

INDIAN RACISM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, last week I made a statement on the excellent discussion of India's racist caste system at the World Conference on Racism in Durban. At that time I intended to place three articles in the RECORD: an article from the National Post, a press release from the Council of Khalistan, and an article from the Information Times. Unfortunately, only the article from the National Post made it into the RECORD. Therefore, I would like to place the other two articles in the RECORD at this time for the information of my colleagues.

[Council of Khalistan, Press Release]

INDIA PRACTICES WORST RACISM IN THE WORLD

LAWS ARE ON THE BOOKS ONLY; HUMAN RIGHTS ARE IGNORED—SELF-DETERMINATION AND EQUALITY ARE THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

Washington, D.C., September 4, 2001—Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, today praised the Dalit and Kashmiri activists who have brought the issue of India's human-rights violations to bear in Durban, site of the World Conference Against Racism. The Council of Khalistan, the government pro tempore of Khalistan, leads the democratic, nonviolent, peaceful struggle to liberate Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987.

"India practices the worst racism in the form of the caste system," said Dr. Aulakh. "The caste system is very reminiscent of the segregation that prevailed in parts of America some years ago, except it is backed by a tyrannical abuse of human rights of Dalits (the black untouchables of India)," he said. "Is that the way of a democracy or the way of a totalitarian theocracy?"

Dr. Aulakh noted that the Dalits, who are considered the lowest caste, are the most oppressed people in the world. He cited the fact that they are not allowed in the temple. He took note of an incident a few years ago when a Dalit constable entered a Hindu temple on a rainy day and was stoned to death by Brahmins. A Dalit girl drank water from a community pitcher and was blinded by her teacher. Dr. Aulakh noted that Dalits are the victims of the worst racism in the world, oppressed by high-caste Brahmins.

"Despite the laws abolishing caste, it remains a guiding principle for India's militant Hindu nationalist theocracy," Dr. Aulakh said. "And despite the laws requiring that anyone who is arrested must be charged within 48 hours, India continues to hold political prisoners for many years without charge or trial," he said. "One of the foundations of democracy is the rule of law. In practice, there is no rule of law in India," he said.

More than 52,000 Sikh political prisoners are rotting in Indian jails without charge or trial. Many have been in illegal custody since 1984. Over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered by the Indian police and security forces, then declared "unidentified" and secretly cremated. Indian forces have murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures reported in the *The Politics of Genocide* by Inderjit Singh Jaijee.

In June, militant fundamentalist Hindu fanatics attacked a train carrying Sikh pilgrims and the Sikh holy scripture, the *Guru*

Granth Sahib. The holy scriptures were burned and the pilgrims were stoned. In May, Indian troops were caught red-handed trying to set fire to a Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) and some Sikh houses in Kashmir. In March 2000 during the visit of former President Clinton, the Indian government massacred 35 Sikhs in Chithisinhpora. Two independent investigations have proven that the Indian government carried out this massacre.

Sikhs ruled Punjab until 1849 when the British forcibly annexed it into British India. No Sikh representative has ever signed the India constitution. India is not one country. It has 18 official languages. It is an empire of many countries thrown together by the British for their convenience. Like the former Soviet Union, it is destined to fall apart.

"The Durban conference must address racism and human-rights violations in India despite India's objections," said Dr. Aulakh. "Only continued international pressure for human rights, the rule of law, and sovereignty will end the racism in India and allow all the people of South Asia to live in freedom," he noted.

"If India is the democracy it claims to be, then why not hold a plebiscite on independence in Punjab, Khalistan and in the other nations seeking their freedom from India?" Dr. Aulakh asked. "The conference should declare its support for the Dalits and for the freedom movements in Khalistan, in Kashmir, in Nagaland, and elsewhere in South Asia," he said. "Democracies don't practice racism," he said. "Democracies don't commit genocide."

[INFORMATION TIMES, Sept. 1, 2001]

INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM IS ALSO A MAJOR ISSUE IN DURBAN

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN IS STILL A SLAVE OF HIS MASTERS

(By Chaliss McDonough)

Durban, South Africa, 31 August 2001 (VOA): The caste system in India has become a major issue at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism. The Indian Government did not want to discuss the issue, but they may not be able to avoid it.

Scores of protesters stand in a circle, drumming and chanting, outside the cricket stadium in downtown Durban. The drummers are from India, and they have come to insist that the caste system not be ignored at the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (31 August—7 2001).

They are handing out headbands and buttons demanding equal rights for those who belong to India's Dalit community, the so-called "lowest caste, untouchables."

