Report on

Science and Human Rights

Soviet Party Conference Calls for Legal Guarantees of Human Rights, Increase in Scientific Freedom

Over the past two years, the Soviet leadership has taken several steps to improve its human rights performance. Many political prisoners have been released, and there have been few new arrests on political charges; emigration has increased; controls over freedom of expression and association have been relaxed; and a new law on psychiatric care intended to eliminate the abuse of psychiatry has been passed. Soviet officials have also made it known that they are preparing legislation designed to provide a legal basis for increased observance of human rights. They are reportedly considering, for example, revisions to the Criminal Code that would eliminate some political offenses and reduce the penalties for others. To date, however, the psychiatry law is the only legislation that has been passed with the express intention of providing legal safeguards against the abuse of human rights.

The issue of legal and political reform has now moved to the forefront of the movement for perestroika, or "restructuring." At the end of June 1988, the 19th Conference of the Soviet Communist Party met in Moscow to discuss and endorse proposals for a series of major political and legal changes intended to bring about "a thoroughgoing and all-round democratization of the Party and society" and to establish "a socialist state based on the rule of law." The conference voted to restructure and reduce the size of both the state and Party apparatus, to increase the powers of the soviets, to accord the public a say in the selection of candidates for elected office, and to provide legal guarantees of glasnost, or "openness," in public life. It endorsed proposals for reform of the judiciary and prosecutors' offices and called for "strengthened guarantees of the exercise of political rights." The conference also called for "the further democratization of science and culture."

General Secretary Gorbachev told the conference delegates that without these political and legal reforms the policy of restructuring, aimed at overcoming the country's economic and technological backwardness relative to the West, would fail. Attempts to reform the economy, he said, were meeting with both inertia and active resistance within the state and Party apparatus and with passivity on the part of much of the population. Political reforms were therefore needed to overcome bureaucratic resistance and to create opportunities for, and legal guarantees of, greater popular participation in decision making.

Human Rights and the Rule of Law

The reform proposals were presented as a set of "Theses," published by the CPSU Central Committee at the end of May 1988 and widely debated in the press during the following weeks. In the section devoted to legal reforms, the "Theses" stated:

Not only do citizens have a responsibility to the state, the state also has a responsibility to its citizens. It must show constant concern for strengthening guarantees of the rights and freedoms of Soviet people. . . . This involves the creation of the material and legal conditions for the realization of constitutional freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble and hold rallies, street processions and demonstrations, freedom of conscience, and others). It also involves strengthening guarantees of the citizens' personal rights (the inviolability of the individual and of the home, the right to privacy in correspondence and telephone conversations, and others)."¹

The "Theses" called for "a radical improvement" in the functioning of the judiciary and state agencies charged with "defending . . . the rights and freedoms of citizens." Priority should be given to "a radical enhancement of . . . the judicial process, strict observance of democratic principles in legal proceedings, the adversary system with equality for the parties before the law, openness and the presumption of innocence. . . . Judges, prosecutors, and investigators must be protected from any sort of pressure or interference in their activity. They must be subordinate to the law, and only to the law."

In his speech to the conference, Gorbachev emphasized the pragmatic reasoning behind the proposals dealing with human rights and legal reforms. "I would like to dwell in particular," he stated, "on the political freedoms that give people the opportunity to express their opinions
on any question. The exercise of these freedoms is a real guarantee that any problem of public interest will be comprehensively discussed, and that all the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ will be weighed. This will help us find the most correct solutions, taking into account all the diverse opinions and real possibilities.” Addressing the issue of legal reforms, Gorbachev made it clear that their purpose is twofold: to provide a weapon against corruption and obstructionism within the state and Party apparatus and to provide legal safeguards in relation to the increased popular participation that he is seeking. There is a need, he stated, “radically to strengthen legality and law and order to rule out the possibility of the usurpation of power and abuses, and effectively counter bureaucratism and formalism.” Citizens’ rights, he continued, “should be reliably protected against any high-handedness on the part of the government and its representatives.”

The resolutions passed by the conference made no specific proposals regarding the exercise of the freedoms enumerated in the “Theses,” calling only for “strengthened guarantees” of unspecified political, social, and economic rights. The conference did, however, pass a resolution on glasnost which called for legal guarantees of freedom of expression, as well as a resolution on legal reforms.

