

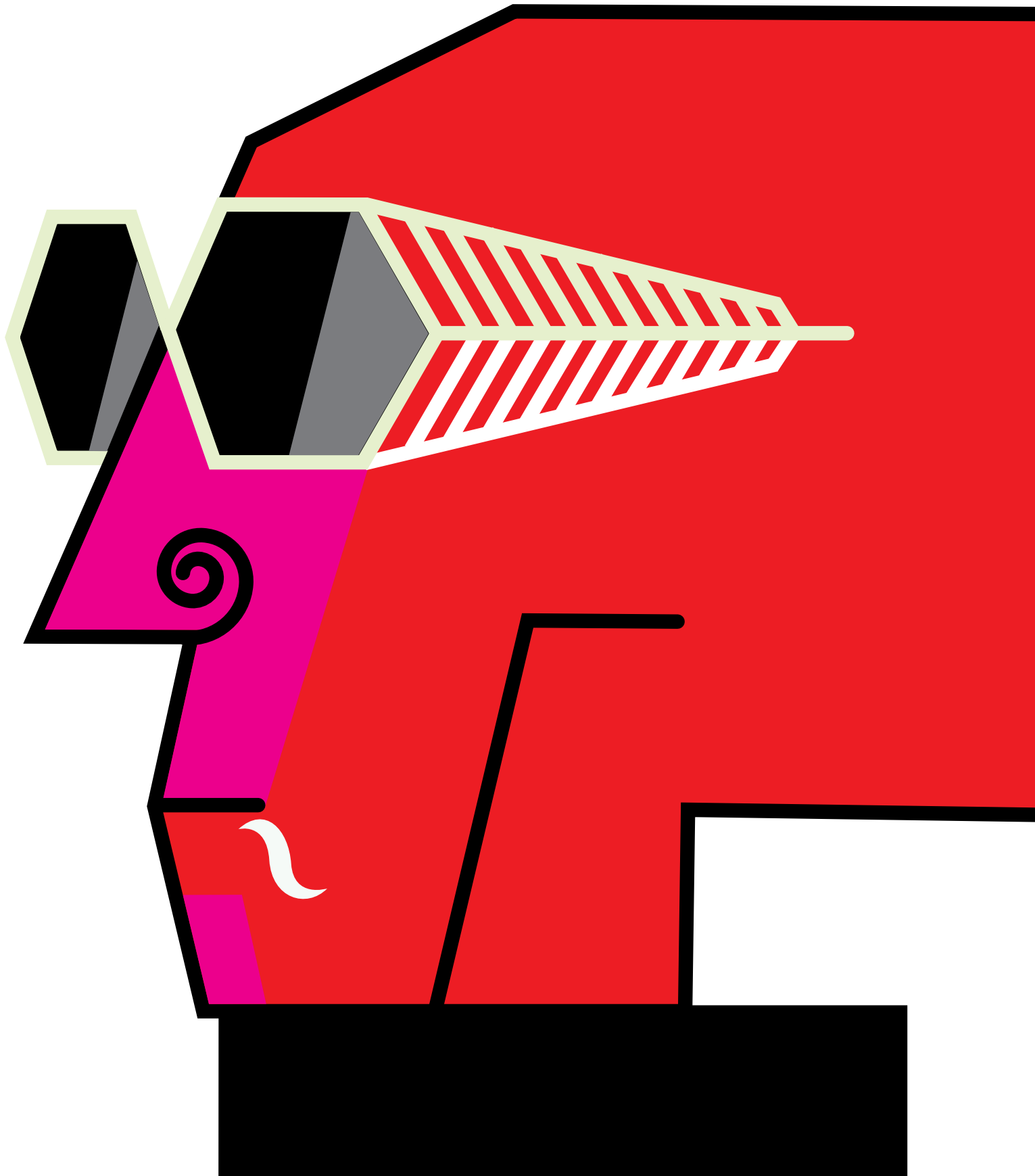


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FEBRUARY - MARCH 2015 //////////////////////////////////





BOX-SIZED LEGACY

BY SARITHA RAO RAYACHOTI

THATS THE WAY IT IS

By Saritha Rao Rayachoti

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If anything, this cartoon accurately depicts the daunting task that Dr. Ambedkar undertook in drafting the Indian Constitution that took a period of almost three years to complete. Pandit Nehru's impatience is palpable. This delay in creating the Constitution, the bulwark on which the nation's social, political and economic development rests, would only delay the speed at which the newly independent country could begin to progress and prosper.

