchables two benefits:-

(i) A fixed quota of seats to be elected by separate electorate of Untouchables and to be filled by persons belonging to the Untouchables. (ii) Double vote, one to be used through separate electorates and the other to be used in the general elec-

torates.

Now if the Poona Pact increased the quota of seats for the Untouchables it took away the right to the double vote given to them by the Communal Award. This increase in seats can never be deemed to be a compensation for the loss of the double vote. The second vote given by the Communal Award was priceless privilege. Its value as a political weapon was beyond reckoning.

3- Today the Untouchables have a few more seats than were given to them by the communal Award. But this is all that they have. Every other member is indifferent, if not hostile. If the Communal Award with its system of double voting had remained, the Untouchables would have had a few seats less but every other member would have been a member for the Untouchables. The increase in the number of seats for the Untouchables is no increase at all and no recompense for the loss of separate electorate and the double vote.

4- Clause (5) of the Poona Pact has limited the system of primary election to ten years which means that any election taking place after 1947 will be by a system of joint electorates and reserved seats pure and simple.

Things will be much worse under the system of joint electorates and reserved seats, which will hereafter become operative under the terms of the Poona Pact. This is no mere speculation the last election has conclusively proved that the scheduled Castes can be completely dis-

franchised in a joint electorate.

5- "The Poona Pact had produced different reactions. The Untouchable were sad. They had every reason to be -"

6- In the light of these considerations, it cannot but appear that the Poona Pact was only the first blow inflicted upon the Untouchables and that the Hindus, who disliked it were bent on inflicting on it other blows as and when circumstances gave them an occasion to do so."

7- After having accepted the Poona Pact, why did not Mr. Gandhi keep faith with the Untouchables by telling the Congress not to despoil the politics of the Untouchables by contesting the seats reserved for the Untouchables by getting such Untouchables elected as were prepared to become the tools of the Hindus?

8- After having accepted the Poona Pact why did not Mr. Gandhi keep up the gentleman's agreement and instruct the Congress High Command to include representatives of the Untouchables in the Congress Cabinets?

9- This shows that Mr. Gandhi not with standing his being a party to the Poona Pact is determined not to allow the Scheduled Castes being given the status of a separate element and that he is prepared to adopt any argument however desperate to justify his attitude of opposition."

10- In short Mr. Gandhi is still on the war path so far as the Untouchables are concerned. He may

start the trouble over again. The time to trust him has not arrived. The Untouchables must still hold that the best way to safeguard them is to say 'Beware of Mr. Gandhi.'

11- The second misdeed of the Congress was to subject the Untouchable Congressmen to the rigours of party discipline. They were completely under the control of the Congress Party Executive. They could not ask a question which it did not like. They could not move a resolution which it did not permit. They vote as they wished and could not speak what they felt. They were there as dumb driven cattle. One of the objects of obtaining representation in the Legislature for the Untouchables is to enable them to ventilate their grievances and to obtain redress for their wrongs. The Congress successfully and effectively prevented this from happening.

12- To end this long and sad story the congress sucked the juice out of the Poona Pact and threw the rind in the face of the Untouchables.

13- The Poona Pact has completely disfranchised the Scheduled Castes in as much as candidates whom they rejected in the Primary election-which is a true index of their will-have been returned in the Final election by the votes of the Castes Hindus.

14- The Poona Pact is thus fraught with mischief. It was accepted because of the coercive fast of Mr. Gandhi and because of assurance given at the time that the Hindus will not interfere in the election of Scheduled Caste.

Making Sense of Wisconsin Massacre

By Dr. Harmesh Kumar, on behalf of Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

We all have been struggling to come to grips with the Wisconsin shooting last Sunday at the Sikh Gurdwara and less than a month ago in Colorado Theater by James Holmes. Last year it was Laughner of Arizona who wounded congresswoman Gifford's and many others, and many more such individuals before that.