The conference defined glasnost as “the indisputable right of every citizen to obtain full and credible information on any issue of social life that does not constitute a state or military secret” and “the right to open and free discussion of any socially significant problem.” Noting that a substantial amount of information was still inaccessible to the public and that people were still persecuted for criticism, the conference resolution called for legislation to define “the boundaries of necessary secrecy,” to establish clear rules governing access to archival materials, and to specify penalties for the withholding of information.

The conference proposal for legal reform aims to increase the independence of criminal investigation agencies and the judiciary from local state and Party officials. At the moment, criminal investigation is the responsibility of the local prosecutors’ offices, which are also charged with acting for the prosecution at trials and with monitoring observance of the law by all Soviet organizations, including the courts. In practice, this means that the prosecutors are expected to monitor their own work and that someone who is wrongfully or illegally convicted has little chance of having his or her case reviewed. While it is the prosecutors’ job to challenge such a verdict, they are themselves responsible for the investigation that produced the “evidence” of guilt in the first place. The concentration of investigative and prosecutorial powers in a single agency has also made it possible for corrupt local officials to manipulate the prosecutors’ offices to initiate proceedings against anyone who criticized them or to block investigations into their own activities. The conference resolution aims to avoid such situations in the future by assigning the investigation of “the majority of crimes” to a special apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs independent of the local authorities.

Independence of the judiciary is to be achieved by changes in the procedures governing the appointment of judges. Currently, all judges in the lower courts are elected—those in the lower courts by popular ballot in their districts, and those in the higher courts (beginning with the bigger cities) by their own Soviets. No candidate for judge reaches the election stage, however, without first being endorsed by the local first Party secretary. Many Party secretaries have taken advantage of their powers to press for conviction or acquittal in court cases in which they have an interest. If a judge ignores such pressure, the secretary can simply fail to recommend him continued on page 5

AAAS Sponsors Participation of Forensic Pathologist in Salvador Exhumation

In May 1988, Danish forensic pathologist Jorgen Thomsen traveled to El Salvador to participate in a court-ordered exhumation of two peasants who were allegedly tortured and killed by the army. The AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and the Committee of Concerned Forensic Scientists and Physicians sponsored Thomsen’s trip, which was made at the request of Tutela Legal, the legal aid office of the Archdiocese of El Salvador.

Local human rights organizations were investigating the murder of Felix Antonio Rivera and Mario Cruz Rivera from Tepemechin, a rural village in Morazan department (eastern El Salvador) where fighting often takes place between the Salvadoran armed forces and members of the FMLN, the Salvadoran armed opposition. On the night of 25–26 February, Salvadoran army soldiers reportedly detained three young men, Sebastian Gutierrez, 18; Felix Antonio Rivera, 25; and Mario Cruz Rivera, 16. The father of Felix Antonio was beaten by the soldiers and died several days later without receiving any medical assistance, and villagers believe he died from injuries inflicted by the soldiers. Mario Cruz’ father
witnessed the detention of his son and watched as soldiers took the three youths towards a neighboring village.

According to witnesses, the soldiers forced the men to run barefoot through a burning field. The soldiers then took the men to a pilanor washstand where Mario Cruz and Felix Rivera were probably tortured and then killed. One witness reported hearing the cries of the men, although no one actually witnessed the alleged torture and killings. The soldiers then shot off their guns to simulate a battle with guerrillas, and helicopters later bombed the area.

The soldiers left the sight of the killings, taking Sebastian Gutierrez with them. They stopped at a nearby home to warn the resident that he should not be afraid at what he might find at the washstand. This man went to the washstand, saw the bodies, and notified the father of Mario Cruz of what he had found. According to Mario’s father, Hilario Cruz, Mario’s ears were missing, his face was disfigured, there were stab wounds on the body, and the tip of the nose, two thumbs, and the ring finger of the left hand had been cut off. The other body was in similar condition. Mario’s father buried the two men near the washstand.

Tutela Legal and the International Committee of the Red Cross are investigating the case of Sebastian Gutierrez who remains “disappeared.”

