

Singh Mann, former police officer turned separatist politician. The results showed that the separatist cause now possessed a measure of popular support. Alienation of the Sikhs of Punjab from India's political system again became manifest when the overwhelming majority of them stayed away from the polling in early 1992, keeping with the call given by the main Akali groups to boycott the elections. The boycott helped the Congress party, under Beant Singh, to form its government in the State, and to embark on a highhanded policy to suppress the Sikh agitation without caring for the limits of the law. Many officials involved in the security operations privately admit that excesses, including custodial killings, do take place. But they argue that they have no other way to demoralize a secessionist movement, which enjoys a measure of sympathy in Punjab's countryside.

EVIDENCE OF STATE ATROCITIES

Interviews with Inderjit Singh Jaijee, Chairman, Movement Against State Repression, and Jaspal Singh Dhillon, Chairman, Shiromani Akali Dal's Human Rights Wing. [Photographic evidence of custodial torture and killings.]

[Interview with Ranjan Lakhanpal, a lawyer who fights generally losing legal battles to enforce the rule of law, against the working of the Punjab police.—Lakhanpal introduces two women victims of custodial rape.]

Our own investigations in the Amritsar region reveal that the dealings of the security forces with the relatives of separatist militants, themselves unconnected with crime, are not only routinely illegal but also brutal. Apparently, the idea is to set an example of harshness that would discourage the rural folk from sympathizing with the extremist cause.

[Interview with Arjun Singh, grandfather of a known militant Paramjit Singh Panjwad, tortured in the police custody. Panjwad's mother was killed in custody.]

Many Sikh officers of the Punjab police privately corroborate these reports of police atrocities.

[Interview with one woman police officer, on the condition of anonymity: She told us about her experience of custodial torture, rape and murders at an interrogation center she was attached to.—Photographic evidence of custodial torture and murders.]

Champions of human rights in Punjab are themselves vulnerable to persecution. Many have suffered long periods of illegal detention, torture in custody and even elimination. Sometimes their relatives become victims of police wrath. On 29 March 1995, lawyer Ranjan Lakhanpal's ten year old son Ashish was run over by a police vehicle. The vehicle belonged to an officer whom Ranjan has accused of murdering a detainee in custody.

THE CASE OF JASWANT SINGH KHALRA

The more recent example comes from the case of Jaswant Singh Khalra, General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal's Human Rights Wing, who got picked up by uniformed commandos of Punjab police from the porch of his house in Amritsar on 6 September 1995, six days after Beant Singh's assassination. Human Rights Wing has been focussing attention on unravelling the mystery of what happens to the large number of people the security forces illegally pick-up for interrogation. Jaswant Singh Khalra was associated with the investigations that led to the discovery that Punjab police have been cremating thousands of dead Sikhs illegally, by mentioning them in the registers at the cremation grounds as "unclaimed" and "unidentified." The investigations also established that these "cremated" Sikhs were largely those who had earlier been picked up for interrogation.

[Interview with the attendant of the cremation ground at Patti, a subdivisional town in Amritsar district.]

Equally incriminating evidence against the police comes from the hospitals where the police sent some bodies so cremated for postmortem.

[Interview with the Chief Medical Officer of the hospital at Patti: This doctor told us that Sarabjit Singh was still alive when the police first brought him for the postmortem. On being discovered alive, Sarabjit Singh was taken away by the police and brought back to the hospital the second time when he was actually dead. The hospital gave the postmortem report the police wanted. The Chief Medical Officer of the hospital at Patti also offered us some astonishing information on how he helped the police to get the post-mortem reports they legally needed in all circumstances before cremating the dead bodies.]

Investigation carried out by the Human Rights Wing forms the basis of a petition that the Committee for Information and Initiative on Punjab has filed before the Supreme Court of India. The issue of illegal cremations by the Punjab police is now being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation, on the orders from the Supreme Court. However, the order of the probe did not come before Jaswant Singh Khalra himself "disappeared."

[Interview with Jaspal Singh Dhillon: "Khalra was quite clearly told that he can also become an unidentified body. And today Khalra is not there."]

The guilty officials of Punjab police knew that, without Khalra's investigative resourcefulness in the Amritsar district, the Human Rights Wing could not have so conclusively exposed their ways of handling the Sikh unrest in Punjab. Khalra had also been providing legal counselling to victims of police atrocities, particularly the relatives of the "disappeared", which encouraged them to approach the courts to redress their grievances.

