

**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.

**ARGENTINA**

On 8 March 1998, the offices of Amnesty International and the Association for the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared were targeted by arsonists, with the loss of valuable documents related to the disappearance of Italian and Spanish nationals during the dictatorship (1976-83). On 21 June 1998, the Italian government became the plaintiff in a trial of military officers involved in the disappearance of eight Italian nationals.

[Sources: IOC 3/98: 102, 5/98: 81.]

On 9 June 1998, ex-dictator Jorge Rafael Videla was arrested for offering for adoption to families with links to the armed forces children born in captivity to kidnapped pregnant women. The impunity laws preventing the prosecution of military personnel for human rights abuses excluded the crime of 'appropriation of minors' with which Jorge Videla is being charged.

[Source: IOC 5/98: 80-81.]

**AZERBAIJAN**

The Ganja local government confiscated all 2,400 copies of a book about the 19th-century Russian

occupation of Ganja.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 233.]

## **BELARUS**

In May 1997, the Prosecutor-General issued a warning to the independent newspaper *Nasha Niva* because it published an article by an historian [name unknown] about the killing of civilians by Soviet partisans during World War II. This allegedly 'infringe[d] the morality, honour and dignity of citizens', although, according to the newspaper, the facts as stated in the article were verified by the former secret police KGB.

[Source: A19, *IFEX Alert*, 5 August 1998: 3.]

In [November] 1997, Pavel Zhuk, publisher of the Minsk opposition newspaper *Svaboda*, received warnings from the State Press Commission that the paper could face criminal prosecution for publishing a series of articles which compared the government to that of Joseph Stalin.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 79-81.]

## **BULGARIA**

*See* Vietnam.

Following legislation passed in July 1997, over 15,000 citizens registered to check whether secret files had been kept on them by Communist intelligence services. On 22 September 1997, the Constitutional Court rejected an appeal to declare the law unconstitutional, but also ruled that the files of court members would not be opened. On 18 November 1997, eleven citizens became the first persons to read their files. On 6 November 1997, the two Bulgarian Orthodox Synods requested that the secret police files on the clergy also be opened to the public [*see NCH #6*].

[Sources: IOC 6/97: 105, 1/98: 82.]

## **CANADA**

In a case that begun in mid-October 1997, Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel is being tried before the Canadian Human Rights Commission for allegedly creating and maintaining a San Diego Internet web-

site.

[Sources: IOC IOC 6/85: 30-31, 6/88: 35, 7/92: 10, 1/98: 83.]

## CHILE

On 17 September 1997, the military prosecutor-general presented a new petition to the Supreme Court of Justice calling for all appeal courts and judges to close legal proceedings into cases of human rights violations, extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' during 1973-78.

[Source: IOC 6/97: 106.]

## CHINA

In 1994, Tibetan Lukhar Sham was sentenced to seventeen years for collecting information and starting a pro-democracy group. He received eight years for purchasing classified documents and was accused of planning to send history and economy books abroad. The details of the case emerged on 7 November 1997.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 101.]

On 21 May 1995, Liu Nianchun (born [1950]), former editor of the Democracy Wall Movement's *Today* magazine, was arrested with others for taking part in events commemorating the June 1989 Tiananmen massacre. He was sentenced to three years' re-education through labour plus seven months for 'refusing to reform'. In December 1996, his sentence was upheld on appeal. A second appeal in January 1997 led to an additional 216 days' detention for 'refusing to reform'. He has reportedly been held in isolation and subject to torture.

[Sources: PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* (1998) 26, PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June* (1998) 25.]

In 1997, Wang Dan [*see NCH #4, #5, #6*] was in poor health. On 19 April 1998, he was released on medical parole and expelled to the USA, reportedly as part of a deal between China and the USA.

[Sources: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 172; AAAS Human Rights Network, Case CH9621.Dan, 22 April 1998.]

In 1997, the re-education campaign for Tibetan monks and nuns continued [*see NCH #6*]. They were supposed to accept, inter alia, that Tibet had been part of China for centuries.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 177.]

In June 1997, on the eight anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre, dissident Shen Liangqing, a former state prosecutor and political prisoner, sent a petition to the National People's Congress demanding, inter alia, an official reassessment of the 1989 events (officially, a 'counter-revolutionary rebellion'). Two months later, he was ordered to evacuate his private residence and surrender it to the local authorities. The following month, he was taken into police detention after he signed a letter expressing solidarity with demonstrating workers. He was held incommunicado. In September 1997, Lin Mu issued a public appeal to senior delegates to the Fifteenth Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress, urging them, inter alia, to reverse the official verdict on the 1989 events.