This woman, who gave her name only as Vimele, explains there is still blatant discrimination against Dalit people in India. "Dalit people cannot enter the temple," she says. "And if you go to a teashop, they have a separated tea shop."

Separate living areas, separate burial grounds and restrictions on their movements. Vimele says these are some of the hardships Dalits face every day.

Vimele came to Durban with the Tamil Nadu Women's Forum. She says Dalit women confront even more discrimination and harassment than men.

Officially, discrimination based on caste has already been banned in India. But another delegate from Tamil Nadu, Joseph Raj, notes that changing the laws has not changed the system.

"In the documents, Constitution and the law, they prohibited discrimination," he says. "But in practice it is there. We have mechanisms within our country, but it has failed to protect our rights."

Mr. Raj is pleased with the amount of popular support he and his colleagues are getting in Durban. He points to the large number of non-Indians roaming the conference grounds wearing headbands, jackets and buttons supporting their cause.

He and other campaigners want the Indian Government to address the issue at the U.N.-sponsored conference, which began Friday. And they want India to put an end to caste discrimination for good.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan briefly touched on the matter during the meeting of non-governmental organizations. He said delegates at the U.N. conference will need to address discrimination based on caste but he failed to use that word to describe it. He simply referred to discrimination based on origin or work, which is commonly seen as a euphemism for caste.

An activist pressed him further on the matter, but Mr. Annan did not respond. That prompted an angry outcry from some members of the audience.

Getting public support for the Dalits' cause in Durban may not translate into a solution for caste discrimination. But it seems clear that the activists have accomplished at least one of their goals. They have put the issue in the public eye on a global scale.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE RAYMOND V. MARIANO

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable Raymond V. Mariano, Mayor of the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. Mayor Mariano has been selected to receive an award from the Grafton Democratic Town Committee.

Mayor Mariano has a long distinguished record of public service. He served on the Worcester School Committee from 1977 until 1981 when he was elected to the Worcester City Council. In 1993, he was first elected to serve as the Mayor of the City of Worcester. He was re-elected in 1995 and 1997 by the largest percentage of any Mayor in Worcester's history, and is now serving his fourth term in office after successfully winning reelection in 1999.

During his tenure as the Mayor of the City of Worcester, Raymond Mariano has had many accomplishments. In order to recognize and respond to the challenges facing the city's young people, Mayor Mariano created a city-wide youth group to work directly with the mayor's office. The mayor also initiated a summer jobs program that has created over 2,000 jobs for the city's youth. Mayor Mariano has also recognized the need for development in the City of Worcester. He helped to secure federal grants for the renovation of Union Station and was the driving force behind the building of a new convention center that is open today. Perhaps Mayor Mariano's greatest success has been the ability to connect with the city's residents. Mayor Mariano has made himself available to hear the citizens' concerns through the community meetings and the 'Mayor's Walks' through the neighborhoods.

Mayor Mariano has been active in many political campaigns on the local, state, and regional levels. He has demonstrated his belief in and the dedication to our political system by working tirelessly on Presidential, U.S. Senate,

Gubernatorial and Congressional campaigns and referenda.

I would like to commend the Mayor, who makes his home with his wife Antonia and their three children, Gina Marie, Raymond Jr., and Anthony on his achievements and congratulate him for this well-deserved award. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to The Honorable Raymond V. Mariano for his outstanding record of public service.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE RHONDA RASMUSSEN

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with regret and deep sadness that I rise to honor Rhonda Sue Rasmussen, former constituent from San Bernardino, who passed away on September 11, 2001, when a hijacked plane collided with a section of the Pentagon where she worked. She was one of the many American heroes who perished that day from an evil terrorist attack.

Throughout the years, Rhonda was a true visionary. She loved her family. I believe that the well-being of our Nation's peoples depends on all of our dedication and efforts to invest in the present and the future.

Mr. Speaker, Rhonda served as an auditor for the army. She was one of the many faceless men and women that support our military forces and keep our Nation safe. She was a dedicated worker, one who always makes sure that citizens come first. She was extremely strong, brave and dedicated to her work. She had a sense of fun about her, even though she approached her duties with great seriousness and duty. They say a person is measured by the lives he or she touched. Through the grace of God, Rhonda touched many lives.

Rhonda's family had nothing but praise for her, describing her as a dedicated and great hero that on Tuesday put herself in harm's way. So in giving this honor, we are honoring her this day.