I have been reflecting on these recent incidents and was immediately hijacked on a tragic memory lane and started thinking about the incident at Columbine High School on April 20th in 1999 where many children were murdered by some teenagers. What can we make out of these senseless killings and the people who were behind these killings? Who can we blame as a community? How can it happen when we have the best and highly paid police force and other intelligence agencies? Are our leaders responsible for these incidents? Are our mental health professionals to blame or are our mental health professionals are not doing enough to predict the violence? Some of the following thoughts come to my mind that I am going to share with all of you.

We cannot escape as a society, community, nation, and even at the global level from these violent incidents. However, we all need to find some answers together to deal, cope and prevent these incidents from happening. It is not the responsibility of the police department alone, but who should we look up to help us? We need to help ourselves, as Benjamin Franklin said, that, "God helps those who help themselves."

Do we understand the implications of our daily duties and chores we do in raising our kids

supporting our families, in the busyness of making our livings to sustain our lives, how our policy makers contribute to making our system more functional or difficult?

I have been observing the world we have around us and in our living rooms through TV and in our work environment through the internet.

There has been a lot of concentration in some portions of the media about wars, currently Syria, Afghanistan and there is talk about attack by Israel on Iran. Some of our role-models and leaders have spoken about making another country's infrastructure like a medieval age or stone-age era. There is constant talk about the war on terror and display of killing machines used to sustain that war. The words we use even in our daily life either playing sports like "go and kill that guy" etc. Are we paying attention? When President Clinton was asked about the connection between Columbine and Kosovo bombing, he told the reporter he did not want to think about Kosovo and wanted to focus on Columbine.

Is our formal education system failing us in our attempt to live as one community? Is it dividing us between different classes or segments? Is this the goal of current education systems? My thinking was that the goals of our education system is to create an enlightened individual who would serve the less

fortunate who did not have the emotional, financial, social, or spiritual resources to get enlightened. If this is not the case, then the less enlightened will not understand the enlightened.

Sometimes I wonder who we are fighting with? Who is responsible for creating the so called demons like Jared Lee Loughner, Jeffrey Dahmer, Theodore (Ted) Kaczynski, Timothy McVeigh, Osama Bin Laden? Which religion or social group is immune from producing or

manufacturing such hateful minds?

We have heard many times from our media about their concerns about the Pakistani madrassas – or schools teaching hatred to young minds. I want to ask our leaders in the USA, can they deny such madrassas or schools in America? Many of my friends including the son of Satwant Singh Kaleka, president of Wisconsin Gurdwara, talked about the soft attacks on his community members including himself in Georgia by white supremacists. The history is replete with such soft attacks either based on race, caste, religion, sexual orientation, or on people whose souls are broken due to wars like PTSD. These groups are in every country on the face of the earth. What are our governments are doing to stop this, or can they do something to stop prejudice or hatred? Or is it our duty at individual levels to practice within our-



MR. SURINDER MAHEY HONORED

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

We take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of a social get-together with Mr. Surinder Mahey, former Mayor of city Corporation of Jalandhar, Punjab on Saturday 25th of August, 2012 in Roseville (California). It was an exhilarating experience to attend this meeting which provided a very healthy and constructive forum for many prominent persons of our community to share their views with Mr. Mahey on many vital issues and concerns of the community. Mr. Mahey in his speech demonstrated his versatile ability in highlighting the missions of our saviors, Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj and

Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who in their spirit and nature struggled to rid the society of man-made divisions and discriminations. Mr. Mahey was given a standing ovation on his arrival for the meeting hosted under the auspices of Supreme Council, Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA. He was also honored on behalf of the council with a plaque for his achievements and contributions to the community. Mr. Parmjit Bhutta initiated the meeting with personal introduction of all who attended the meeting and Mr. Tavinder Kazla did a good job in coordinating the flow of questions and answers

with Mr. Mahey during the meeting.

