

into "reconverting" to Hinduism. The Police have evoked the infamous and ironically named Freedom of Religion Act selectively against the Christians but not against their tormentors. As the media has reported, 17 adult persons had some time ago become Christians, and had told the police they had done so of their own free will, without any duress or allurement. The police, acting at the behest of local religio-political goons, however, chose to prosecute them and registered cases against them. Emboldened by this, the local fundamentalist elements intimidated the Christians, organising social ostracisation against them. Reports suggest that the authorities tacitly supported the "reconversion." The council has deplored the blatant religious partisanship of the local police and civil administration.

It is quite clear that these elements are getting strengthened by the attitude of the Central government. The minority communities, specially Christians are alarmed, at the failure of the Central government to denounce a Private Members bill moved by one of their party members in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament, which seeks a ban on religious conversions, which in effect means a ban on freedom of faith. This bill evoked dark memories of a similar Hitlerian OP Tyagi Bill in the late Seventies which the government, of which the current Bharatiya Janata party was a part, had extended its support.

The council has also strongly criticised the government's reported plan to enact new laws to strangle foreign donations and grants to minority, specially Christian, institutions and organisations. The existing Foreign Contributions Act, FCRA, is already being used as a weapon by the BJP government to target Christian groups and to stifle all protest. We fear the proposed laws are being designed to entirely curtail the educational and public welfare work of the Christian church in India. Christian groups have been thoroughly investigated in the law two years and have been found innocent, and yet extremist groups as well as ruling political parties have persisted a hate campaign against us using disinformation, half truths and malicious lies.

We call upon Civil Society, the national Human Rights Commission and all fellow citizens to unite in fighting this erosion of civil liberties and constitutional guarantees.

HAVE YOU DONE ENOUGH???

The anti-Christian Bill is in the Parliament. This is a place where even very sensitive Bills have been passed by manipulations, ignorance and negligence. Pandemoniums are created to pass Bills by voice votes. Bills become Acts in a second as opposition stages a walkout.

Have you heard your representative opposing the Bill? Have you heard the Christian MP's forum responding? Have you read about the Bill in your newspaper? Have you heard any of the church leaders speaking out? Now the burden is upon you. Do you know that it is the Sikh leader Gurmit Singh Aulakh who dedicates all his energies to bring up the issue of Christian persecution before the American legislative bodies?

How many Indian Christians have you seen lobbying against the persecution of Christians at the UN organisations or the US Committees?

Do you know that it is dalits, atheists and even moslems who have taken up the issue of the present Bill which is bound to affect the Christians the most? Dr. Satinath Choudhry is one of the earliest to respond. The objec-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

tions to the Bill have appeared before the secular and dalit E-fora even before the head of any Church has even taken note of the Bill. Fascism is here and now. The very rights of individuals are at stake. Have you done enough???

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 298 and 299, final passage of H.R. 2647, Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2002 and the approval of the Journal, I was detained at the White House in a meeting on World Conference Against Racism. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both.

TRIBUTE TO RUTH HYMAN

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of Congress to an event on Thursday, August 16 in New Jersey. The Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Monmouth County is holding a dinner and tribute at Temple Beth El of Oakhurst to honor Ruth Hyman. Ruth will have the distinction of being honored for her work as a philanthropist and her support of Jewish causes in the area, as well as in Israel.

Ruth, a close friend of mine, was born in my hometown of Long Branch, New Jersey into a family of four boys and four girls. She says that her parents' direction and teachings of tzedakah, menschlichkeit, and the Torah guided her to be the person that she is today.

Ruth's teachings as a child can well be seen in her community involvement. She is a life member of Daughters of Miriam, charter and life member of the Central Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged, founder and past chairperson of the Federation Women's Business and Professional Division, benefactor and board member of the Jewish Community Center, and an active member of B'nai Brith, AMIT, and Congregation Brothers of Israel. For the past twenty-five years Ms. Hyman has been the Chairperson of the Women's Division of Israel Bonds, and for the past twenty-six years she has been the president of the Long Branch Hadassah.

This is not the first time that Ruth has been honored for her service to the community. Ruth has received the Service Award from the Jewish Federation Women's Campaign, Woman of Valor of the Long Branch chapter of Hadassah, Israel Bonds Golda Meir Award and the Ben Gurion Award, Lay Leader of the Year by the Jewish Federation, and the Hadassah National Leadership Award. The community cannot express the debt that we owe to my friend Ruth who has shown us all that selflessness will never go unrecognized.

I want to personally thank Ruth Hyman for being a leader of the Jewish community and an excellent role model for our youth.

HONORING CONNEE GARTLAND ON HER 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in honoring a very special person, Mrs. Connee Gartland, on the occasion of her 80th birthday. Family and friends will gather this weekend in Dennisport, Massachusetts to celebrate this milestone.

Constance Doris Fischer Gartland was born on August 7, 1921 in Boston, Massachusetts to Alfons and Louise M. Fischer. She earned a B.S. Degree in Education from Salem State College in 1943 and a Master's in Business from Boston University in 1945. During her distinguished career as an educator, she held the position of Business Education Teacher at Mary Brooks School and Academie Moderne, both in Boston; and Weston High School in Weston, Massachusetts.

On October 7, 1950 Connee married Edward V. Gartland, Jr. They became the proud parents of four children: Susan, Pamela, Deborah and Edward V. III and eventually the proud grandparents of five grandchildren; Brian and Kevin Anderson, Delaney and Riley Cruickshank, and Edward V. Gartland IV. They lived in Newton, Massachusetts and spent summers in their home in Dennisport.

With warmth and generosity, Connee and Ed opened their hearts and home over the years to neighbors and friends of all ages and from all parts of the country. There was always lively and enjoyable conversation in their home because of their many interests and activities.

During the winter, Connee now lives in Fort Myers, Florida where she is a member of the Development Committee at her church. Other memberships include the Women's Club, the 9-Holers Golf League, where she held the position of Treasurer; and the staff of the Lake Fairways Newsletter, The Informer.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in sending our congratulations to a wonderful person, Connee Gartland, who has touched so many lives as a former educator, parent, grandparent, and friend. Let us extend our best wishes for a Happy 80th Birthday and continued health and happiness.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH PERU

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, U.S. relations with Peru have recently become a matter of concern due to the shoot-down of the U.S. missionary plane, with the death of two U.S. nationals, a mother and her child, and the continued imprisonment of Lori Berenson. At the same time, we have been witnessing the growing accusations of corruption and human rights abuses stemming from the arrest of former Peruvian spy chief Vladimiro