In the same month, a letter, supposedly written by ousted politician Zhao Ziyang, was sent to the fifteenth Communist Party Congress in September 1997, demanding that the official verdict of the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre be rewritten. The Foreign Ministry denied that remarks made in mid-November 1997 by President Jiang Zemin at Harvard University were a 'rewriting' of the official verdict.

[Sources: IOC 6/97: 106, 1/98: 83; HRW, *World Report 1998* (Washington 1997) 172-73.]

In June 1997, Yu Zhenbin (born [1962]) was released. A staff member of the Qinghai Provincial Archives Bureau, he had been detained in Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province on 27 June 1989. In January 1991 he was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment. He was convicted of setting up the Democratic Opposition Parties' Alliance, an organisation that the authorities claimed to be 'counter-revolutionary' and aimed at overthrowing the CCP. He was also accused of having made 'reactionary speeches' and of having distributed leaflets in which current policies and leaders were criticised and political reforms called for. He was released after his twelve-year sentence was reduced by four years.

[Sources: AI, *People's Republic of China: Preliminary Findings on Killings of Unarmed Civilians, Arbitrary Arrests and Summary Executions Since 3 June 1989* (ASA 17/60/89, 1989); AAAS, *Directory of Persecuted Scientists, Engineers, and Health Professionals* (1992) 15 and (1994) 39; AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 131.]

In August 1997, Hong Kong textbook publishers revised modern history texts for primary and secondary schools, removing references to the Tibet conflict, the 1957 Anti-Rightist campaign, the Cultural Revolution (1966-69), 1976 dissident protests and the 1989 Tiananmen massacre and its aftermath.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 433.]

Plans by the Kunqu Opera company to perform the *Peony Pavilion*, a 20-hour opera based on a 400-year-old Chinese love story, in New York, Paris, Caen, Sydney and Hong Kong, failed after censors in Shanghai called the opera 'feudal, superstitious and pornographic', impounded the sets and refused to

let the cast leave the country.

[Source: IOC 4/98: 11.]

## COLOMBIA

On 18 April 1998, lawyer and legal professor José Eduardo Mendoza was killed at home by two unidentified persons. The assassination is thought to be linked to his attempts to reopen the inquiry into the 1948 murder of liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaetan.

[Sources: IOC 3/98: 88, 4/98: 109-10.]

## CONGO

In early April 1998, forensic experts looking for mass graves left by the rebels led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila in 1996-97, were forced to leave the northwestern town of Mbandaka after facing hostilities from the local population for allegedly 'disturbing traditional burial sites'.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 106.]

## CROATIA

The September 1996 acquittal of *Feral Tribune* journalists Victor Ivancic and Marinko Culic [*see NCH #5*] was annulled by the Supreme Court on 5 May 1997. A retrial on the same charges, adjourned in December 1997, was resumed on 18 May 1998.

[Sources: IOC 6/96: 172, 4/97: 110, 1/98: 86, 2/98: 87; A19, *Bulletin*, October-November 1996: 3; HRW, *World Report 1997* (1996) 212; AI, *Report 1997* (1997) 131, *Report 1998* (1998) 146; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* ([1998]) 45, PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June* (1998) 42.]

After protests from their parents in November 1997, ethnic Serbian students in eastern Slavonia were not required to study Croatian history from 1990 onwards.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 86.]

## CUBA

On 7 April 1997, Cuban authorities briefly detained Fidel Emilio Abel Tamayo, the father of one of several school children who had refused to sign the *Declaración de los Mambises del Siglo XX* (Declaration of the Mambises of the Twentieth Century) in March. The declaration, named after the mambises who fought for Cuban independence, was meant to support the Ley de Reafirmación de la Dignidad y Soberanía Cubanas (Law Reaffirming Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty), which created broad restrictions on free expression and was a response to the Helms-Burton law (which tightened the U.S. embargo of Cuba).

[Source: IOC 1/98: 110.]

## CZECH REPUBLIC

On 23 January 1998, a Prague court acquitted ultra-nationalist leader Miroslav Sladek of incitement to racial hatred. During a demonstration against the signing of the reconciliation agreement with Germany in early 1997, he said: 'We can only be sorry that during World War II we slaughtered so few Germans.' The court ruled that his remarks should 'be judged in the context of his entire speech'. He was immediately released from prison, where he had been detained for over two weeks.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 88.]

## EGYPT

On 7 January 1992, the Committee of the Koran and its Sciences, an organ of the Al-Azhar University Islamic Research Academy confiscated five books of Mohammed Said al-Ashmawi, author, retired judge and former head of the Supreme State Security Court, at the Cairo Book Fair. All books were published by the Sinai publishing house. The author subsequently threatened with issuing a writ against Al-Azhar and suing its sheikh for damages. In March 1992, the Committee severely criticised him for distorting Islamic history. There was considerable concern for his safety. He wrote widely and critically on the rise of militant political Islam. In 1997, he was reported living under 24-hour protection.

