

As soon as Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, president, SAD (A), came out from Akal Takht after participating in ardas, radicals started raising slogans for an independent Sikh state and showed pages containing statements in favour of Khalistan and posters displaying damaged Akal Takht in the military operation. However, Mr. Badal accused those who indulged in sloganeering of being agents of the Congress, which was responsible for the infamous Army operation. He said Mr. Mann was well aware that Punjab had to suffer greatly because of this.

Mr. Mann said though they were not allowed to continue their peaceful struggle to attain independence, they would contest the next elections democratically.

Commenting on the recent judgments and coverage in newspapers, he claimed that judges and the English media had also saffronised. He asked people to raise their hands if they wanted revival of Anandpur Sahib's resolution of 1973 and for severing of relations with the Congress and the BJP.

Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, Jathedar, Akal Takht, said the real tribute to those killed in the operation would be to protect the Sikh history and culture, and to stop apostasy and addiction among the Sikh youth.

He said the Sikh religion was formed to safeguard human ideal's of truth, righteousness and values. He added that for this reason it had to fight against rulers who forgot their duties towards the masses.

Among those present on the occasion were Mr. Avtar Singh, president, SGPC, Bibi Jagir Kaur, former SGPC president, and senior Akali leaders, including Mr. Gurdev Singh Badal, Mr. Ranjit Singh Brahmputra, Mr. Sewa Singh Sekhwan, Mr. Sucha Singh Langah, Mr. Bikramjit Singh Majithia and Mr. Guljar Singh Ranike.

IN CELEBRATION OF RUTH
PASSEN

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2006

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Ruth Passen as she celebrates her 80th birthday. I am proud to pay tribute to her 40 years of respected community journalism as the editor and publisher of the Potrero View, and recognize her lifetime of community service and social activism. Born and raised in San Francisco, she became a formidable advocate for social justice, peace, equality, democracy and freedom.

In 1970, with a few dedicated volunteers, Ruth launched the Potrero View, which has become San Francisco's longest running community newspaper. With her guidance, the Potrero View grew from a neighborhood newsletter into an award-winning, respected, and much anticipated journal of local news, as well as a significant resource of community services. Its investigative style and editorial integrity are well-known throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

As a dear friend and right arm to the late, legendary Enola Maxwell, Ruth helped build the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House, affectionately known as the Nabe, into a hub of vital services for the youth, the elderly, and the families of Potrero Hill. She was instrumental in bringing her beloved jazz and theater to the Nabe and the wider community.

Ruth was actively involved with the Women's International League of Peace and Free-

dom in the peace mobilization of the 1960s and 70s and worked in solidarity with the people of El Salvador for justice and democracy in the 1980s.

Ruth and her husband Joe Passen, whose life we celebrated on this floor 14 years ago, were relentless champions of the labor movement. Together, they fought for working men and women on the San Francisco waterfront and in the maritime industry throughout the West Coast. They helped San Francisco become the first and foremost trade union town in the world. They worked alongside Cesar Chavez in support of California's farm workers.

As Young Democrats they were part of a progressive movement in San Francisco that brought Phillip Burton, John Burton, Sala Burton and me to this people's house.

We thank Ruth for her immeasurable contributions to our City. We wish her every happiness as she begins a new chapter in her life as Editor Emeritus of the Potrero View and grandmother extraordinaire. Finally, she will have much deserved time to pursue her many interests, as well as spend time with her beloved family—her son Marc, daughter-in-law Dianne, and granddaughters Natalie and Teresa. Thank you, Ruth for your years of service to our beautiful City of San Francisco.

ARTICLE EXPOSES REPRESSION
OF SIKHS BY INDIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, a good article appeared in the Argus of Fremont, California on repression of the Sikhs in India. Fremont has a large Sikh population and the article appeared earlier this month in conjunction with the commemoration of the Indian government's June 1984 attack on the Golden Temple, the most sacred Sikh shrine.

The article points out that the abuse at Abu Ghraib which embarrassed all of us, was a lesser offense than what India did to its Sikh population in June 1984 when it attacked the Golden Temple and 37 other Gurdwaras in Punjab.

The article quotes a Sikh named Jasdeep Singh as saying that "We would have said that was nothing" referring to Abu Ghraib.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since we know how atrocious the Abu Ghraib incidents are, that gives us an indication of the carnage that was inflicted on the Sikh Nation by the Indian regime in June 1984.

The article also discusses the Sikhs' desire for an independent, sovereign Khalistan, which declared its independence from India in 1987. This has been met with many years of bloody repression, including the murders of over 250,000 Sikhs and over 52,000 who are held as political prisoners in "the world's largest democracy."

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to demand self-determination and full human rights for all people in South Asia. We should stop our aid and trade with India and we should demand a free and fair plebiscite not only on the status of Khalistan, but of Kashmir (as India promised in 1948), of Nagalim, and all the nations seeking their freedom in that troubled region.

It would be good for the freedom, prosperity, and stability of all concerned.

I would like to insert the Argus article into the RECORD at this time.

[From the Argus, June 5, 2006]

FREMONT SIKHS RECALL OPPRESSION

(By Matthew Artz)

FREMONT.—Jasdeep Singh couldn't help but laugh at the uproar over the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

"We would have said that was nothing," said Singh, who moved to Fremont in 1992, he said, after Indian authorities detained and tortured him three times because he is Sikh.

Sikh nationalism barely a blip on the international radar, was front and center Sunday at the Fremont Gurdwara Sahib, the local Sikh house of worship, where community leaders reaffirmed support for transforming the Indian state of Punjab into a secular Sikh-majority state of Khalistan.

"We know from our history that Sikhs will never be safe or truly free unless they have a homeland of their own," Singh said.

For the estimated 150,000 Sikhs living in the Bay Area, Tuesday marks the anniversary of two of the most devastating and seminal events in the history of the 500-year-old faith.

In 1984, with Sikhs pressing for an independent Punjab, where they are a majority, the Indian government invaded the Golden Temple—Sikhism's holiest place—and 36 other religious sites where separatists were hiding, killing thousands. The attack came on the 378th anniversary of the torture and death of a Sikh religious leader.

Four months later, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was murdered by two of her Sikh bodyguards, rioters murdered thousands more Sikhs, who are easy to identify because the men wore turbans and grow long beards.

The bloodbath and ensuing eight years of repression drove many Sikhs to North America.

Now, 7,500 miles from their ancestral land, leaders of the Fremont gurdwara won't let their brethren forget about what transpired in India.

Photographs of 73 Sikhs murdered by Indian authorities in 1984, including the two men who killed the prime minister, ring the gurdwara's dining room.

On Sunday, the gurdwara installed an exhibit about their faith that included photographs of Sikh men being burned alive or beaten by Indian soldiers. Other pictures commemorated the 400th anniversary of the torture and murder of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, who refused to remove references to Islam and Hinduism from the Sikh's holy book.

"We're trying to make people aware," said Ram Singh, a gurdwara leader who plans to protest outside the Indian Consulate in San Francisco tomorrow. "We don't want our future generations to forget what happened to us."

Jasdeep Singh, an engineer, won't forget the day in 1989 when soldiers raided his graduate school boarding house and detained all the Sikhs in an effort to gain intelligence on separatist leaders.

"First the clothes came off," he said. Later, guards tied his hands behind his back and hung him from the ceiling. "These two shoulders," he said, "felt like they were going to pop out."

Since Singh arrived in Fremont, persecution of Sikhs in India has decreased and the governing Congress Party named a Sikh, Mammohan Singh, to serve as prime minister.

Years of repression followed by some reforms have stifled the independence movement in Punjab and left Sikhs in the Bay