

full range of human rights can be enjoyed by all the people there, not just the Brahmins. We should declare our overt support for the 17 freedom movements currently operating within India's borders. We can do so by supporting a free and fair plebiscite, under international supervision, on the question of independence for Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and the other minority nations living under the boot of Indian oppression. Former President Carter might be a good person to head an international monitoring team.

The Council of Khalistan has issued a press release praising the demonstrators who are bringing the issue of Indian racism to the forefront. The Information Times has also run an excellent article on the demonstrations. I would like to place them both into the RECORD at this time for the information of my colleagues. In addition, I would like to insert the National Post article into the RECORD.

[From the National Post, Sept. 6, 2001]  
UN RACISM CONFERENCE MOVED TO TEARS,  
NOT ACTION—RACE VICTIMS TELL STORIES  
(By Corinna Schuler)

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA.—In an oft-ignored chamber of the cavernous convention centre, the real victims of racism struggle to have their stories of suffering heard.

This is not one of the dozens of rooms where international negotiators spend days behind closed doors, locked in debate about where to place a comma or whether to spell "Holocaust" with a capital "H."

Here, persecuted people from every corner of the globe take their turn on stage between 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. every day to tell simple stories about real suffering—the only forum at this massive United Nations gathering where the personal pain of discrimination is laid bare.

One day, the speaker was an escaped slave from Niger. The next, an aboriginal woman from Australia. Then, a migrant worker from Brazil.

Yesterday it was Murugesan Manimegalai's turn. The 29-year-old mother of four is a member of India's lowest caste, so impoverished she had never left the confines of her squalid settlement before boarding a plane this week for Durban. "I was very worried that it might fall," she confides with a shy smile. But she pushed her fear aside yesterday, took a deep breath and told the story of her husband's horrifying murder to a crowd of 200 human rights activists and a few journalists. By the time she was done, even the moderator was blinking back tears. "We are Dalits"—untouchables—began Ms. Manimegalai.

As one of India's 1.4 million lowest-caste people, she grew up in a segregated village— forbidden to draw water from the communal well or to attend the same temple as upper-caste people.

Her husband had only a Grade 10 education, but became an eloquent activist and was elected president of a village council. Members of the upper caste warned he would not last six months. "We will see how the president functions without a head," said one written death threat.

After six months in office, when Mr. Manimegalai took a trip into town, upper-caste people followed him home in a bus. A crowd of men blocked off the road, screaming wildly for everyone to run away—"except Dalits."

"They grabbed my husband by the shirt and stabbed him in the stomach. Even then, my husband pleaded with the dominant caste people not to kill the rest of the Dalits. They ignored him, and chopped the [six] others in front of his eyes." Ms. Manimegalai did not

stop for a breath as the next words tumbled out. "Even after my husband's death, the anger, the bitterness, the caste-fanatic feeling did not subside."

"They cut off his head and threw it in a well nearby." Witnesses were too terrified to come forward and it was only after three years of protest that some of the attackers were finally jailed. "We strongly demand," Ms. Manimegalai concluded, "that the caste system in our country be abolished. We demand education for our children, job opportunities—and dignity." The roar of applause continued for a solid minute. When the diminutive Ms. Manimegalai stepped off the stage, a burly African woman grabbed her in a bear hug, sobbing. Ms. Manimegalai was overwhelmed as others waited in line to give a hug or shake her hand. Tears streamed down her face as she stood in the glare of the TV lights.

It was not the first time the Voices Forum has borne witness to such raw emotion. But many of the 1,100 journalists in Durban to cover the UN's World Conference Against Racism have been too preoccupied by arguments over Israel and demands for reparations for the colonial-era slave trade to take much note.

The armies of suited government officials working to write up a "historic" blueprint for fighting racism and intolerance were not present to hear Ms. Manimegalai's demands.

Many were in a room down the hall, arguing about whether words such as "descent" and "ethnic origin" should be included in the list of grounds for discrimination.