[Sources: IOC 3/92: 35, 6/92: 27, 1-2/94: 119-121, 124, 129, 237, 255, 5/96: 88; *WUS & Human Rights*, June 1992: 5; A19, *Bulletin*, December 1997: 8.]

On 14 January 1998, the artistic production police raided the Sinai publishing house and confiscated fifteen copies of two books by Khalil Abdel Karim, *The Yathrib Society* (Yatrib being the pre-Islamic name for Medina) and *The Rabaa Songs on the Companions of Prophet Mohammed*, apparently in

relation to a ruling from Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy saying they were blasphemous.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 89.]

## **ETHIOPIA**

In October 1997, two writers were arrested, allegedly for their involvement as journalists for the Oromo newspaper *Urji* and their activism as members of the Ethiopian Human Rights League. During the first ten months of their detention, they were held in solitary confinement and denied any visits from their family. They are held without charge or trial. Moti Biyya (pen name) (born [1957]) is a journalist and social anthropologist interested in the Oromo identity and through his books he provides Oromo society with historical background and coherence. In 1995, he published *Oromyan Befereqa* (Oromia, the Hidden Atrocities), a political analysis of the colonisation of the Oromo people by successive Abyssinian groups. In 1997, he published *Abyssinocracy or Democracy?*, in which he compared the situation of the Oromo minority under the socialist government of Menghistu and the current government. Garuma Bekele (born [1960]) is a journalist who published, inter alia, a historical novel, *One Day*, on the Oromo experience of the 1950s and 1989.

[Sources: PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* (1998) 6; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 7; *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, October 1998: 4.]

## **FRANCE**

On the eve of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish festivals of New Year and atonement, the Bishop of Saint-Denis, Olivier de Berranger, apologised at the site of a former deportation camp for the Church's complicity in the wartime deaths of 73,000 French Jews.

[Source: IOC 6/97: 110.]

The author of the introduction and conclusion of *Le Livre Noir du Communisme* (The Black Book of Communism), historian Stéphane Courtois was forced to drop the original title for the work, *Le Livre des Crimes Communistes* (The Book of Communist Crimes), when two of the six contributing historians threatened to withdraw.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 88.]

In mid-December 1997, National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen repeated the statement he made ten years previously that the Nazi gas chambers were a 'mere detail' of history. The last time he made such

a claim, he was fined under the anti-racist laws.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 89.]

## **GEORGIA**

In [December] 1997, President Eduard Shevardnadze categorically opposed the opening of former KGB archives, arguing that it would give rise to ‘a new wave of resistance, mistrust and hatred’ and would ‘reopen old wounds’.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 90.]

## **GERMANY**

Since 1995, specific legislation relating to the internet has been passed, outlawing, inter alia, Nazi propaganda and Holocaust denial.

[Source: IOC 4/98: 113.]

On 31 May 1998, *Welt am Sonntag* published classified German government papers, intended to be kept secret until 2019, relating to the reunification of West and East Germany. They revealed that the then Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher was opposed to an immediate reintegration of East Germany.

[Source: IOC 4/98: 113.]

In late July 1998, the Bundesbank and state archive in Koblenz issued a report stating that documents detailing the property stolen from Holocaust victims had been ‘misplaced’. Jewish activists, who did not accept the official explanation that the loss of the files was purely accidental, demanded an official investigation.

[Source: IOC 5/98: 86-87.]

## **GUATEMALA**

*See* United States.

Those involved in the exhumations of mass burial sites, of which there were an estimated 500

throughout the country, continued to be intimidated, threatened and harassed, apparently by those seeking to prevent naming those responsible for the massacres, such as former military commissioners and local civil patrol members. [see NCH #5 and #6].

[Source: AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 181.]

In September 1997, the Historical Clarification Commission requested the US government to declassify records concerning human rights abuses committed during the armed conflict. US government archives most likely contain much information essential to the truth-seeking process underway in Guatemala. The release of US documents is also likely to expose important aspects of US policy that contributed to human rights violations in Guatemala.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 120.]

Two days after the publication of the voluminous episcopal report *Guatemala: Nunca Más* on 24 April 1998, bishop Juan Gerardi (born [1923]), who had presented it to the press, was murdered. The report, based on thousands of testimonies, identified the army as responsible for at least eighty per cent of the human rights violations counted in the 36-year civil war. It remained uncertain, however, whether the murder was politically inspired or not [see NCH #2].