At least that's the way it seemed to me. But there was offense taken. In 2012, a furore erupted in the Indian parliament over this cartoon by Shankar Pillai originally published in 1949 and later reprinted in a Political Science school textbook. The crux of the conflict was the seemingly denigrating way in which Pandit Nehru seemed to brandish a whip at Dr. Ambedkar. Another opinion was that it was fine to be printed in a newspaper, not in a school textbook.

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Obviously, there's more to a person than these attributes, as I discovered through the numerous contemporary cartoonists, with no personal link to Shankar, who consider Shankar's Weekly as the springboard for the next generation of cartoonists.

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IT TAKES INSPIRATION

from an incident in Gautama Buddha's life

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AUGUST 28, 1949

A FURORE ERUPTS IN THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT

over this cartoon by Shankar Pillai

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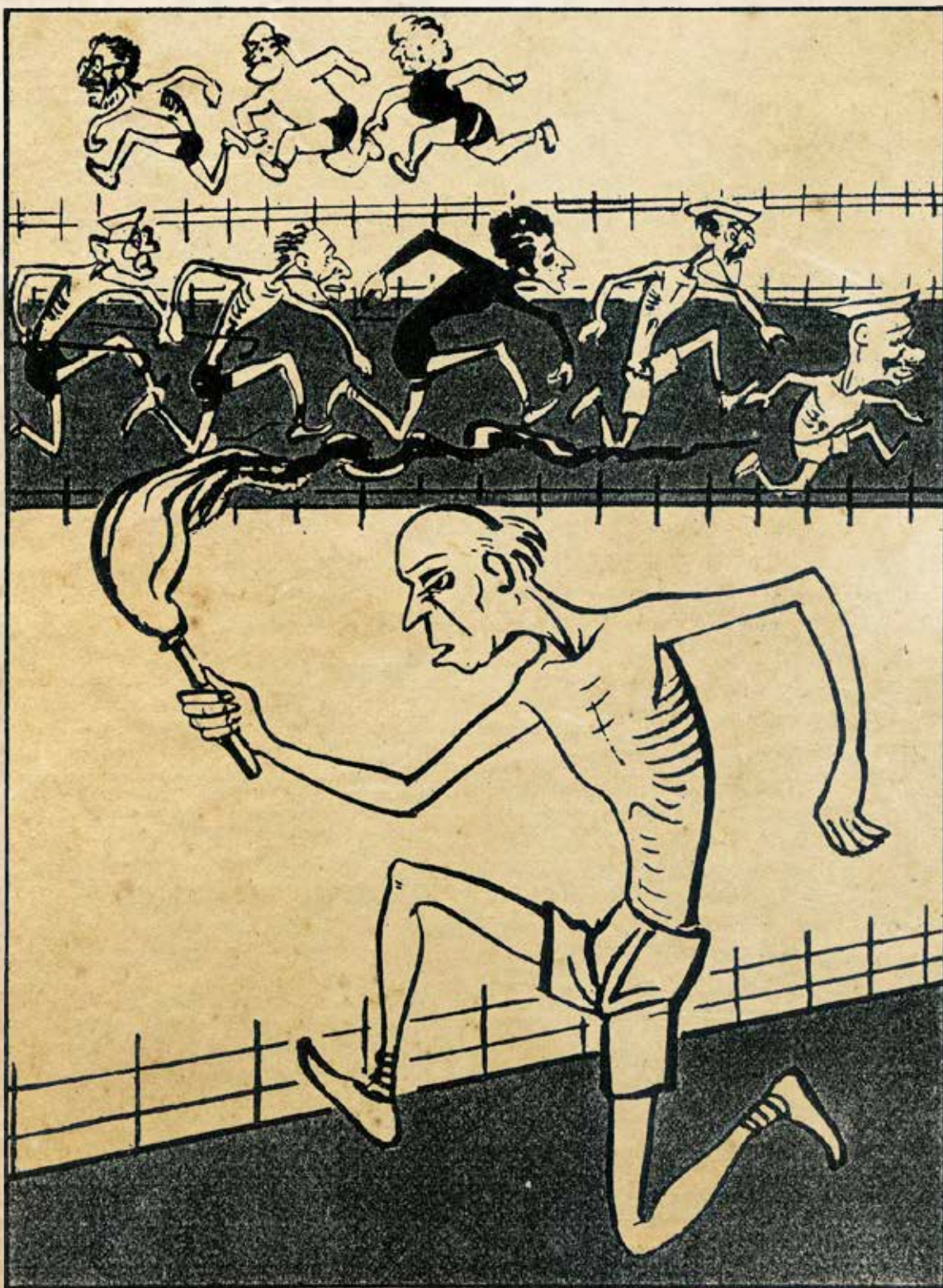
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MAY 17, 1964