Families Request an Investigation

Soon after the incident, the families of Cruz and Rivera asked local officials to perform an exhumation in order to make a formal identification of the deceased and to determine the cause of death. But the judges in San Francisco Gotera, who have jurisdiction over cases in northern Morazan department, were hesitant because the zone is known as an area of conflict between the military and the armed opposition. The families and local human rights groups then invited representatives of Salvadoran and international humanitarian organizations to observe the exhumation and also to act as a safeguard for the local government officials.

On May 24, Dr. Thomsen, representatives of Tutela Legal, various church groups, the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador (nongovernmental), members of the Attorney General’s office, Americas Watch, the human rights office of the Catholic University (IDHUCA), other humanitarian organizations, a large group of local villagers, and national and international press traveled to the gravesite in Varilla Negra in Morazan department. Dr. Guillermo Armando Alvarado Moran, a pathologist from the governmental Forensic Unit of the Commission for Investigations, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, also attended the exhumation.

At the site, after some controversy over the presence of a foreign physician at the exhumation, the local judge drew up a hand-written statement appointing Dr. Thomsen as forensic doctor for the court along with Dr. Alvarado Moran. Dr. Thomsen directed the exhumation of the two bodies, which were buried about one meter below the surface and wrapped in plastic. The remains were badly decomposed.

Allegations of Torture

Autopsies of the bodies had to be completed that day, and there were no technical instruments or facilities at the site. Family members and neighbors who were present at the exhumation identified the bodies of the two men. The families’ testimonies describing the mutilation of the bodies were consistent with what was found during the autopsies.

Although the advanced state of decomposition made certain wounds difficult to detect on both bodies, other lesions were clearly the result of violence. Thomsen stated that the lesions on the body of Felix Antonio Rivera were the result of severe trauma, possibly from a blunt instrument or by bullet wounds. The cause of death could not be established in either case. Dr. Thomsen concluded that it could not be established if the deceased were tortured prior to death or mutilated after death. The missing fingers and other body parts indicated, however, that torture may have occurred.

Dr. Thomsen was interviewed extensively by local and international press and appeared on the Salvadoran televised evening news program. He stated on the program that there were strong indications that the victims had been tortured.

Journalists interviewed Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce, commander of the Third Brigade of the Infantry in San Miguel which has jurisdiction in the area, about the deaths. Col. Ponce described the army’s report on the incident stating that there was fighting between the army and guerrillas in Tepemechin and that troops and helicopters were sent in. He claimed that the two deceased were part of a group of 25 guerrillas and that local residents were influenced by the guerrillas. Ponce added that, “If there was mutilation, it is reprehensible and should be condemned in every aspect.”* He declined to authorize an investigation of the unit that reportedly carried out the killings, however.

In September 1988, a government-ordered medicolegal investigation into the deaths of ten campesinos in San Francisco (30 miles east of San Salvador) implicated four members of the military believed to have been responsible for the killings. Evidence obtained during a forensic examination of some of the bodies showed that the victims were shot at close range. This refuted the military’s claim that the campesinos were killed in a guerrilla ambush. Soldiers have rarely been arrested for the killings of civilians in El Salvador, and no officer has ever been convicted for this type of crime despite the fact that it is generally accepted that the military was responsible for thousands of civilian deaths in the early 1980s.

—Janet Gruschow

Malaysian Scientists Detained in Government Round Up

Between late October and December 1987, over a hundred Malaysians were arrested and held in preventive detention under Malaysia's Internal Security Act. The ISA allows for unlimited detention of persons whose actions are deemed by the government to be "prejudicial to the security of Malaysia or any part thereof." Among those detained were members of Parliament belonging to the opposition Democratic Action Party, members of other opposition parties, trade unionists, educators, scientists, environmentalists, and members of social and religious action groups. Most of those arrested were members of groups which have criticized government policies in the political, social, environmental, and educational spheres.

The Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, alleged that the arrests were made to prevent racial unrest. Racial tension between the Malays, who comprise about 50% of the population of Malaysia, and the Chinese, Indian, and other ethnic groups has been high in past years, most recently sparked by a controversy over the appointment of non-Mandarin speaking persons to head the Mandarin-speaking Chinese schools. Other factors contributing to tension in Malaysia are declining export revenues, rising unemployment in the country, and challenges within Parliament to the April 1987 election of the Prime Minister as head of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) party.