[Sources: IOC 4/98: 113; HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 118; AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 179.]

## **HONDURAS**

*See* United States.

On 10 March 1998, the Committee of the Relatives of Detained and Disappeared (COFADEH) denounced a draft law which would halt investigations into disappearances during the last decade.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 109.]

## **INDIA**

*See* Sri Lanka.

## **INDONESIA**

On 13 April 1994, Wimanjaya K. Liotohe, a writer and Protestant teacher of religion, was interrogated by the police in connection with *Prima Dosa* (Prime Sin), a collection of documents for submission to the courts in the context of a lawsuit in which he accused President Suharto of being behind the move in 1965 to overthrow President Soekarno. The collection was banned in January 1994 and Wimanjaya K. Liotohe, under arrest for a while, faced up to seven years and four months in prison for insulting the President, but in the end he was released. In September 1997, he nominated himself for Vice-President for the 1998 elections, but he was arrested on charges of insulting the President.

[Sources: IOC 3/94: 176; AI, *Power and Impunity: Human Rights Under the New Order* (1994) 22; AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 197.]

On 11 November 1997, Lynn Fredriksson, an American freelancer covering a ceremony commemorating the 1991 massacre of civilians by the military, was expelled from East Timor.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 90.]

## IRAN

From about September 1995, militant students from the Ansar-e Hezbollah (Supporters of the Party of God) intimidated Abdolkarim Soroush (born 1945), philosopher and historian of philosophy and science, research fellow at the Institute for Research in Humanities and lecturer at Tehran University. They interrupted his lectures or prevented him from delivering them, including a May 1996 lecture in a seminar commemorating the martyrdom of Professor Motahhari at Amir Kabir College. The Intelligence Ministry repeatedly summoned and threatened him. He was attacked by the clergy and in the press. His passport was withdrawn. In an open letter of 9 May 1996 to President Rafsanjani, he denounced this situation and wrote that no-one dared offer teaching posts to him and that he was allocated only one course (the philosophy of social sciences) at Tehran University. In one of his articles, he argued that religious jurisprudence did not suffice for the organisation of society. Reputedly a moderate in the Shi'ite world, called by some the 'Luther of Islam', he is accused by militants of undermining religion under the guise of scientific discourse. In 1997, the Ministry of Information seized his passport, preventing him from attending academic seminars to which he was invited in Germany, Malaysia and the UK. He was banned from teaching and warned that he faced possible imprisonment if he continued to speak his mind.

[Sources: IOC 4/96: 104, 165-78; HRW, *World Report 1997* (1996) 283, *World Report 1998* (1997) 332, 436.]

In 1996, Karamollah Tavahodi (born [1927]), a Kurdish writer, historian, and retired director of the

University Library of Mashhad, was arrested and held incommunicado until his trial. In January 1997, he was sentenced to one or two years' imprisonment for 'propagating non-Islamic ties', following official objections to the content of volume five of his *Historical Movement of Kurds in Khorasan*, a book based on research concerning Kurdish tribal migrations from Kurdistan to other regions of Iran over four hundred years ago. His files, the product of thirty years of research, were reportedly confiscated.

[Sources: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 330; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* (1998) 60; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 56.]

On 30 October 1997, poetess Simin Behbani's speech about, inter alia, 'Ali Akbar Sa'idi-Sirjani, a liberal writer and historian who died in prison in 1994, was interrupted at the Grand Hall of Art in Teheran when the sound system was disconnected and lights switched off before she could finish.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 90.]

On 6 December 1997, Akbar Ganji, managing editor of the journal *Rah-e Now* (New Way), was arrested and in 1998 he was tried in camera. The charges against him were not known, but his trial was believed to relate to a research paper entitled *Shariati and Fascism*, presented to university students in Shiraz on 10 June 1997. An edited text of the paper was published in Teheran in November 1997 by the journal *Kiyan* under the title *Satan Is the First Fascist*. [On Ali Shariati, see *NCH #5* and *NCH #6*].

[Source: IOC 2/98: 93.]

On 30 June 1998, Hojatoleslam Sayyid Mohsen Sa'idzadeh (born 1958), a cleric and writer, was arrested and taken to an unknown destination, presumably for advocating equal opportunities for women and for writing an article for the newspaper *Jameah* in which he constructed legal arguments for a progressive view of Islam. A judge in the revolutionary courts of Kermanshah until 1986, he became a scholar, of Islamic law and, in 1995, an adviser and researcher to the Ministry of Justice. He is the author of a two-volume local history of his home town Qa'en, and of a study of resurrection.