Khalra's whereabouts remains unknown. The chief of the Punjab police has categorically denied Khalra's abduction by the officers of his force. The Supreme Court of India has ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation to probe the "disappearance" along with the issue of illegal cremations by the Punjab police. In ordering the probe, the court has neither extended protection to witness who might lead to evidence to establish the truth, nor has asked the CBI to associate the human rights groups, directly involved in exposing the police atrocities, with the inquiry. It is evident that the Central Bureau of Investigation, as an investigating agency under the Union Home Ministry, lacks the necessary power and independence to determine the truth of allegations of serious human rights crimes, made against India's security forces.

Human right groups worldwide are seriously concerned about the disappearance of Jaswant Singh Khalra, which is seen as a warning to all those who are engaged in exposing police atrocities in the State. The Sikh groups in Punjab are agitating the Khalra's release. Many leaders of the Western countries, including the President of the United States of America, have conveyed their concern about the case to the government of India. However, the information percolating from the police sources suggests that Khalra might already have been eliminated. Despair dominates the mood of the Sikh leaders in Punjab.

[Interview with Sukhjinder Singh, former Akali Minister: "All Sikhs cannot get one constable or one police officer transferred from one place. That is the situation."]

[Interview with Jaspal Singh Dhillon: "There is no way any Sikh today can look

for justice from any organ of the Indian state."]

[Interview with Professor Satish Jain: "There is a large section of this country which approves of State atrocities. And, I think, the weakness of the Indian nation, the weakness of the Indian society, really lies in this attitude."]

Will India society rectify this weakness? Will State atrocities in Punjab cease? These are the mute questions before the people of India, even as they prepare themselves for the next elections.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT LEE TENG-HUI AND THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN ON THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 25, 1996

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my heartiest congratulations to President Lee Teng-hui who was chosen the first popularly elected President of Taiwan in direct, democratic elections, which were held over the past weekend. President Lee received 54 percent of the vote in a field of four candidates. The results of this election are a tribute to President Lee, who has played the leading role in completing the democratic transformation of Taiwan, a transformation which led to these first-ever democratic elections. I also wish to extend congratulations to Lien Chan, the democratically elected Vice President.

Mr. Speaker, President Lee has served as the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan since 1988. He has long and close ties with the United States and with the American people. It is highly significant, Mr. Speaker, that President Lee was born on Taiwan in 1923. He attended Kyoto Imperial University, and received a bachelors degree from National Taiwan University in 1949. His studies in the United States include an M.A. from Iowa State University and a Ph.D. from Cornell University. Between 1949 and 1965 he was a member of the faculty of National Taiwan University, and he served many years as a professor there. His political experience includes service as the mayor of Taipei City, Governor of Taiwan Province, and Vice President of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, just 1 year ago, President Lee was invited by his alma mater, Cornell University, to visit the campus as a distinguished alumnus. The administration opposed granting him a visa for that visit. As my colleagues know, legislation that I introduced and which passed the House unanimously, put the Congress on record favoring granting him a visa. I am delighted that he was able to visit Cornell as President of Taiwan, and it is my sincere hope that he will have the opportunity to visit the United States as its democratically elected President.

The real winners in Saturday's Taiwanese elections, Mr. Speaker, are not the candidates who won reelection—though I do not want to diminish the great victory which this election is for President Lee and Vice President Lien. The real winners in the elections are the people of Taiwan. They have made a democratic choice, they have conducted an exemplary campaign, and they have participated in the

elections in numbers that are a tribute to the people of Taiwan. Despite appalling efforts at intimidation by the Government of the People's Republic of China, two-thirds of the eligible voters of Taiwan participated in the elections. That is a participation rate that exceeds ours here in the United States, Mr. Speaker. Their obvious desire for democracy and their responsible and thoughtful exercise of the franchise merit our most profound respect and praise. They are the real winners in the election.

The second big winner in this election has been the friendship between the people of the United States and people of Taiwan. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the action of this House last week in strongly affirming the commitment of the American People of Taiwan in the face of the threats and intimidation they faced from the bullies of Beijing. We have made clear our commitment to the democratic process in Taiwan, and it is extremely important that this be known both by the People of Taiwan and by the Government of the mainland.

The big losers in this election, Mr. Speaker, are the bullies of Beijing—the leaders of the People's Republic of China who attempted with military maneuvers, missile firings, amphibious landings, and other similarly ruthless efforts at intimidation to affect the outcome of this election and to undermine the evolution of democracy in Taiwan. The bullies of Beijing miscalculated. They were proven wrong, and the people of Taiwan have demonstrated just how wrong they are. Democracy is stronger and more stable and more acceptable than the totalitarian and authoritarian rule of despots.