While many of the detainees were released in early 1988, 40 of those arrested were served with two year detention orders. Only the Home Affairs Minister (a post held by Dr. Mahathir) can order and rescind the detentions. The detention orders, which authorize the detention of the individual for up to two years, can be renewed indefinitely without judicial review. At least eleven scientists, engineers, and health professionals were served with the detention orders. During the summer, six of the eleven were released from detention without any formal charges being placed against them. However there are certain conditions attached to their freedom.

Theresa Lim Chin Chin, a social worker with the Malaysian Council of Churches, and Cecilia Ng Choon Sim, a social scientist at the University of Agriculture who graduated from Harvard University, were released from detention on 3 June 1988. However, they must report to the police station once a month and are restricted to the geographical area around their towns. Furthermore, they are forbidden to participate in the activities of any trade union or political party.

On 25 August, four others were released, including Tan Ka Kheng, a lecturer in environmental engineering at the University of Agriculture, vice president of the Environmental Protection Agency of Malaysia, and a graduate of UCLA-Berkeley; Chow Chee Keong, a civil engineer and dramatist; and Chee Heng Leng, a lecturer at the University of Agriculture and graduate of Wellesley College and Harvard School of Public Health. These individuals are subject to the same restrictions as Misses Lim and Ng and must comply with an order confining them to their homes between 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on 17 September.

Unrest Continues at University of Chile in 1988

Throughout 1988, faculty and students at the University of Chile have voiced their opposition to the Chilean government's policies of limiting university autonomy and decreasing government fiscal responsibility toward the universities. The protests heightened when, in March 1988, government-appointed rector Juan de Dios Vial Larraín announced the implementation of the government policy of "rationalization" which would drastically reduce Chile's direct fiscal contribution to the university budget. The plan sought the elimination of several programs and departments and a reduction in the physical size of the university. It also called for a reappropriation of the university budget and a substantial increase in tuition. The new rector, Jose Luis Federici, was forced to resign in October 1987 after his appointment and rationalization project sparked a university-wide protest (see Fall 1987 Report on Science and Human Rights).

On 25 July the students, supported by the faculty association, occupied the university's engineering and medical schools and called for a two-week strike. This step forced the university to close down the following week. Vial indicated that he would meet with student leaders to hear their complaints, but only if they ended the occupations.

The strike ended in August after Vial agreed to add approximately $750,000 to the student aid budget, bringing the program back up to 1987 levels. Vial claimed that the funds would come from other parts of the university's budget, but many believe that they would come directly from the government, which apparently wanted to avoid any unrest at the university during the 5 October presidential plebiscite.

Government intervention in the universities has long been opposed by faculty and students, but Pinochet's defeat in the October plebiscite has given them new hope for more autonomy. Yet, even if direct military intervention in university affairs decreases, many believe it will be difficult to bring government spending on education back up to the levels of before the 1973 coup.

Janet Gruschow and Maria A. Ward
ber, at least nine people were released from detention, including Poh Boon Seng, a lecturer in engineering at the University of Agriculture.

Scientists still in detention are Arokia Dass, an engineer and trade union activist; Mohamed Yunus bin Labai Ali, a student of sociology; Tuang Pik King, a mathematician by training and currently headmaster at a Confucian secondary school in Kuala Lumpur; Mohamed Nasir Hashim, an associate professor of community medicine at the National University of Malaysia and a graduate of Cornell University; and Kua Kia Soong, a sociologist by training and research director of the Malaysian Chinese Resource and Research Center. They are being held at Kamunting Detention Center near Taiping.

It remains to be seen whether the government will continue to release the detainees prior to the expiration of their two-year detention orders. Prime Minister Mahathir seems determined to maintain his hold on the political reins of the country. Following a challenge to Mahathir’s election as head of the UMNO party, a Malaysian judge declared the UMNO party illegal in February 1988 based on alleged improper registration of some branches. The Prime Minister promptly formed a new party, whose registration was approved by the government. In March, the Parliament passed legislation allowing for more extensive mandatory sentencing for certain crimes and giving the Attorney General the right to decide where cases will be heard, thus enabling the government to steer cases away from judges thought to be too independent. On 6 July 1988, the Prime Minister suspended five Supreme Court judges, including the head of the Supreme Court, Tun Salleh Abas, who has a reputation for impartiality. On 6 August, a judicial tribunal dismissed Salleh from his post for “misbehavior” and “misconduct.”