[Sources: IOC 5/98: 88; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 56; *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, October 1998: 1, 6.]

## **IRAQ**

In June 1997, Iraqi forces set up roadblocks outside Karbala, turning back some Shi'a pilgrims making the annual walk to the tomb of Imam Husayn (who died there in AD 680). Some Shi'a opposition groups also reported clashes between pilgrims and security forces resulting in many arrests.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 334.]

## **ISRAEL**

In March and April 1998, Ronit Weiss-Berkowitz received death threats from Jewish extremists for her contribution to a 22-part television series *Tkuma* (Rebirth) marking Israel's fiftieth anniversary and analysing Israel's history from 1936 to 1995. Her views on the fate of the Arab population in Israel after its foundation in 1948, the confiscation and administration of their territories, and the Palestinian refugee problem since 1948 challenged the traditional Israeli view of history.

[Sources: IOC 3/98: 76-77, 4/98: 115; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 58.]

## **ITALY**

In early July 1998, art experts criticised *Artemisia: the Untold True Story of an Extraordinary Woman*, a film about 17th-century Florentine painter Artemisia Gentileschi. The film depicts her as the willing lover of perspective teacher Agostino Tassi, whereas the historical view is that Gentileschi was raped by Tassi. During his trial, she underwent torture to validate her accusations.

[Source: IOC 5/98: 89.]

## **JAPAN**

In 1993, Takashima Nobuyoshi (born [1942]), former teacher of social studies in Tokyo and writer of many textbooks, later professor at Ryuku University, sued the state because the Ministry of Education had thoroughly revised his four-page manuscript about Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese army, the Gulf War and Japanese colonialism (inter alia in Malaya), to be included in a reader. He had already faced problems concerning textbook certification in 1989 and 1992. On 22 April 1998, a district court ruled that two changes to a textbook demanded by the ministry were illegal. One passage quoted philosopher Yukichi Fukuzawa who described other Asian nations as 'savage', the other stated that Japan should have consulted other Asian countries before sending minesweepers to the Persian Gulf in 1991. The court ordered the ministry to pay damages to Takashima Nobuyoshi.

[Sources: IOC 3/98: 49, 4/98: 115.]

The government rejected the 1996 recommendation of the United Nations special rapporteur on

violence against women that it provide individual compensation to 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army during World War II; instead it established a voluntary fund. In early April 1998, it was announced that women who served as ‘comfort women’ during World War II will receive compensation from the government. Each of the 155 women registered for compensation will get 25,000 US dollars.

[Sources: AI, *Human Rights are Women’s Right* (1995) 53-56; HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) xxxii, 197; AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 215, IOC 3/98: 113.]

On 29 August 1997, the Supreme Court ruled as illegal the deletion from history textbooks of references to Unit 731 (a camp where germ experiments were carried out on live prisoners in China during World War II) and to the 1937 Nanking Massacre. At the same time, it upheld the Ministry of Education’s constitutional right of textbook screening, saying that it did not constitute censorship, because it did not prohibit the book from being published commercially. The other claims against textbook screening brought by history professor Ienaga Saburô (born 1913) against the ministry were dismissed. The court declared that the ministry’s power had been abused in expunging cases of well-documented atrocities from textbooks.

[Sources: IOC 3/83: 35, 5/86: 6, 1/90: 38, 3/94: 177, 6/97: 114, 3/98: 48-52; A19, *Information, Freedom and Censorship: World Report* (1991) 181-82; HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 197.]

In September 1997, the government announced that it would not issue an apology or provide compensation to more than 16,000 mentally or physically disabled Japanese women who were forcibly sterilised under a government programme that began in 1948.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) xxxii, 197.]

In [December 1997], no cinema in Tokyo was willing to screen the film *Don’t Cry Nanjing*, a 1995 China-Hong Kong co-production depicting the December 1937 Nanking massacre. The first showing went ahead in Nagoya on 8 December to an audience of thirty.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 94.]

On 23 May 1998, a film about General Tojo Hideki (Prime Minister during World War II), entitled *Pride: the Fateful Moment*, was released. It prompted criticism from North Korea and China.

[Source: IOC 4/98: 116.]

## LATVIA

On 10 March 1998, the prosecutor-general filed criminal charges against publicist Juris Rudevskis for a series of articles in the political weekly *Nacionala Neatkariba* (National Independence) in which he criticised Russia, citing numerous examples of massacres, court treachery and murder from Tsarist times to the Communist era and discussing the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in supporting 'state tyranny' through the ages. The charges - incitement of racial or ethnic hatred - carry a three-year sentence.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 180.]