The success of democratic elections in Taiwan will have a profound impact upon the mainland. As the generational change in the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party continues in Beijing, it is clear that the free and open and democratic elections in Taiwan have dealt the party dictatorship a great blow. The example of Taiwan will continue to affect what happens on the mainland.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in this house to join me in paying tribute to President Lee Teng-hui and Vice President Lien Chan, and, in particular, in paying tribute to the people of Taiwan.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, freedom-loving people all over the world join in the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the beginning of the Greek War of Independence.

On March 25, 1821, a group of heroic Greeks proved that the ancient fire of freedom and democracy—which inspired the founders of our country—had not been extinguished by over 400 years of brutal Ottoman rule.

More than 2,000 years ago, democracy was born in Greece. Political power in the hands of the people governed had never been seen before. That system of governance provided the inspiration for nations around the world.

The country that emerged from the Ottoman yoke has been a staunch ally and friend.

Greece has stood by the United States in every major international conflict this century.

Our country has benefited from an active and successful Greek-American community. The immigrants who came to our shores from Greece worked hard. Their children went on to become scholars, doctors, scientists—many individuals from that community have served our country with distinction in the Armed Forces and Government.

Soon the Olympic flame will reach the United States, where it will preside over the Olympic Games as a reminder of the Hellenic ideals that inspire athletes, philosophers, and democratic movements throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize this important date in the long struggle for freedom and democracy. Greece's victory over tyranny is a victory for democracy and freedom all over the globe.

GUN BAN REPEAL ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my continued support for the assault weapons ban passed by the Congress in 1994. Passed with the overwhelming support of national law enforcement organizations, this new law is working to reduce bloodshed and save lives.

During the late 1980's, assault weapons accounted for about 8-10 percent of all guns traced to crimes by law enforcement, even though assault weapons accounted for only about 1 percent of the guns in private hands. The number of assault weapons traced to crime in the first months of 1995 fell for the first time in recent years from the prior year's level. These impressive statistics indicate that the use of assault weapons in crime is now declining. My colleagues, this law is working.

The attempt by the Republican leadership to derail the successes of the assault weapons ban is nothing more than poorly disguised political opportunism. This is a payback—pure and simple.

But this vote should not disguise the fact that the overwhelming majority of the American public, including gun owners, wants assault weapons off our streets and out of our school yards.

When we debated this bill 2 years ago, the legislation was narrowly drawn to protect the right of all law-abiding Americans to own firearms both for hunting and other sporting purposes, as well as for their own self-defense.

Assault weapons are the weapons of choice for terrorists, mass murderers, drug dealers, gang members, drive-by shooters, and cop killers. They also continue to be used against their well-armed opponents—police officers.

For the safety of our children and those who are sworn to protect them, vote against this bill and maintain the assault weapons ban.

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT MUST ITSELF BE ABOVE REPROACH

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned today. I am very concerned about the ability of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to conduct its business in a fair and impartial manner, because of press reports that we have seen throughout this Congress expressing doubts about the committee's ability to uphold the bipartisan standard of fairness for which it is well-known.

Just yesterday I read a press report about a new breach or possible breach of impartiality, where the committee was accused of communicating with a Member who was under review. Surely, Mr. Speaker, this must not happen. It is totally unacceptable.

The group in this House that is charged and given the privilege of maintaining the ethics and the decorum of this House must not itself come under reproach.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD an article by Larry Margasak on this issue.

ETHICS COMMITTEE REBUKES LAWMAKER, LETS HIM ANNOUNCE IT

(By Larry Margasak, Associated Press Writer)

WASHINGTON (AP)—In an unusual arrangement, the House ethics committee privately rebuked Rep. David M. McIntosh, R-Ind., but allowed him to announce the action in generally favorable terms.

Committee Chairman Nancy Johnson refused to publicly release the panel's letter sent to McIntosh on Tuesday. The letter criticized his distribution of materials at a hearing and religious comments made by an aide.

The letter found, however, that no rules were violated and two ethics complaints against McIntosh were dismissed.

Johnson's action broke with the usual practice of publicly releasing letters that complete ethics cases.

In this instance, the only hints of the letter's criticism came in a news release from McIntosh written with an assist from the committee.

The congressman's spokesman, Chris Jones, said, "The committee asked us to include certain things in the news release." Those items, in the last paragraph of McIntosh's seven-paragraph statement, made references to the ethics panel's concerns.

Congressional sources familiar with the letter, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was far more critical than McIntosh suggested in his news release.

The complaints were based on McIntosh's actions at a Sept. 28 hearing of a House Government Reform subcommittee he chairs and improper remarks by a subcommittee staffer about a Jewish holiday.

McIntosh displayed a poster and distributed a letter resembling the stationery of the Alliance for Justice, a coalition of civil rights and public interest lobbying groups. The document purported to list amounts of federal grants received by the group's member organizations.