At the end of her speech, a moderator thanked Ms. Manimegalai and other presenters for having the courage to speak out. "You should never doubt raising your voice in this chamber," she said assuringly. "Never doubt the importance of doing that."

The sorry truth is that the powerful testimonies heard in the Voices Forum have little chance of being incorporated into the UN's final declaration on racism, or its program of action.

"Cast out Caste" posters have been plastered all across Durban and activists have handed out thousands of information brochures in an effort to highlight the injustice of the caste system in Hindu society. But India has fought all attempts to include any mention of caste, and neither the UN nor any government is pushing the point. The strongest language in the draft declaration comes in a single paragraph that refers to discrimination based on work or descent—and even those watered-down words seem set to be withdrawn. Likewise, Eastern European countries refuse to acknowledge the discrimination endured by the Roma, or gypsies, no matter how many emotional stories they have told in Durban this week.

The African slave girl who told her story moved an audience to tears, too.

Inside conference rooms, however, African government delegates are so engrossed in debate about the slave trade of centuries past there has been almost no talk of how people like 17-year-old Mariama Oumarou and 20,000 others in Niger could be spared the horror of slavery today.

Will this conference change Ms. Manimegalai's life? The document under such hot debate is not an international treaty or a UN resolution. In fact, it's not a legal document of any kind and—if agreement is reached here by tomorrow—countries are free to ignore it.

But, Ms. Manimegalai lives with the hope her presence here will help the suffering Dalits of India break free from their oppression. "I am destitute," she said. "My house is just a matchbox and I do not have enough money to care for my children. They are living with relatives.

"But when I saw the big crowd in the room today, I was not afraid. I was happy. At least I can tell the world our story. There are many people back home who are relying on me here."

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE  
FOR VALLEY HOSPITAL IN  
RIDGWOOD, NEW JERSEY

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 6, 2001

Ms. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, New Jersey, on the momentous occasion of their 50th anniversary of service to northern New Jersey. From a small and difficult beginning, the Valley Hospital has become a premier example of quality and commitment to medical excellence. This weekend, in celebration of their golden anniversary, the Valley Hospital "Old Fashioned Fair" will be held in the town of Ridgewood.

This remarkable hospital was once only a dream for the northwest New Jersey community. However, due to the perseverance of a small group of concerned community members, this vision of a hospital was transformed into a reality. Plans began nearly forty years before ground was even broken. In 1910, community groups gathered to raise money for a hospital, however the stock market crash and the Great Depression stalled their attempts. With the leadership of the Women's Auxiliary in 1944, local residents rallied again to donate almost \$1,000,000 to break ground in 1949. Today we are able to congratulate the Valley Hospital on fifty years of outstanding service to northwest New Jersey. A passage from The Sunday News, dated June 19, 1951, illuminates the struggle and success of the hospital:

There has been discouragement and heartache, delay and disappointment. There have been set-backs of every conceivable variety during these years of construction but now at long last, comes the fulfillment of the dream—a community hospital completely equipped with every facility that modern medicine and modern science have developed, ready to take its place along with the best in the country in caring for those who are ill.

In August of 1951, the first patient walked through the doors of the Valley Hospital. That first year, over 4,000 patients entered those doors. In the following fifty years, the Valley Hospital expanded to meet the constantly changing needs of the growing community and implemented cutting-edge technology. Last year, the hospital administered to 42,540 patients and welcomed 3,221 babies. Thirty-five physicians of the Valley Hospital were named in the "Best Doctors in New York" list of the New York Magazine this year; a list compiled by their peers throughout regions of New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. This month the Valley Health System, the hospital's umbrella organization, will be the nation's first health provider to feature Mayo Clinic health information on their website. As one can tell, this is a phenomenal group of people involved with the hospital.