On 16 March 1998, the SS Legion held a memorial day rally for its fifty-fifth anniversary. Russia's foreign ministry expressed indignation saying that the legion '(...) destroyed thousands of Jews, Russians and Belarusians.'

[Source: IOC 3/98: 114.]

## **MYANMAR (Burma)**

In February 1998, Ko Aung Tun (b. 1967) was arrested and sentenced to a total of seventeen years' imprisonment under various acts, including the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act. The State Peace and Development Council, Myanmar's military government, claimed that he was collaborating with 'terrorist groups'. Opposition sources stated, however, that the real reason for his arrest was because he had written a history of the student movement in Myanmar. Ko Aung Tun was active in the student-led 1988 pro-democracy movement and was imprisoned from 1990 to 1994. U Myo Htun assisted Aung Tun in writing the book, which the authorities claim was distributed 'illegally'. He was reportedly sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Both were held incommunicado in solitary confinement and tortured. Their health was precarious [*see NCH #9*].

[Sources: AI, *Urgent Action 163/98* (26 May 1998); *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, July 1998: 6; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 31-32.]

## **NICARAGUA**

On 24 October 1997, students at the former Instituto Autónomo Rigoberto Lopez Perez, named after the Sandinista fighter who assassinated former President Somoza, went on strike after it was announced that the school was to be renamed after a poet. The episode followed a government decision to wipe out the last vestiges of Sandinismo by changing the national symbols. The most notorious action so far has been the replacement of Sandino's image on the banknotes by that of the 19th-century general José Santos

Celaya.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 93.]

## **PAKISTAN**

On 22 January 1998, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif promised to punish those responsible for the ‘tragedy’ when East Pakistan broke away to become Bangladesh in 1971. He did not specify whom he blamed for the disintegration of the country.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 98.]

## **PALESTINE**

On 24 April 1996, Wa’el ‘Ali Farraj, a history student (b. [1972]), was arrested by members of the Palestinian Authority’s General Intelligence. During the first few days of his detention, he was hooded, severely beaten and deprived of sleep and food. He was then interrogated for another month. He is detained without charge or trial. The Attorney General’s office informed a relative that it could not intervene on the grounds that the case was a political one. He was a suspected supporter of Islamist groups [see NCH #9].

[Source: AI, *News*, November 1998: 7.]

On 19 January 1998, intellectuals and officials marched through Gaza to condemn the prosecution of Roger Garaudy, a French writer accused of denying the Holocaust, in France. In his book *The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*, Roger Garaudy maintained that the killing of Jews during World War II amounted to ‘pogroms’ or ‘massacres’ and not ‘genocide’ or ‘Holocaust’. The protesters denounced ‘Zionist cultural terrorism’ as the enemy of free expression.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 99.]

## **POLAND**

On 13 November 1997, Prime Minister Aleksander Kwasniewski said that he wanted to make Communist-era secret service files public and that he had submitted a bill to parliament to that effect.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 96.]

## ROMANIA

On 1 October 1997, the National Peasant Party Christian Democratic's Disciplinary Commission suspended Senator Ticu Dumitrescu's membership for one year after he repeatedly criticised the leadership's lethargy in drafting a law to open the Communist era secret police files. On 25 June 1998, the Senate approved such a law by 109 to 7 on the condition that it would not affect 'national security'. The law has yet to be approved by the Chamber of Deputies. It will establish a National Council for the Study of the Archives of the Former Securitate, but leaves files with the Intelligence Service and the ministries of defence and justice.

[Sources: IOC 6/97: 120, 5/98: 95.]

On 16 December 1997, the Senate approved amendments to the education law making the teaching of history and geography in the Romanian language compulsory. It also forbade separate universities in the language of minorities.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 100.]

## RUSSIA

On 30 October 1997, the Voronezh Oblast Duma adopted a non-binding recommendation urging teachers not to use an allegedly 'anti-Russian' textbook on 20th-century European history. Deputies claimed that the book, written by professor Aleksandr Kreder of Saratov University, was 'unpatriotic and tendentious', belittling and distorting Russian history, although these claims were not supported by the federal education ministry.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 97.]

## RWANDA

On 19 December 1997, Philomène Mukabarali (born [1942]), a director of a catering and tourism training college at Gikondo in the capital Kigali, who was threatened several times in 1997, was arrested and held first at Nyamirambo brigade, then at the Criminologie (a detention center of the Gendarmerie), and, on 8 January 1998, at Kigali Central Prison. She was reportedly charged with endangering state security for possessing leaflets, allegedly found in her home at the time of her arrest, which expressed support for the monarchy of Rwanda. Philomène Mukabarali was a member of Abatangana ('those who

do not hate each other'), which organised cultural activities, including traditional songs and dances, with the objective of promoting reconciliation. Some of its activities referred to the pre-1959 history when Rwanda was ruled by a monarchy. This was reportedly viewed as a political threat by some elements in the current republican government. Philomène Mukabarali was released later [see NCH #7].

