

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the City of Berkley, in Oakland County, MI, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this week. This City's rich history and enduring perseverance serves as a shining example of the mettle of all Michiganders.

Before being established as a village in 1823, Berkley was part of a vast forest and swamp teeming with quicksand and other perils. Despite these hardships, settlers pressed on through the wilderness outside of Detroit to stake their claims in Berkley. By 1832, the burgeoning number of settlers arriving in Detroit warranted a stagecoach route that ran through Berkley on the way to Pontiac.

Berkley, along with many other communities, suffered through many adversities during the Great Depression. However, the village met those challenges head on and established a pay-as-you-go plan, spending only what it took in, in order to continue to govern responsibly. Many of the residents became active in local politics, and upon learning of the benefits of becoming a city, the discussion commenced.

After a year of debate and preparation, the residents of Berkley adopted a city charter, and elected a mayor and six commissioners. On May 23, 1932, now with a population of 6,000, the City of Berkley was established. With Detroit opening up its factories to produce materials at the onset of World War II, the residents of Berkley joined in the war effort. In 1946 Berkley had spent more for constructing new facilities and factories than any other city in Oakland County.

Madam Speaker, today Berkley is a vibrant community in Oakland County that is home to over 15,000 residents, a state-of-the-art library, and a bustling downtown district. I congratulate them on their 75th anniversary and wish the residents many more years of prosperity.

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER ATTACKED FOR ANTI-SIKH BEHAVIOR

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, recently it has been discovered that the Chief Minister of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal, went and met with a Punjabi cult leader named Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh, who claimed to be a baba and was recently in the news for dressing up as the last Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, and offering Amrit to anyone who called. Amrit is a very sacred ceremony in the Sikh religion and it cannot be done by just anyone. Ram Rahim also has murder and rape charges pending against him. Yet Mr. Badal went to him and bowed, seeking votes. Ironically, Ram Rahim came out for Mr. Badal's political opponents, the Congress Party.

As Chief Minister, one of Mr. Badal's chief responsibilities is maintaining law and order. Yet he seeks support from this fake religious leader instead of prosecuting him for the damage he has done to the Sikh community and to Punjab.

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, has issued a press release condemning Badal's activities. It shows that chief Minister is allied with the Indian government against the Sikh people. Remember that when Badal was chief Minister before, he presided over the most corrupt government in Punjab's history. They even renamed bribery "fee for service." His wife could tell the amount of money in a bag just by picking it up.

Only by freeing themselves of Indian rule will the Sikhs be able to rid themselves of this kind of anti-Sikh leadership. The U.S. government can help by stopping aid and trade with India until criminals such as Ram Rahim are prosecuted and all human rights are observed and by putting ourselves on record publicly in support of self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, the Muslims of Kashmir, the Christians of Nagalim, and all the people seeking freedom in South Asia in the form of a free and fair vote. Isn't that the democratic way? The people of Kashmir were promised a vote on their status in 1948. They're still waiting.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN DEPLORES ANTI-SIKH BEHAVIOR OF PARAKSH SINGH BADAL

WASHINGTON, DC, May 22, 2007.—The Council of Khalistan condemned the behavior of Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal. It has recently surfaced that before the Punjab elections, Badal and his son Sukhbir went to meet with Baba Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh, leader of the Dera Sacha Sauda cult which has brought about so much strife in Punjab. While there, they bowed their heads to Ram Rahim. A Sikh is not supposed to bow except to the Guru Granth Sahib. This is the moral degeneration of the Akali leadership.

Ironically, despite Badal's begging and pleading, Ram Rahim supported the Congress Party in the recent elections in Punjab. Now Badal is blaming his predecessor, Captain Amarinder Singh, for the problem. Badal didn't even get votes out of his shameful actions. Perhaps it's time he paid attention to the Sikhs who elected him rather than the anti-Sikh BJP, his coalition partner, and the leaders in Delhi.

Badal is the Chief Minister. As such, he is responsible for law and order. Yet he refused to prosecute this fraudulent baba pretending to be Guru Gobind Singh. There are pending charges of murder and rape against Ram Rahim. Why does Badal kowtow to him?

"There are no Deras or sects in the Sikh religion. There is only one Sikh religion and Sikh Nation," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "Fake Babas like Baba Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh are part of the Indian government's ongoing effort to weaken the Sikh religion and prevent Sikhs from achieving freedom," he said. "Sikh leaders should not be dignifying them. Badal should be prosecuting this fraudulent baba for these despicable acts."

"Badal's conduct is shameful for a Sikh leader," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "This shameful conduct shows that Badal is under the complete control of the Indian government, rather than working for the Sikhs. We must free ourselves of corrupt, anti-Sikh

leaders like Badal and his friends by liberating Khalistan," he said. "Remember what former Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh said: 'If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh.'"

A report issued by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR) shows that India admitted that it held 52,268 political prisoners under the repressive "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act" (TADA) even though it expired in 1995. Many have been in illegal custody since 1984. There has been no list published of those who were acquitted under TADA and those who are still rotting in Indian jails. Additionally, according to Amnesty International, there are tens of thousands of other minorities being held as political prisoners. MASR report quotes the Punjab Civil Magistracy as writing "if we add up the figures of the last few years the number of innocent persons killed would run into lakhs [hundreds of thousands.]" The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands of Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

"The Sikh masses must rise to the occasion and establish new leadership that works for the interest of the Khalsa Panth and abides by Sikh tradition," said Dr. Aulakh. "Badal and his son have betrayed the Sikh Rehat Maryada, Sikh principles, and Sikh tradition. Their leadership must be rejected for the interests of the Khalsa Panth. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht must censure him for violating the Sikh Rehat Maryada, betraying the Sikh Nation, and defaming the Sikh religion," he said. "Incidents like this test the resolve of the Sikh Nation. The Khalsa Panth will never allow the cult babas to dare to compare themselves with our revered Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, who sacrificed his whole family for the Chardi Kala of the Khalsa Panth," said Dr. Aulakh. "Remember Guru Gobind Singh's words: 'Sava lath se ek laraon, tabe nam Gobind Singh kahaon.' Also remember Guru's blessing, 'In grieb Sikh in ko deon patshahi.' Only a free Khalistan will put a stop to occurrences like this. We must continue to pray for and work for our God-given birthright of freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. The time is now to free Khalistan."

[From the Panthic Weekly, May 17, 2007]

BADAL AND FAMILY ARE SACHA SAUDA PREMIS: CULT SPOKESMAN

Amritsar Sahib (KP)—At a news conference organized by the Sacha Sauda Cult, photographic evidence was released indicating that as recent as January of 2007, Shiromani Akali Dal's president Parkash Badal, his son Sukhbir Badal, and other Akalis met with the dehdahri-cult guru Ram-Rahim and asked for his blessings.

This announcement was made after a large Sikh conclave held at Takht Sri Damdama Sahib called upon the Sikh Nation to socially boycott the entire Sirsa cult, and demanded the Punjab and Haryana Governments to take stern action against the cult leader.

Panthic observers doubt any action would be taken by the Akal Takht Jathedars against the Badals, nor will the Punjab Government take action against the cult. Parkash Badal's cozy relationship between the Sauda leader and other similar cults is now a widely accepted fact.

The recent softening of the tone by Jathedar Joginder Singh Vedanti is an indication that he does not want to ruffle the