The Valley Hospital has risen to pre-eminence on the national level in health care

and medical technology for its patients. Under Mike Azzara's guidance as Chairman of Valley Health Systems, and Audrey Meyer's leadership as President and CEO of the Valley Hospital, the hospital has entered the 21st century as a premier provider of health care in not only New Jersey but the entire Northeast United States.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in commending the Valley Hospital for its service to the community in the past fifty years, and recognizing those committed to continuing its tradition of excellence in the future.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CENTER OF MONTEREY COUNTY, INC.

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 6, 2001*

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County, whose thirtieth anniversary was celebrated on August 12, 2001. The center has been assisting visually impaired individuals to transcend the loss of sight as independent, contributing community members of Monterey County, in my district. I am pleased to be able to honor their work here in the U.S. Congress.

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County offers a wide variety of services to its clients, and works to cater these services to each individual's needs. With such programs as Daily Living Skills and Braille Instruction, information and referral services, accessible technology, support groups, and an Orientation and Mobility Instruction course, this center offers much to the communities of Monterey County. Last year, the Blind, and Visually Impaired Center provided direct services to three hundred forty-eight clients from twenty-two towns, cities, and villages. The clients live throughout Monterey County, from the coastline at Pebble Beach to the farm communities of Greenfield and King City.

I am proud to honor the work of the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County.

The thirtieth anniversary of the center offers an opportunity to pay tribute to the hope of its founders and the diligence of those who work there. I look forward to their continued success.

NATIONAL PAYROLL WEEK

**HON. STEVE ISRAEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 6, 2001*

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the tireless efforts of payroll employees of this nation. September 3–7 is National Payroll Week. In honor of this week, we should all thank the more than 130 million payroll professionals who work tirelessly to ensure that workers receive their wages and federal employment taxes and worker earnings are reported.

Company payroll departments prepare over 4 billion paychecks each year. In addition to paying workers accurately and on time, payroll professionals play a key role in crucial government programs including the enforcement of fair labor standards, child support deductions and payments, unemployment insurance, Social Security taxes and benefits, and Medicare.

Payroll professionals deserve our thanks for helping maintain this nation's system of preserving funds for the American community. Regular efforts are made to educate ordinary workers about the payroll tax withholding system. Nationwide, 20,000 members of the American Payroll Association organize outreach programs for their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I hereby ask you and our colleagues to join with me in thanking the payroll employees who are indeed, "Working for America" and proclaim September 3–7, 2001, National Payroll Week.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION WEEK

**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 6, 2001*

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the community of Brownsville,

Texas, for reminding our children about the values we cherish by commencing "Violence Prevention Week" as the new school year begins.

Each year, parents, students and educational professionals begin the school with more trepidation than we ever did, for today the worst-case scenario is not that our children will get in a fight, but that they will be a victim of gun violence.

Here in Texas, we know that if the central component of these tragedies were merely the existence of guns, the level of school violence we see today would have always been so. It is much more: the responsibility that family teaches (including gun safety and proper storage); the faith and tolerance taught by family, churches, synagogues and mosques; the entertainment our children see; and the everyday examples of behavior to which young people are exposed.

In short, it is many things. Our society at large is far less to blame for the incidents of violence we have seen in communities across the country than are the individual families and communities whose job it is to be a good example every day. We should teach responsibility, emphasize faith, and offer age-appropriate entertainment and examples of behavior to children.

Brownsville is taking an important step in speaking to the issue of school violence by planning Violence Prevention Week, sponsored by the Brownsville Independent School District, the local law enforcement agencies, the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce and the local church community.

Events throughout the week include: a formal proclamation and efforts to bring up the subject around the dinner table, essay contests to make the subject pertinent to students, a "Violence Prevention Fair" at a local mall, school addresses by Dana Scott, sister of Rachel Scott, was killed at Columbine, and the incorporation of topics relating to violence prevention into the school curriculum.

Events will culminate in a LIFE (Laborers in Fields of Education) breakfast for educators and community leaders on Saturday, Sept. 8. The guest speaker will be Darrell Scott, father of Rachel Scott, whose story of refusing to deny her faith at her killer's request inspired millions around the world.