

(copy)

Chandigarh,  
January 19, 2005.

Professor J. P. Bourguignon,  
Directeur, Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques,  
F-91440 Bures-sur-Yvette, FRANCE.

Dear Professor Bourguignon,

I am indebted to you and your pre-eminent research institute for the gracious hospitality and intellectual stimulation that I have received during my previous visits, and I am thankful for your invitation to visit once again from February 1, 2005 to February 28, 2005.

Unfortunately this time I must perforce decline. I do so out of dismay arising from the black law enacted some months ago by your government. A "law" which legitimizes the illegitimate: intolerance of a state towards some deeply held beliefs of some of its own subjects! A "law" that has barred many students---including some who are Sikhs like me---from public school education in France, by arbitrarily decreeing that they must first give up the mode of dress which their religion and/or tradition enjoins, and which, in the case of the Sikhs in question, constitutes a key part of their very identity.

To put my protest on record I am sending a copy of this letter to the President of France. I hope such protests will, in time, convince your government to repeal this odious law, and embrace once again the cherished principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which your nation proposed to the whole world.

Yours sincerely

(K. S. Sarkaria)

Karanbir Singh Sarkaria,  
Professor, Department of Mathematics,  
Panjab University, Chandigarh 160014, INDIA.

sarkaria\_2000@yahoo.com