Mr. Parmjit Bhutta also appreciated Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber Editor-In-Chief, "Ambedkar Times" (In English) and "Desh Doaba" (In Punjabi) for running as a sole media in USA to voice the concerns of the community in a very responsible and undaunted manner. We appreciate Mr. Chumber for providing professional coverage to the meeting in his News Papers along with pictures. We appreciate the initiative and efforts taken by M/S Tavinder Kazla, Parmjit Bhutta, Hans Raj Kajla, Rakesh Chander and Kewal Bolina for organizing this event successfully. Copies of "Desh Doaba", Ambedkar Times

selves the ways to create peace within and then spread that peace around our surroundings? Did we ever imagine what emotional and psychological scars these people have suffered which led them to indulge in such gruesome crimes?

The other dangerous fuel we use is commercial games (virtual or real) in America and it is spreading to other countries like India and China where we teach kids how to "kill or hate" their enemies. They practice it in their own homes with computers, iPads, iPhones and tablets etc. Our leaders also provide wonderful role-models by demonizing their opponents as we have seen in recent political campaigns.

We need to focus on respect, dignity, respect and love for all. We need to reflect what it takes to stop the hurt and pain for ourselves and the same thinking we need to apply for others.

We have similar groups in Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism; their main motive is to show their superiority over other religious groups even though it is every religion's core value to spread the message of hope and respect for everyone and serve the humanity with love. Are we listening and applying that message in our individual lives? Saint Kabir said many centuries ago, "when your enemy dies do not celebrate because your friend will die too." The only way to save the world and younger generations from violence is to understand and accept the people as part of your extension.

I will end with a quote from Guru Nanak Ji, "Accept all people as your equals and let them be your only sect; conquering ourselves, we conquer the world."

(Punjabi) and Ambedkar Times (English) were presented to Mr. Surinder Mahey by M/S O. P. Balley, General Secretary of the Council, Ram Murti Saroay, Chairman, Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (Bay Area) and Amrik Chand C.P.A, respectively.

The presidents of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas – California also represented their respective Guru Ghars to participate in the proceedings. It was also resolved in the meeting to hold such productive meetings more frequently to strengthen the fiber of our sustained and continuous efforts to ameliorate the lot of the under-privileged segments of society.

THE STORY OF SB1540 (HANCOCK)

Onkar S. Bindra

It came to my attention in 2001 that the California State University Sacramento (CSUS = Sac-State) did not include Sikhism in their course HRS140: Exploring World Religions, which was taken by 450-500 students every year. Repeated requests for inclusion of Sikhism in the said course were rejected by the department's faculty, mentioning that the course was already too heavy and difficult to complete during the available time. I was asked, if I had contacted the California Department of Education regarding teaching of Sikhism at the school level.

Thereupon, I met Dr. Thomas Adams, Director of the Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources (CFIR) division of the California Department of Education (CDE). He gave me a copy of the "2001 updated Edition with Content Standards of the History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools" (Framework). It did not include the Sikhs, nor does its current (2005) edition.

My contact with Dr. Adams resulted in an invitation to serve on the Legal and Social Compliance Committee that met on June 24-25, 2005, for reviewing the textbooks submitted by publishers for the 2005 textbook adoption. Soon, I learnt that in addition to Instructional Resources (IR), i.e. textbooks, the teachers could use Supplemental Instructional Materials (SIM). So, I got the following approved by the CDE as SIM: 1) The Sikh Next Door, 2) The Boy with Long Hair; 3) videos Meet the Sikhs, 4) Understanding Sikhism, 5) Sikhs in America, and 6) Cultural Safari, including the accompanying Sikh Studies Unit and the Teacher Resource Guide.

Revision of the Framework was started in 2008 in accordance with CDE's long-term program. Four Focus Groups (FG) met in Sacramento, San Jose, San Diego and Los Angeles. I attended the Sacramento FG meeting, and all subsequent relevant meetings held at Sacramento. Recommendations of the FG were discussed, and guidelines recommended by the Curriculum Commission were adopted by the SBE on Nov. 5, 2008.

The guidelines included, "Be aligned to the state-adopted History-Social Science Standards adopted by the SBE in October 1998." The revision of the Framework was to be done during six monthly meetings of 2-day each, by a 20-member Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee (CFCC). My request to

include in the CFCC at least one person knowledgeable about Sikh religion, culture and history was accepted. The person selected was Mrs. Mohani Thiara, a practicing Sikh who teaches history. She did a good job.

