

[From The Washington Times, Aug. 4, 1998]

HOUSE MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES ASK
CLINTON'S HELP IN FREEING FOUR SIKHS

(By Tom Carter)

A bipartisan group of 33 legislators has written to President Clinton urging him to get involved in protecting four Sikh human rights activists arrested in India last month.

"There is reason for concern that their detention is without merit and that they are at risk of torture while in detention," wrote Rep. Constance A. Morella, Maryland Republican, in a letter dated July 30.

"I hope that your administration will urge Indian authorities to undertake an independent investigation of these cases, urging them to review these arrests and to act to protect the physical integrity of those detained," she wrote.

In a separate letter, sponsored by Edolphus Towns, New York Democrat, 32 members of Congress urged Mr. Clinton to involve the government of the United States in securing these men's release.

"In a democracy, human rights activists . . . should not have to live in fear of the police. We call on you to intervene with the government of India," said the letter dated July 31.

Others who added their names to the letter included Republicans Dan Burton of Indiana, Frank R. Wolf of Virginia, Peter T. King of New York, Philip M. Crane of Illinois and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida. Democrats who signed the letter included Reps. Esteban E. Torres of California, Cynthia A. McKinney of Georgia and Barbara B. Kennelly of Connecticut.

The Council of Khalistan, which advocates independence for Sikhs in Punjab, faxes copies of the congressional appeals to news organizations over the weekend.

The four human rights activists were arrested last month in Punjab on what Mr. Towns described as "false charges."

Jaspal Singh Dhillon, Rajinder Singh Neeta, Kulbir Kaur Dhami and Daljit Singh Rajput were arrested for what Indian authorities claimed was their involvement in an plan to help free "militants" by blowing up a jail.

A State Department official, asked to comment on the matter, said the U.S. Embassy in India was aware of Mr. Dhillon's case.

"They have made informal contact with the Indian authorities and they are monitoring it," the official said.

The Indian government yesterday had no comment on the specifics of the case.

"The police wouldn't have acted just like that. They will have done their work. There is rule of law in Punjab," said Amar Sinha, press spokesman of the Indian Embassy.

On July 24, Amnesty International issued an "urgent action" on the four men.

According to the Amnesty release, Mr. Dhillon worked with Jaswant Singh Khalra, a well-known human rights activist who "disappeared" in September 1995 after his arrest after exposing the mass cremations of unidentified Sikhs.

Nine police officials have been charged, but not prosecuted, in the arrest and "disappearance."

"There is a fear that [Mr. Dhillon] may disappear too," said Jurjit Chima of Amnesty International yesterday.

Gurmit Singh Aulakh, director of the Council of Khalistan, which advocates independence of Sikhs in Punjab, said the men were arrested to prevent them from testifying at a "People's Commission" human rights forum to be held Aug. 8 through 10.

TRIBUTE TO HARRIET PHILIP,
WHO WILL BE CELEBRATING
HER 105TH BIRTHDAY ON AU-
GUST 5, 1998

HON. NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise, to pay tribute to a kind and able woman, Harriet Philip. Harrie, as she is known by her friends, was born on the Caribbean island of Trinidad on August 5, 1893. Later in life, she immigrated to the United States and settled in Brooklyn where she is surrounded by friends and family members who love her sense of humor and her particular attitude about her needs and wants.

Harrie, an expert artist, crochets, knits, and designs exquisite articles for her loved ones without the use of patterns. She also loves to talk with her friends and family who admire her charming personality. Harrie's uplifting spirit and longevity have been an inspiration to all those around her.

Harrie, a follower of the Bahai religion, has raised three sons and one daughter. These children have blessed her with two beautiful grandchildren.

It is with great pleasure and personal regard that I ask my fellow colleagues to rise to pay tribute to Mrs. Harriet Philip on her 105th birthday, with wishes of many more to come.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, AND JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 3, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the amendment, which would restore funding for the Legal Services Corporation to current levels.

The Legal Services Corporation is a lifeline for thousands of people with no other means of access to the legal system. Last year, LSC resolved 1.5 million civil cases, benefiting over four million indigent citizens from every county in America.

Who are these people? Over two-thirds are women, and most are mothers with children. Women seeking protection against abusive spouses. Children living in poverty and neglect. Elderly people threatened by eviction or victimized by consumer fraud. Veterans denied benefits, and small farmers facing foreclosure.

These are the people who will be hurt if this amendment is not adopted today. If LSC is forced to absorb the huge cuts made in committee, half of the 1,100 neighborhood legal services offices will have to be closed. This

will leave a single lawyer to serve every 23,600 poor Americans. Over 700,000 people in need of legal services will have to be turned away.

We cannot—we must not—allow this to happen. I urge my colleagues to vote for this amendment. It's the decent thing to do.

RABBI AND MRS. MERVIN B.
TOMSKY TO CELEBRATE THEIR
50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, Rabbi Mervin B. Tomsy, and his wife, Helen, who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on August 22, 1998. Though they are longtime residents of California, the story of the Tomsy's marriage actually begins in Minnesota. Mervin and Helen knew each other in Minnesota as children, attended the University of Minnesota together, and got married in Minnesota. A few years later the couple moved to New York, where Mervin attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He was ordained as a rabbi in 1956.

Fifteen years later the Tomsys moved to Southern California, where they have lived ever since. I met Rabbi Tomsy after he became rabbi at Temple Emanu El in Burbank, California, and had the pleasure of speaking to his congregation on a couple of occasions. Today he holds the title of Rabbi Emeritus at Temple Emanu El, and he is the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Divinity Law from Jewish Theological Seminary.

Both Rabbi Tomsy and Helen are extremely active people, which may well be one of the reasons for their successful marriage. Helen was a public school teacher for many years and has been heavily involved in literacy programs. Rabbi Tomsy is on the Board of Directors for the University of Judaism, where his duties include interviewing candidates who wish to convert to Judaism.

For 22 years, the Tomsys have been active in Jewish Marriage Encounter, which stresses ways to enhance the marital bonds. It hardly needs to be said that the Tomsys are an ideal role model for younger couples who participate in the program.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Rabbi Mervin and Helen Tomsy on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. I join their children, David, Sharon and Judith, and grandchildren, Andrew and Daria, in wishing them all the best in the years to come.

COMMEMORATING THE 175TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE DELAWARE
AND HUDSON

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the Delaware and Hudson, headquartered in Clifton Park, New York, is the oldest continuously operated transportation company in North America. The