—Kari Hannibal

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for re-election. The conference resolution proposes that, in future, all judges (except for those of the USSR and republic Supreme Courts) be elected by the Soviet at the next higher level. The conference also recommended an extension of judges’ term of office from the current five years. (There have been suggestions in the press that all judges be appointed for life, and the legal experts charged with working out the details of the reform are reportedly considering this possibility.)

The resolution also proposes to increase the rights of defendants in court trials. At the moment, defense lawyers are denied contact with their client until the pre-trial investigation is completed. The conference proposal to “increase the role of defense counsel during pre-trial investigations and court proceedings” is presumably intended to change this situation.

Perestroika and Scientific Freedom

Alongside the political reforms needed to create conditions for improved economic performance, the Party conference also addressed the need for reforms in Soviet science. Both Party reformists and science administrators now publicly admit that the Soviet Union lags behind the West not only in applied science and technology but also in basic research. The Central Committee “Theses” noted that, despite a number of organizational changes and increased investment in scientific research, "no substantial changes in scientific and technical progress have taken place."

This assessment was echoed by many scientists who took part in the press discussion of the “Theses.” Many of them blamed the situation not on shortages of funding and equipment but on continuing administrative and political restrictions on scientific freedom. In an article published in the government daily, Izvestia, and reprinted in the United States, Roald Sagdeev, until recently director of the Institute for Space Research, pointed to the emphasis on “big science” as giving rise to a “bureaucracy that came to stifle Soviet science.” In this bureaucracy, decisions about research plans are made not by scientists actually engaged in research, but by administrators so far removed from the laboratory that they are “unable to distinguish an original idea from eyewash.” One result of this, Sagdeev argued, is “the erosion of scientific standards.” Another—the inability to identify, and invest in, promising new areas of research.

Much of the criticism was directed at the impact of national security and secrecy regulations on scientific work. Sagdeev noted that, despite efforts to enhance glasnost and democracy in the Soviet Union, “far too much research remains classified on the basis of its stated military importance, and too much other research remains immune to criticism.” Others pointed out that the preoccupation with secrecy leads to restrictions on access to a broad range of information deemed “sensitive,” to considerable delays in publication (while the material in question is scrutinized by the censors’ office), and frequently to an outright ban on publication, and, in particular, to the isolation of Soviet science from the outside world. Critics was also directed at Party supervision of science, particularly the need to gain local officials’ approval for research proposals and the de facto requirement of Party membership for promotion to responsible positions in science administration.

While many scientists focused their criticism on bureaucratic and political controls over science, others injected a note of self-criticism into the discussion. Addressing the Party conference, the Rector of Moscow State University, A. Logunov, noted the loss of “many democratic traditions in science” and went on to state: The virus of Lysenkoism is still alive in scientific circles, where some, with the help of Party and state agencies, are trying to suppress those holding different views. . . . Over the course of many years, there has been a loss of professional honor among specialists, which has led to pointless projects,
ecological disruption, and accidents that we are
only just now learning about. This is a serious
disease that has developed in our society. In es-
ence, a whole galaxy of so-called specialists has
emerged, a very flourishing group whose members
are always ready to substantiate and carry out
almost all instructions from the bosses.?
Gorbachev's speech to the Party conference suggested
that the reformists within the leadership share at least
some of these criticisms. The centralized planning
of basic research, said Gorbachev, had been—and con-
tinued to be—carried out in such a way that "areas of
research that did not flow from the logic of development
of science" received support, while "many promising
new fields of research did not receive timely support or
were even banned." He went on to state that "scientists
were rarely enlisted to give expert opinions on projects,
decisions, and plans; if their opinions diverged from
the interests of government departments, they were ignored,
and sometimes they were persecuted." The task now,
Gorbachev continued, is to create "a qualitatively new
Soviet research potential." This can only be achieved by
"democratizing the situation in science" to create condi-
tions conducive to "the competition of scientific ideas
and opinions."