The last time her family saw her was during a barbeque earlier this year. It was at this barbeque, hosted by her mother who suffers from cancer, that she told her family that she would soon move to Monterey, California. Regretfully, that day will never come. A family will never be reunited, and we grieve for the loss of this wonderful soul.

Rhonda served our nation proudly, raised four wonderful and dedicated children, and was loving wife. Although she, her husband, and her children had to move often due to her work, she managed to raise four wonderful children. Three of her children are in college and the fourth is a Forestry Department firefighter in Washington state.

May God protect the soul of this wonderful woman. In a time when decent people are in short supply, she was a model and example to her children and her community. Selfless as seen in her commitment to the safety of our nation. Caring as seen in her devotion to her family. Her soul is one of the many departed

on that fateful day, but the impact of her death is a deep well of sorrow in itself. I wish to extend to her children, husband, and the rest of her family my most heartfelt condolences.

I cannot ever come to comprehend what her loss means to her family, but I am saddened and I mourn with them. Let us take comfort in the fact that she is now guarded by our Lord. Rhonda you are loved by many, you served your nation well, you are a hero, and will not be forgotten.

A devoted wife to Floyd Rasmussen, Rhonda lived in Virginia during her work at the Pentagon. Rhonda has four children: Nathan, T.J., Jeremiah and Becky.

In short, Rhonda Rasmussen is a model of excellence we can all follow. Rhonda will be missed by family and friends alike. She touched us all with her kind deeds and leadership in her community.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERTA R. GOLDMAN

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Roberta R. Goldman of Shrewsbury Massachusetts. She has been selected to receive an award from the Grafton Democratic Town Committee on Sunday, September 16, 2001 in Grafton Massachusetts.

Following graduation from Boston University, she moved to Shrewsbury to raise her family and became involved in numerous civic and political activities. She served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives where she helped pass the Education Reform Act of 1985. She also served as Director of Educational Reform in the Office of Education Affairs under Governor Dukakis.

As a member of the Democratic State Committee since 1988, Roberta has served on the Rules committee and on the Host Committee for four Democratic State Conventions held in Worcester. She has been a delegate to five Democratic National Conventions and last year was elected as an Elector to the Electoral College. Her campaigning for candidates at every level, from local office holders to Presidential candidates is legend. She is Co-Vice Chair of the Shrewsbury Town Democratic Committee, and chairs the bi-annual Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award event.

As a social studies teacher at Shrewsbury High School, she has worked to instill an appreciation of involvement in the political process. Through the Political Action Group for high school students, young people participate in local activities as well as actively campaigning in New Hampshire for the presidential candidate of their choice in the state primary.

Mr. Speaker, I commend an outstanding, tireless campaigner, and congratulate her on receiving this award. I know all of my colleagues join me in paying tribute to her today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 339, on September 13, 2001, I was unable to record my vote. At the time I was at the Pentagon surveying the damage and encouraging the rescue workers.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CONGRESSIONAL TOWN MEETING

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the outstanding work done by participants in my Student Congressional Town Meeting held this summer. These participants were part of a group of high school students from around Vermont who testified about the concerns they have as teenagers, and about what they would like to see government do regarding these concerns.

I am asking that these statements be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, as I believe that the views of these young persons will benefit my colleagues.

ON BEHALF OF KEVIN DECAUSEMACKER
REGARDING GUN CONTROL, MAY 7, 2001

Kevin Decausemacker. Thank you for this opportunity. It is a really great thing you let the youth of Vermont come and express their opinions.

Congressman Sanders. Thanks very much for coming, Kevin. Give us your name for the record.

Kevin Decausemacker. The year was 1938.

Congressman Sanders. Your full name.

Kevin Decausemacker. I'm sorry. I'm a little tired. I'm Kevin Decausemacker. A little hard to pronounce. The year was 1938, one year before the invasion of Poland. It was now that Adolf Hitler implemented the first example of gun control. He prohibited the Jewish people from owning firearms, and by so doing took substantial power away from the people. He made it easier to commence his mission of genocide with little resistance from his victims. This is what a government can do with too much power: Whatever it wants. Our government has created three different branches to limit the power it possesses. The United States promotes a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The more we constrict the rights that the Second Amendment states we have, the more power is taken away from the people and given to the government. I feel that the more power the government has, the more the people are at risk of being taken advantage of by it. Why implement gun control then? Solely for safety. However, if safety is the main concern, in England and Australia, where there are strict gun-control laws, there have been rising breaking-and-entry and burglary numbers. So what gun control has done there has