

INTRODUCTION

The Network of Concerned Historians (NCH) forwards to its participants news about the domain where history and human rights intersect, as reported by the American Association for the Advancement of Science [AAAS, Washington]; Amnesty International [AI, London]; Article 19 [A19, London]; Human Rights Watch [HRW, Washington/New York]; Index on Censorship [IOC, London]; International PEN Writers in Prison Committee [PEN, London]; Scholars at Risk [SAR, New York]; World University Service [*WUS, Amsterdam*]; and other sources. The fact that NCH presents this news does not imply that it shares the views and beliefs of the historians and others mentioned in it.

AZERBAIJAN

According to an Azeri publication dated 7 December 1994, historian Movsum Aliyev was arrested for insulting the president in an article he wrote for the publication 'Azadlyk', entitled 'The Answer to the Falsifiers of History'.

[Source: IOC 1/95: 233]

BULGARIA

In August 1995 British archaeologist Dr Douglas Bailey was deported after taking part in an excavation project at Podgoritsa, north-east Bulgaria. Fourteen of his students were searched and interrogated at Sofia airport and accused of military espionage. When Douglas Bailey later returned to Bulgaria to reclaim confiscated equipment, his passport was seized and he was interrogated for three days before being deported on 24 August. Bulgarian project members have had their offices and homes searched and documents confiscated.

[Source: IOC 5/95: 171-172]

CHINA

In May 1995 Xu Liangying (b. [1920]), a retired physicist, translator of Einstein's collected works and formerly working in the Institute of the History of Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and one of the intellectuals publicly calling for an end to repression of free speech and for the release of political prisoners, was harassed by government officials, after drafting and initiating a petition, signed by forty-five intellectuals, including historian Bao Zunxin and former history student Wang Dan, appealing to the government to free all political prisoners. In March 1994 he was placed under surveillance and virtual house arrest during the visit of foreign dignitaries to China. In October 1992 copies of the scientific journal 'Future and Development' containing several articles dealing with political and economic reform, including one by Xu, had been confiscated.

[Sources: American Association for the Advancement of Science, Directory of Persecuted Scientists, Engineers, and Health Professionals (Washington 1994) 37-38; American Association for the Advancement of Science Human Rights Action Network (AAASHRAN), Case CH9539: 23 May 1995 (and update 5 June 1995); IOC 4/95: 173]

CROATIA

On 2 February 1995 Members of Parliament launched a Croatian Statehood Campaign, in which they accused the media of being anti-Croatian and of falsifying Croatian history.

[Source: IOC 2/95: 173]

GERMANY

In early January 1995 it was reported that customs officials in Wuppertal seized the entire print run of a book by the left-wing author and historian Karl-Heinz Jahnke. The book was printed in Hungary and banned in Germany for 'reasons of national security'.

[Source: IOC 1/95: 239]

On 17 February 1995 the book 'Eye for an eye' by John Sack was withdrawn by the publisher before any copies had been sold. It argued that Stalin deliberately chose Jews to oversee concentration camps in post-war Poland, and has been labelled 'anti-Semitic fodder' by a literary critic.

[Source: IOC 2/95: 175]

On 29 August 1995 Bela Ewald Althans was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for denying the Holocaust. In 1992 he had told tourists queueing up to visit Auschwitz that it had not been a death camp.

[Source: IOC 5/95: 177]

GREECE

On 28 April 1995 President Costis Stephanopoulos accused Macedonia of claiming the entire Macedonian region, which includes areas in Greece and Bulgaria, because of its refusal to remove an ancient Greek symbol from its flag. On 27 January 1995 the Foreign Minister had refused to attend the commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz in protest at the Polish government's plan to raise the Macedonian flag during the ceremony.

[Source: IOC 2/95: 175, 5/95: 178]

GUATEMALA

On 24 April 1995 the Catholic bishops launched an alternative Truth Commission under the slogan 'Recovering the Historic Memory'. The project is in response to popular frustration with the official Truth Commission, set up by the UN, which is scheduled to spend only six months investigating 35 years of violence.

[Source: IOC 4/95: 176]

HONDURAS

On 28 June 1995 the national human rights commissioner Leo Valladares said that he would ask the US embassy to declassify documents relating to the disappearance of 184 Honduran civil leaders during the 1980s. The Honduran Armed Forces have burned all their files on the disappearances.

[Source: IOC 4/95: 177]

HUNGARY

On 22 December 1994 Radio Budapest reported that the Historical Investigation Committee had been

abolished by the government. Part of the Committee's role was to account for the omissions in history books left by censors under the Communist regime. The investigations had reportedly proved uncomfortable for some of the politicians who were returned to power in the spring 1994 elections.

[Source: IOC 1/95: 240]

JAPAN

In January 1995 the popular youth magazine Marco Polo was closed down and its editor dismissed by the publishers after it carried an article denying the Holocaust.

[Source: IOC 2/95: 178]

NAMIBIA

In early 1995 Nazi sympathisers distributed information in which the Holocaust was claimed to be a hoax. It had to be decided whether or not they would be prosecuted under the Racial Discrimination Prohibition Act.

