

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Three year sentence for Fan Yiping

21 July 1998

AI Index: ASA 17/23/98

Fan Yiping, a 43 year-old businessman and veteran democracy activist from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fined 10,000 *yuan* for allegedly helping dissident Wang Xizhe to flee China in 1996.

Fan Yiping's trial at the Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court started on 13 July with the verdict being announced on 21 July 1998. He was accused of having helped Wang Xizhe "to illegally cross the border" into Hong Kong in October 1996. He is intending to appeal against his conviction.

According to dissident sources, Fan Yiping merely helped Wang Xizhe by indicating a way for him to contact a member of the "snakeheads" - a person who would help smuggle him out of the country for a fee.

Food company manager Fan Yiping, had been detained on 16 March 1998 reportedly for investigation into his links with exiled dissidents. Several other people were detained for questioning by the police in Guangzhou around that time, apparently in connection with the detention of Fan Yiping¹. Dissident sources have alleged that the real reason for Fan Yiping's detention and sentence is his support for independent labour unions. Fan Yiping had been an editor of the "Voice of the People" magazine during the 1979 "Democracy Wall" movement.

Wang Xizhe, who spent 14 years in prison for his democracy activities, fled China shortly after the detention of Beijing literary critic Liu Xiaobo on 8 October 1996. Wang and Liu co-authored an open letter calling for political reform, autonomy for Tibet and the impeachment of President Jiang Zemin. The same day, Liu Xiaobo was given a three year period of "reeducation through labour", an administrative punishment imposed without charge or trial, and remains in detention.

¹ See "China: Detention and harassment of dissidents and others between January and June 1998", ASA 17/16/98, June 1998 for information on Huang Yusheng, Su Jiang and Zhou Jianzhong.

Amnesty International believes that Fan Yiping is a prisoner of conscience who should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in English, Chinese or in your own language,

- ◆ urging the immediate and unconditional release of Fan Yiping;
- ◆ expressing concern that he does not appear to have been accused of a recognisably criminal offence in accordance with international standards;
- ◆ expressing further concern at reports that FanYiping's sentence is politically motivated and in reality is related to his support for independent trade unions in China.

Please send appeals to:

Governor of the Guangdong Provincial People's Government

LU Ruihua Shengzhang

Guangdongsheng Renmin Zhengfu

305 Dongfeng Zhong Lu

Guangzhoushi 510031

Guangdongsheng

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 44563 OFAGDCN

Telegram: Governor, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Salutation: Dear Governor

President of the Guangdong Provincial High People's Court

MAI Chongkai Yuanzhang

Guangdongsheng Gaoji Renmin Fayuan

26 Cangbian Lu

Guangzhoushi 510090

Guangdongsheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: President of the Provincial High People's Court, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Salutation: Dear President

This document is sent to China and CHIRAN Coordinators for action by groups. It is sent to Sections for information only.