

Justice D. S. Tewatia, Retd. Justice H. Suresh and Retd. Justice Jaspal Singh. After the first session of the commission at Chandigarh on 8-9-10 August 1998, the affected families see a glimmer of hope. The People's Commission is the people's response to the non-fulfillment of election promises by the present government at the state level and the incapability of the ruling coalition at the Centre to rectify the wrongs of yester-years. If people can form governments surely they can form commissions as well; can they not?

Now, the Congress, the BJP and the Police (the trinity responsible for gross human rights abuse in the Panjab through acts of omission and commission) are pressurizing the Badal government to wind up the People's Commission, calling it "illegal" and "harbinger of disturbance" and other names.

We appeal to the Panjab State Human Rights Commission, to advise the state government, not to stoke the fires that are lying buried. Though we contest the "quality of peace" that has "descended on the Panjab", any attempt by the state "not to let people cry for their beloveds" will boomerang. The endorsement of the Panjab State Human Rights Commission of the work of the People's Commission will go a long way to enhance respect for human rights and to smother the politically motivated propaganda against this humble attempt by the people to assuage the hurt of victims and their families. This certainly is part of the moral mandate of any human rights body, more so of a state-sponsored Human Rights Commission.

Moreover the labour of the People's Commission will not go in vain. The report of the People's Commission will not meet the same fate of hundreds of Commissions set up by the Indian state under the Commissions of Enquiry Act. It will perhaps be useful for the Human Rights Commission to conduct a statistical analysis of the total number of Commissions of enquiry instituted by the state and those whose recommendations have been accepted.

The focus of the work of the People's Commission is also not at loggerheads with the working of the judiciary as is being propagated by the wanton statements of the Panjab Advocate General, Congress and BJP leaders and the Panjab police chief. Their consternation is more about the uncovering of truth about their shameful deeds. Those opposing the People's Commission will do well to remember that before the official Srikrishna Commission was setup to pinpoint the responsibility for the riots in Bombay in 1992-93, a People's Commission was set up by an independent body, The Indian Peoples Human Rights Commission. Justice S.M. Daud and Justice H. Suresh made an extensive enquiry and submitted a report on the role of the government and the police in the rioting in Bombay. The report was first published in August 1993. The evidence collected by that People's Commission made the task of witnesses much easier when they deposed before the official Srikrishna Commission.

It may also be noted that the panel of judges on the Indian People's Human Rights Tribunal have conducted enquiries into the firing in Arwal in Bihar in 1987, the burning of 646 huts of tribals in Vishakapatnam district by the Andhra Pradesh government in 1988, the role of the Provincial Armed Constabulary in the riots in Meerut in 1988, the role of the Karnataka government in anti-Tamil riots and the role of the Tamil Nadu government in anti-Kannadiga riots in 1992.

At the international level, the journey for trial of guilty officers, bureaucrats and political leaders responsible for crimes against humanity, which started with the Nurem-

berg trials has fructified this year in the formation of an International Criminal Court.

The Panjab State Human Rights Commission and the National Human Rights Commission will do well to train the Indian police, paramilitary and military forces to recognize the harsh reality that sooner or later nemesis will catch up. Transparency and not secrecy is the watchword. "Reasons of state", "demoralization of the police forces" and "amendments to the Criminal Procedure code to make it difficult to prosecute police officers", "orders of superiors", "ignorance of law, especially international and humanitarian law" will not be adequate to protect either the protagonists or the perpetrators of human rights abuse.

We are concerned that no serious effort has been made by the government of Panjab or the Commission to popularize the commission and its work among the people of Panjab. No public sitting of the commission has taken place since its formation. The people of Panjab are eager to know the number of cases in which suo moto action has been taken by the Commission. We look forward to the first annual report of the Panjab State Human Rights Commission and we anxiously wait to see how it nails down the state government and the police machinery. Should the commission require details on the above points, we shall gladly furnish them.

We appeal to you and through you also to the overindulgent Advocate General of Panjab, Mr. Gurdarshan Singh Grewal, to advise the present State government in Panjab whether it wants to join the sanguineous trinity of the Police-Congress-BJP or to find a respectable place in contemporary history, particularly in a year, when the international community, in spite of India's abstention, has formed the International Criminal Court to try individual cases of gross human rights abuse.

(Prof.) JAGMOHAN SINGH,
General Secretary.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING CONGRESSMAN DELLUMS

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 13, 1998

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, RON DELLUMS, a great member of the House of Representatives, and a great member of the Congressional Black Caucus retired last February. On several occasions I spoke enthusiastically of my great admiration for Congressman DELLUMS; however, I was absent on the day tributes to my esteemed colleague were made on the floor of the House. Today, for the RECORD, I would like to summarize my tribute to a friend, a mentor and a great role model.

RON DELLUMS is a man defined by magnificent contradictions. He is the activist who took a great risk when he joined the establishment; but he won the bet that he could never be corrupted. He is the peacemaker who rose to the position of Chairman of the powerful war-making Armed Services Committee.

RON DELLUMS was and is a steady keeper of a broad and integrated vision of this complex world. He is a tribune broadcasting a consistent, universal message. Throughout his long career in the Congress he remained loyal to certain fundamental principles advocating peace with justice—and his order of priorities never became confused. Despite his world

view, his philosophical and intellectual loftiness and his intensity concerning administrative excellence, RON remained first and foremost a descendant of Frederic Douglass, first and foremost an African American with an abiding dedication to his people.

When the oppressed Blacks three thousand miles away in South Africa needed a champion, RON DELLUMS was there with his parliamentary skills managing a difficult controversial resolution through the House. The effort was greatly enhanced by this oratorical eloquence and the fact that he had already accepted jail and arrest to promote his position. In a historic moment on the floor of the House, which has not yet been accorded its appropriate recognition, the Dellums South African sanctions resolution passed and set in motion a process which doomed the evil of apartheid. Nelson Mandela was later set free and a new South Africa nation was born.

Although he was the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee in 1993 when the call came for direct action to return democracy to Haiti, RON DELLUMS was again on the front lines accepting arrest and jail to promote a policy of sanctions against an oppressive regime.

To promote justice and a better utilization of our national resources throughout the world RON led the drive to reallocate the military budget. He continued to support the Congressional Black Caucus alternative Caring Majority Budget. His concerns for full employment and job training as well as a more generous and sustained investment in education never waiver while he executed his duties as Armed Services Committee Chairman.

Today, the portrait of RONALD V. DELLUMS in the National Security Committee Hearing Room speaks symbolic volumes about the magnificent contradictions of this Renaissance Man. This great room of the warriors, with forbidding portraits all around, many with a background including some weapon of destruction, is transformed by the Dellums portrait which makes a complete and almost perfect statement. From this powerful portrait the sunshine of peace and hope triumphantly invades the war room. This masterpiece leaves the bright shining signature and spirit of a conquering hero: RONALD V. DELLUMS.

HONORING THE PINK RIBBONS PROJECT

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 13, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the tremendous contribution that the Pink Ribbons Project is making in the battle against breast cancer.

Every October, we celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month to highlight the efforts by medical providers, community organizations, and businesses to ensure all women have access to the breast cancer screening and treatment they need. It is particularly gratifying to acknowledge the efforts of the Pink Ribbons Project, Dancers in Motion for Breast Cancer, whose generosity is helping to achieve this goal and save lives.

The Pink Ribbons Project was conceived and created in New York City in May 1995 by