Addressing the conference, the President of the USSR
Academy of Sciences, Guryi Marchuk, acknowledged
that reforms of the Academy to date had not gone far
enough, and declared that further reforms would bring
about "the democratization of the work of all elements of
the Academy of Sciences."?

Most of the reform proposals endorsed by the confer-
ence are formulated in highly general terms, and the
legislative details remain to be worked out by Party and
state bodies. Given the widespread opposition to reform
within the state and Party apparatus, these details are
likely to be the subject of some hard bargaining. The final
shape of the political and legal reforms therefore remains
to be seen.

---Jane Cave

1. This and all further quotations from the "Theses" taken
2. These and all other quotations from Gorbachev's speech
taken from Pravda, 29 June 1988.
3. These and all other quotations from the conference resolu-
tions taken from Pravda, 5 July 1988.
to Go," Issues in Science and Technology, Summer, 1988,
pp. 48–52.
5. See the round-table discussion between scientists from the
Far-Eastern Division of the USSR Academy of Sciences,
6. See, for example, the letter from A. Grodzhinsky, a member
of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Literaturnaya Ga-
zeta, 8 June 1988, p. 10; and the resolution passed by Party
members at the Central Economics-Mathematical Institute
of the USSR Academy, ibid., 22 June 1988, p. 10.
8. Ibid.

Brazilian Doctor Suspended for Torture Participation

In March 1988, the regional medical society of Rio de
Janeiro suspended Dr. Amilcar Lobo, a Brazilian psy-
choanalyst, from practicing medicine, because he partici-
ipated in torture sessions conducted in military garrisons

Lobo admitted to having participated in torture ses-
sions, and to "slightly medicating people so that they
wouldn't die";* but argues that due to the 1979 amnesty
law, he cannot be prosecuted by a civilian board such as
the medical society. The law states that no military
officer can be punished for human rights abuses com-

Rio's regional medical society argues that it has the
authority to suspend Dr. Lobo because he is no longer in
the armed forces and had enrolled in the medical society
as a civilian doctor. Dr. L. Andrade Vaz de Melo,
president of the regional medical society, accused Lobo
of using "all the technical and scientific knowledge at his
disposal to make people suffer and die . . . ."* Lobo said
he would accept the suspension if those in the military
who committed the killings were prosecuted as well.

---Maria A. Ward

*Index on Censorship, June 1988, p. 34.

New CSFR Publications

The AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom and
Responsibility (CSFR) and the Refugee Policy Group
have published the proceedings of a 1986 AAAS annual
meeting symposium on the plight of refugee scientists in a
new report entitled Scientists in Exile: Issues and Per-
spectives on the Refugee Experience. The report exam-
ines the forces that propel a scientist to flee his/her
country, problems scientists encounter in pursuing their
careers in a new country, and the relationships they
maintain with their compatriots at home. It also reviews
some current programs which assist scientists to return
to their home countries once conditions there have
become tolerable for them.

CSFR and Physicians for Human Rights have released
a report on their investigations into the human rights
situation in Kenya. In Kenya: Medicolegal Aspects of the
Inquest into the Death of Peter Njenga Karanja, author
Dr. Robert H. Kirschner evaluates the medicolegal evi-
dence presented at the government inquest investigating
the death in police custody of Peter Karanja, a Kenyan
businessman, in February 1987. Excerpts from this re-
port were published in the Spring 1988 issue of this
newsletter.

Both reports are available free of charge from the
AAAS Office of Scientific Freedom and Responsibility,
1333 H Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20005 or call
(202) 326–6790.
Chilean Physician Dismissed Over Records Mishap

Dr. Jorge Villegas, a prominent Chilean plastic surgeon, was dismissed from his hospital position on 20 April 1988 because of his criticisms of the mishandling of the medical records of one of his patients. Villegas, the chief plastic surgeon at the Hospital del Trabajador in Santiago, is the treating physician of Carmen Gloria Quintana who was burned by members of the Chilean army on 2 July 1986.

In January 1988, an unidentified person found Carmen Quintana’s original medical reports in the hospital’s garbage dump and gave them to HOY magazine four months later. HOY publicized the incident through an interview with the surgeon. The hospital dismissed Villegas reportedly because he did not clear statements he made to HOY (No. 561, April 1988) with hospital officials first and placed the blame for the disappearance of the medical records on Villegas himself.