[Source: AI, *Urgent Action 405/97* (22 December 1997; twice re-issued 6 and 14 January 1998).]

## **SINGAPORE**

On 13 July 1998, the Film and Publicity Department announced a review of, inter alia, the long-banned film *The Year of Living Dangerously*, about the 1965-66 killings in Indonesia.

[Source: IOC 5/98: 97.]

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

In September 1997, a former agent of the Civil Cooperation Bureau was remanded in custody to stand trial for the murder of David Webster [see NCH #5].

[Source: AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 308].

## **SOUTH KOREA**

On 30 January 1998, the trial of Suh Joo-sik, representative of human rights group Sarangbang, began. He was charged, inter alia, with violating the National Security Law for showing a documentary at the 1997 Human Rights Film Festival about a 1948 civil uprising on Cheju Island, which authorities claimed was subversive.

[Source: IOC 2/98: 101.]

On 13 March 1998, historian Park Chang-hee [see NCH #2] was released under a presidential amnesty.

[Sources: AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 226; *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, April 1998: 2; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June 1998* (1998) 38.]

The recently published book *Eroticism in Korean Art History*, by professor Lee Tae-ho, finds that, unlike contemporary attitudes towards sex, ancient Koreans had a candid attitude towards sex, which they expressed openly. Other compilations of art eroticism were usually censored.

[Source: 5/98: 98.]

## **SRI LANKA**

BBC plans in 1997 to make a five-part television serial, *Saleem's Story*, based on Salman Rushdie's historical novel *Midnight's Children*, were unsuccessful, because Indian and Sri Lankan authorities did not allow shooting the film on their territory, after Muslims had protested against earlier permissions.

[Source: IOC 1/98: 100.]

## **SWEDEN**

The government could face thousands of legal claims for compensation because of a secret programme of forced sterilisation of more than 60,000 women (1935-76), revealed in August 1997.

[Source: IOC 6/97: 125.]

## **TAIWAN**

The anniversary of a massacre of mainly Taiwanese civilians by government troops in February 1948 was made a national holiday. A government proposal to 'pardon' the Taiwanese leaders of the protests which led to the massacre was opposed by survivors on the grounds that the protesters had committed no offence and therefore needed no pardon.

[Source: AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 325.]

## **TURKEY**

In December 1991, *Dersim: Folk Song of an Insurrection*, a book by poet Hüseyin Karatas, was confiscated. On 1 April 1993, the author was sentenced to 20-months' imprisonment and a fine for 'disseminating separatist propaganda'. He was, however, not imprisoned as he was appealing to the European Human Rights Court. His sentence was reduced to sixteen and later to thirteen months' imprisonment, which he began on 18 March 1998. The book refers to a Kurdish revolt which took place in the Dersim (renamed Tunceli) area in 1930-38.

[Sources: PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* (1998) 53; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To*

30th June 1998 (1998) 49.]

In April 1994, journalist Ragip Duran (born [1954]) wrote an article for the journal *Ozgur Gundem* entitled ‘Apo 91/Ocalan 94’, in which he analysed two interviews he had conducted with PKK (Workers’ Party of Kurdistan) leader Abdullah Ocalan, also known as Apo. In the article he made a casual comparison between Abdullah Ocalan and the Italian hero of independence Giuseppe Garibaldi. On the basis of this comparison, he was accused of separatist propaganda and sentenced to ten months in prison. In October 1997, the Supreme Court confirmed the sentence, which he began on 16 June 1998.

[Sources: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 454; *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, July 1998: 1; A19, *Bulletin*, September 1998: 4.]

In February 1997, the second Turkish-language edition of Leo Muller’s book *Gladio: Das Erbe des Kalten Krieges* (Gladio: The Legacy of the Cold War) was confiscated and both the publisher and the translator were tried, inter alia for ‘inciting racial hatred’. In September 1997 they were given a suspended sentence and a fine. Both sentences are under appeal.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 286.]

On 17 February 1997, the centre-left daily *Radikal* was seized because it reprinted an article from the French weekly *Figaro Magazine*, entitled ‘Turkey: Army Against the Islamists’ and written by Islamist intellectual Abdurrahman Dilipak. The article described Kemal Ataturk, Turkey’s first president, as an ‘authoritarian military ruler’.

[Source: IOC 2/97: 100.]

The University of California at Los Angeles refused to allow the Turkish government to fund a chair in Ottoman studies because the Turkish government attached conditions to their offer of one million US dollars that would have forced scholars to ignore the 1915 massacre of Armenians.