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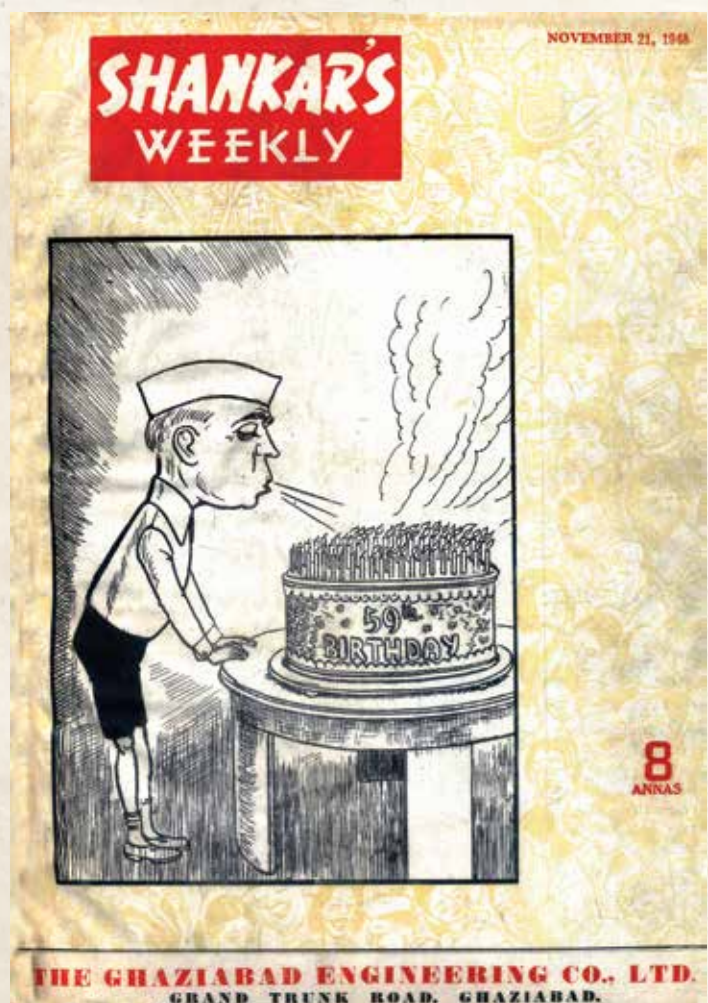
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It was a note written in a formal manner in response to the decision to stop the magazine. Shankar's touch, that elusive something that I seek to define, shines through in his decision to publish it and in his use of the blank space around the note. He peppered the page with seven caricatures, perhaps done over the years, of the author of that note - a certain wiry sari-clad woman with a distinct beak-like nose and an unmistakeable swish of grey in shortly cropped dark hair.





PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi,
July 26, 1975.



Dear Shankar,

I learnt a few days ago about your decision to stop Shankar's Weekly and I have just seen the farewell note in your issue of July 27. It takes a great deal of strength of mind to close down what one has built through years of care and labour. You are the best judge. As you say, it is too much for one man even when that man is an institution. We shall miss the journal.

My good wishes for your health and the well-being of your other causes.

Yours sincerely,

(Indira Gandhi)