Villegas had been employed with the Hospital del Trabajador for the past eight years, and also holds the positions of Chairman of the Chilean Society of Plastic and Restorative Surgery and General Advisor to the Medical College of Chile.

Carmen Quintana, a Chilean, was set on fire along with Rodrigo Rojas on 2 July 1986. Rojas died five days later. The two youths and many others were participating in a general strike in Santiago. Quintana contends that an army patrol stopped Rojas and herself, threw gasoline over them and set them on fire. The military claim that Quintana accidently set the fire herself. The medical reports of Dr. Villegas supplied evidence that supported Quintana’s version. A judicial investigation into the burning incident is still underway.

In the interview with HOY, Dr. Villegas discussed the importance of safeguarding Quintana’s medical documents, and criticized the neglectful handling of a patient’s personal data. Villegas called the discarded medical reports “priceless.” They included Quintana’s medical history, chest and head X-rays, and detailed observations of her treatment and recovery.

Dr. Villegas has received much support from his colleagues over the dismissal. He has been praised for his excellent work on Quintana, and for saving her life. Dr. Villegas is now working in a private clinic and will perform further operations on Quintana, who returned to Chile in July.

The AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility wrote to Sr. Eugenio Heiremans, the director of the Hospital del Trabajador, to inquire about Dr. Villegas’ dismissal and the handling of Quintana’s medical records. Mr. Heiremans replied that Dr. Villegas knew of the disappearance of Quintana’s files on April 12th, yet failed to inform his superiors until six days later, after they had already been published in the magazine article. Heiremans also claimed that all professional, moral, and ethical factors were considered in deciding on the dismissal of Dr. Villegas. However, Villegas states that when a reporter telephoned him with the news of the medical reports, he asked the journalist to inform the hospital administration immediately. In addition, Dr. Villegas informed his nursing staff the following morning.

—Maria A. Ward

AAAS Annual Meeting

The 1989 AAAS Annual Meeting will be held in San Francisco between 14 and 19 January at the San Francisco Hilton Hotel. The AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility is sponsoring two symposia on science and human rights and an open forum for those attending the annual meeting who would like to learn more about the work of the Committee. In addition, one of the AAAS plenary lectures will address the application of genetic methods to human rights investigations in Argentina.

Defending Human Rights with Genetics and Forensic Evidence
Monday, 16 January 1989, 8:30—11:30 a.m., Continental 2, San Francisco Hilton Hotel

Speakers will review recent advances in human molecular genetics and the application of biotechnology in the search for missing children and the “disappeared” in Argentina. They will also discuss the use of biological evidence in court cases and efforts to develop international standards for the use of biological techniques in investigations of human rights violations.

Torture Rehabilitation under Repressive Regimes
Monday, 16 January 1989, 2:30—5:30 p.m., Continental 2, San Francisco Hilton Hotel

Speakers from South Africa, the Philippines, Chile, and Argentina will examine the medical, psychological, and social services developed for survivors of torture and other trauma in environments where human rights violations and violence against the civilian population are or were common.

CSFR Forum-Reception
Monday, 16 January 1989, 6:00—7:30 p.m., Monterey Room, San Francisco Hilton Hotel, open to the public.

Plenary Lecture on Genetics and Human Rights
Dr. Mary-Claire King will present a plenary lecture at the AAAS meeting on the topic: “Genetics and the Disappeared: Search for Two Generations” on Wednesday, 18 January 1989 at 8:30 p.m.
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The Office of Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and its Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility monitor the actions of the governments of the United States and other nations which may circumscribe the freedom of scientists or restrict the ability of scientists to exercise their professional responsibilities, and report on developments affecting scientific freedom and responsibility.

The Science and Human Rights Program within the Office of Scientific Freedom and Responsibility collects and disseminates information about foreign scientists, engineers, and health professionals who are victims of human rights abuses or who experience infringements of academic freedom. It also develops and applies scientific methods and techniques to the documentation and prevention of human rights abuses. The concerns of the Office of Scientific Freedom and Responsibility are universal and independent of the ideology of any government or the individuals it attempts to aid.

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