[Source IOC 2/98: 104.]

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

New revelations regarding the conduct of British paratroopers and soldiers who opened fire on unarmed civilians killing thirteen people on Bloody Sunday (30 January 1972), and the tampering with evidence submitted to the 1972 Widgery Tribunal - tasked with investigating the events of that day - led to calls for a fair and transparent public inquiry.

[Sources: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 291, 293; AI, *Report 1998* (1998) 347, 349.]

On 26 August 1997, former journalist and staff member of the domestic Security Service MI5, David Shayler, alleged that the MI5 had kept thousands of secret files on individuals. An injunction was placed on the *Mail on Sunday*, preventing it from publishing any further allegations. On 4 September 1997, the injunction was extended. On 29 July 1998, Home Secretary Jack Straw revealed that MI5 had amassed files on nearly 500,000 people since its inception in 1909. The files would not be made available to the public.

[Sources: IOC 6/97: 127, 5/98: 103.]

In 1998, Greater Manchester's obscene publications squad confiscated 535 video tapes from David Flint, the publisher of a magazine called *Sexadelic* commissioned by Creation Press to write a history of pornographic film.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 127.]

On 8 June 1998, the third edition of *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, a book about Lord Elgin who removed the Parthenon sculptures from the Acropolis of Athens at the end of the eighteenth century was published. Its author, William St Clair, He claimed that, in the late 1930s, the Marbles were irreparably damaged when scrubbed with metal scrapers. The British Museum denied suppressing the facts surrounding this incident, but, in 1994, William St Clair was denied access to its records.

[Source: IOC 4/98: 132.]

## UNITED STATES

*See* Turkey.

In May 1997, the Clinton administration declassified 1,400 pages of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) documents about its involvement in a coup that overthrew the elected government of Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 [*see* NCH #6]. The documents revealed the CIA's encouragement of political assassination and murder. In August 1997, the CIA released documents confirming that in the 1980s it had known about the interrogation and torture of civilians by a military death squad in Honduras.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) xxxii, 90, 120-21.]

On 17 March 1998, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History opened some 124,000

documents from the files of its now defunct Sovereignty Commission, responsible from 1956 to 1977 for spying and plotting against civil rights activists thought to be supportive of desegregation. This ended a 21-year legal battle between Mississippi and the American Civil Liberties Union.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 127-28.]

## VATICAN

In mid-March 1998, the Vatican issued a statement expressing 'deep sorrow' at the involvement of some Roman Catholics in the Holocaust. Jewish leaders and Holocaust historians criticised the statement on the grounds that it did not implicate the Church itself in Nazi extermination programmes.

[Source: IOC 3/98: 128.]

## VIETNAM

On 4 January 1995, Dang Phuc Tue (religious name: Thich Quang Do) (born 1927), a Buddhist scholar and poet, author of several novels and studies of Buddhist history, lecturer at the Buddhist university of Van Hanh, Saigon until April 1975, General Secretary of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment on the charge of 'undermining national security' for writing a letter in November 1994 protesting the arrests of UBCV monks who had distributed relief to flood victims without government approval. He was in very poor health. He benefited from an amnesty on 2 September 1998. He had been arrested several times before. In 1982, he had been placed under surveillance, in virtual isolation and confined to his home village because his presence in Ho Chi Minh City was deemed 'dangerous for the well-being of the people'.

[Sources: AI, *Report 1985* (1985) 252, *Report 1986* (1986) 267, *Report 1987* (1987) 276, *Report 1988* (1988) 189, *Report 1989* (1989) 206; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist June to December 1997* (1998) 41; PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June* (1998) 38-39; *Centre to Centre: Newsletter of PEN*, October 1998: 6.]

In December 1997, writer Pham Van Viem was kidnapped by the Vietnamese secret police in Bulgaria and returned to Hanoi after he had translated a book entitled *Fascism*, written by Zhelyu Zhelev before he became the first President of post-Communist Bulgaria. Pham Van Viem has not been seen nor heard from since.

[Sources: PEN, *IFEX Action Alert* (27 May 1998) 2, PEN, *Half-Yearly Caselist To 30th June* (1998) 40-41.]

## ZIMBABWE

In January 1996, the film *Flame*, a fictional account of the struggle of two women against white minority rules in Rhodesia, by script writer and film director Ingrid Sinclair, was almost banned before its completion because of a short scene in which one of the women is raped by her commander in the freedom fighters camps in Zambia and Mozambique. The film was based on seven years of research with women ex-fighters.

[Source: HRW, *World Report 1998* (1997) 410.]