I invited Mrs. Pushpinder Singh to plead for inclusion of her coloring book, "The Boy with Long Hair." Prof. Jeffrey Brodd, now Chair, Department of Humanities and Religious Studies at CSUS, and Mrs. Yvonne Taylor of the Modesto City School District (Now retired)



came at my urging and supported my request for inclusion of Sikhism in the 9th grade elective Survey of World Religions. Many others came from Fresno, Stockton, Yuba City, Oroville, Bay Area and Greater Sacramento to one or more meeting of the CFCC. They testified about bullying in schools, discrimination in employment and hate crimes, and pleaded for inclusion of Sikh culture, history and faith in the Framework.

The CFCC prepared the 2010 Draft History-Social Science Curriculum Framework (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/index.asp>). This draft included Sikh items at six places in the K-12 framework. The draft was approved on July 17, 2009 for the next step, viz. a 60-day public review. However, the Public Review was yet to be started when the 2009-10 state budget bill signed by Governor Schwarzenegger suspended all further action for five years. The suspension period was extended by two years when the present Governor signed SB70, a budget bill. Thus, the law required that the draft Framework would not move forward until 2015-16. We needed legislation to allow SBE to resume work on the draft Framework. AB2069 (Carter), SB1278 (Wyland) and AB1033 (Feuer) did not bear fruit. Effort at inclusion of

History-Social Science into AB250 (Brownley) did not succeed. Hancock's SB300 of 2011 included History-Social Science (H/SS) besides Science. However, H/SS was amended out from that bill at the last moment. This history caused all but me to be dejected and pessimistic and unwilling to try again. However, I preached the famous quote, "If at first you do not succeed; try, try, try again."

As a regular visitor to the meetings of the Curriculum Commission and the SBE, I was at the

agreed to do so. There, I met Mr. Perea and his close friend Mr. Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Mayor of San Joaquin. As soon as I learnt that the ACR work had been assigned to Mr. Stephen Francis in Mr. Perea's Capitol office, I started following it up on behalf of the SCCC. Stephen worked on ACR97 (Perea) very diligently, and got it approved as early as May 17, 2012.

During a visit to the capitol office of Mr. Perea, I pointed out to Ms. Celia Mata, his Legislative Director, virtual absence of Sikh-American history in school textbooks. Also, I explained to her that we needed a bill to allow completion of the revision of the H/SS Framework. She agreed to work on it when Mr. Perea gives her a green signal. At my request, conveyed by Mayor Dhaliwal, Assemblyman Henry Perea agreed to author the bill. To get her started on the project, I gave her, on Dec. 22, 2011, the first draft of the bill that I had prepared with the help of Dr. Adams of the CDE.

Assemblyman Manuel Perez also agreed to author the bill. Thanks to Amy Wilson of his staff. In the meanwhile, I met about a dozen legislators or their staff for support. They all agreed to help. At this stage, Sen. Loni Hancock agreed to author a bill. Sen. Wyland and Assembly-Members Mike Eng, Luis Alejo and Mariko Yamada agreed to become co-authors. Staff members of all legislators helped, but special thanks are due to Rebecca Bauman, Education Consultant of Sen. Hancock, for the day-to-day information and suggestions for action. Sen. Loni Hancock introduced SB1540 on Feb. 24, 2012 with five coauthors, who were joined later by three others. At my urging, Manbeena Kaur of The Sikh Coalition, New York; Mirin Phool of Kaur Foundation of Maryland; Pashaura Singh Dhillon of the Sikh Council of Central California, Fresno; Balbir Singh Dhillon of the Sikh Temple Sacramento, and Marry Connor of Korea Academy of Educators of San Marino, whom I first met at the 2009 CFCC meetings, registered the support of their organizations through their letters.

Before each meeting of the Senate/Assembly committees for Education/Appropriations, I met the staff of each member with a letter requesting for support of their legislators, and reminded them by phone a day before the meeting. Committee membership ranged from 9 to 17, and totaled 48.

(Cont.. on page 4)