[Source: IOC 3/95: 181]

In August 1995 an ex-editor and ex-director were charged under the Racial Discrimination Prohibition Act for publishing a full page advertisement commemorating the death of Nazi leader Rudolf Hess, in which he was referred to as a 'martyr of peace'.

[Source: IOC 5/95: 182]

NETHERLANDS

On 9 June 1994 author Graa Boomsma was found not guilty of insulting Dutch war veterans. The charges arose over comments Boomsma made in an interview about his novel 'The Last Typhoon'. In it he compared the Dutch army's conduct in Indonesia in the late 1940s to that of the Nazi's during World War II. In late July 1994 the government launched an appeal against the Groningen Court decision but it was dismissed on 26 January 1995. Graa Boomsma reported having received threatening telephone calls throughout January.

[Source: IOC 3/94: 179, 4-5/94: 245, 2/95: 181]

POLAND

On 11 December 1994 several dozens of writers and intellectuals issued an appeal, calling for the opening of the Security Administration Archives covering the Stalinist period (1944-1956).

[Source: IOC 1/95: 245]

On 30 March 1995 the Interior Ministry announced that many more files from the Communist secret police archive would be made available to historians. Journalists seeking access to the archive will still have to apply directly to the interior minister for permission.

[Source: IOC 3/95: 184]

SOUTH KOREA

On 21 March 1995 Kim Mu-yong [b. 1961], a history lecturer at Bangsong Tongshin University, was arrested under the National Security Law for possessing, distributing and producing writings on the Korean guerrilla movement (1948-1953). He was awaiting trial in Seoul Prison.

[Sources: IOC 3/95: 187; WUS Human Rights Bulletin, August 1995: 4]

On 26 April 1995 history professor Park Chang-hee [b. 1932] was arrested under the National Security Law at his home in Seoul and reportedly ill-treated since then. On 9 June 1995 he was charged for meeting an alleged North Korean agent in Japan, for passing state secrets and for praising North Korea.

[Sources: IOC 4/95: 186; WUS Human Rights Bulletin, August 1995: 4]

THAILAND

On 5 August 1984 Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa (b. [1933]), noted social critic and Buddhist writer, was arrested while his book 'Interviews with S. Sivaraksa: Unmasking Thai Society' was banned. Thousands of copies of the book were seized by the police. The arrest centred around an article on the history of Thai education in which he criticised kings and princes of the last two hundred years for their ignorance of Buddhist teaching and tradition. On 30 November 1984 the charges of lèse majesté (defamation of the monarchy) were withdrawn. In September 1991, he fled to Sweden after an arrest warrant had been issued for similar reasons, but on 14 December 1992 he was arrested again after his return from exile. He was put on trial in June 1993, but the court dismissed his case on 26 April 1995.

[Sources: IOC 6/84: 43, 48, 1/85: 65, 2/85: 36, 4/85: 4, 10/91: 56, 3/93: 40, 3/95: 187; AI Report 1985:

248-249, 1992: 251, 1993: 282, 1995: 283]

TURKEY

On 5 October 1993 Günay Aslan, a writer and television journalist, was arrested and imprisoned when he tried to leave Turkey, detained and condemned to serve a two years' sentence (reduced to eighteen months after appeal) for 'separatist propaganda' on the basis of the Anti-Terror Law. In 1989 he had written a book, 'Thirty-Three Bullets: History in Mourning', about the 1943 execution of thirty-three Kurds suspected of stealing horses and about contemporary events in southeastern Turkey against this historical background. Following publication, the book was confiscated and the writer accused on the basis of a Penal Code Article that was revoked in April 1991. Subsequently, the charge was dropped and the book reprinted, but Günay Aslan was prosecuted again under a new law and condemned in January 1993. At the end of 1994, he was still in jail.

[Source: AI Report 1995: 291]

In the spring of 1995 the book 'Genocide as a Question of National and International Law: The 1915 Armenian Event and its Consequences', written by US historian Vahakn Dadrian, was banned. The publisher of the Turkish translation of this book, already in prison for publishing another book on the Armenian genocide, faced prosecution for separatist propaganda.

[Source: IOC 4/95: 188]

UNITED STATES

In mid-November 1994 the federal government declassified 44 million official secrets, nearly half of which related to World War II.

[Source: IOC 6/94: 252, 1/95: 253]

In January 1995 the Smithsonian Institution decided to eliminate text and pictures of Japanese victims of the atomic bomb in a planned exhibition. Only the fuselage of the Enola Gay, the aeroplane that dropped the bomb, a plaque and a film of the plane's crew would be displayed. The change came after criticism from Congress and veteran groups in September 1994. Some found the the portrayal of the Japanese in the aftermath of the war too sympathetic.

[Source: IOC 6/94: 252, 2/95: 190]

On 17 April 1995 President Bill Clinton signed an executive order requiring that all top secret, secret and confidential documents 25 years or older be automatically declassified. The order reverses a system of intense classification that has been in place for the past decade. In January 1994 a draft report on the new governmental classification had proposed a 40 years term.

[Source: IOC 3/95: 190]