

Interview With Manfred Nowak: Part I

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, discusses Gao Zhisheng and Hu Jia

UN CONTINUED FROM A1

"Of course the regime accuses him of their classic refrain, made to so many others: to have made false statements about China's human rights status," Mr. Nowak said.

"The Chinese government took no stand about inquiries into his torture—neither denied nor acknowledged them."

On March 15 this year, Mr. Gao's wife, Geng He, and their 16-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son arrived in the United States after escaping through Thailand.

"The latest I am aware of is her [Ms. He's] harrowing escape from China with her daughter to Thailand. The pressure was huge on the Thai government—to repatriate her back to China.

"But through massive interventions from the U.S.A. and the European Union the two came



Manfred Nowak. THE EPOCH TIMES

Both, Mr. Gao (once) and Mr. Hu (twice) have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

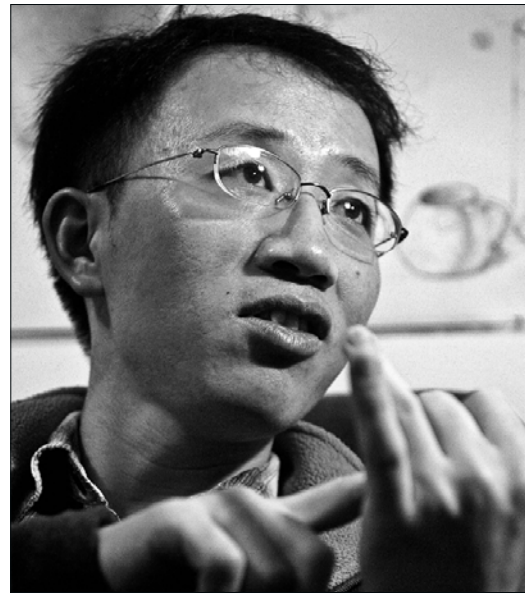
"They are courageous people who during an increasingly harsh repression prior to the Olympics displayed the fortitude to continue to intervene for oppressed people and human rights," Mr. Nowak said. "They deserve this prize...Yes, either one, or both of them."

Heide B. Malhotra and Charlotte Cuthbertson edited this article.

Manfred Nowak, from Austria, who has been the UN Special Rapporteur on torture since 2004. He is also a law professor at the University of Vienna and was one of the judges of the Human Rights Chamber for Bosnia and Herzegovina between March 1996 and December 2003.

to the U.S.A.

"This event made Mr. Gao's situation even more explosive. My last contact was before the escape. We fear that he is under severe duress because of his wife's escape," Mr. Nowak explained.



FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hu Jia

In December 2007, Hu Jia participated in many social and human rights movements.

He was detained by the Chinese regime on charges of "overthrowing state power," and was sentenced to three years and six months in prison in March 2008.

According to a report from AFP on Oct 9, 2008, when Hu received his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in September 2008, the Chinese regime pleaded the prize committee not to consider awarding the prize to a "criminal."



VERNA YU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Gao Zhisheng

Gao Zhisheng was named one of China's top 10 lawyers by the Chinese regime in 2001.

However he was disbarred by communist authorities in 2005 after calling for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in a series of open letters to the Chinese regime.

Since then Gao has reported attempts on his life and has been arrested several times.

Earlier this year, his family published a letter from Gao that detailed barbaric torture he suffered during a two-month period.

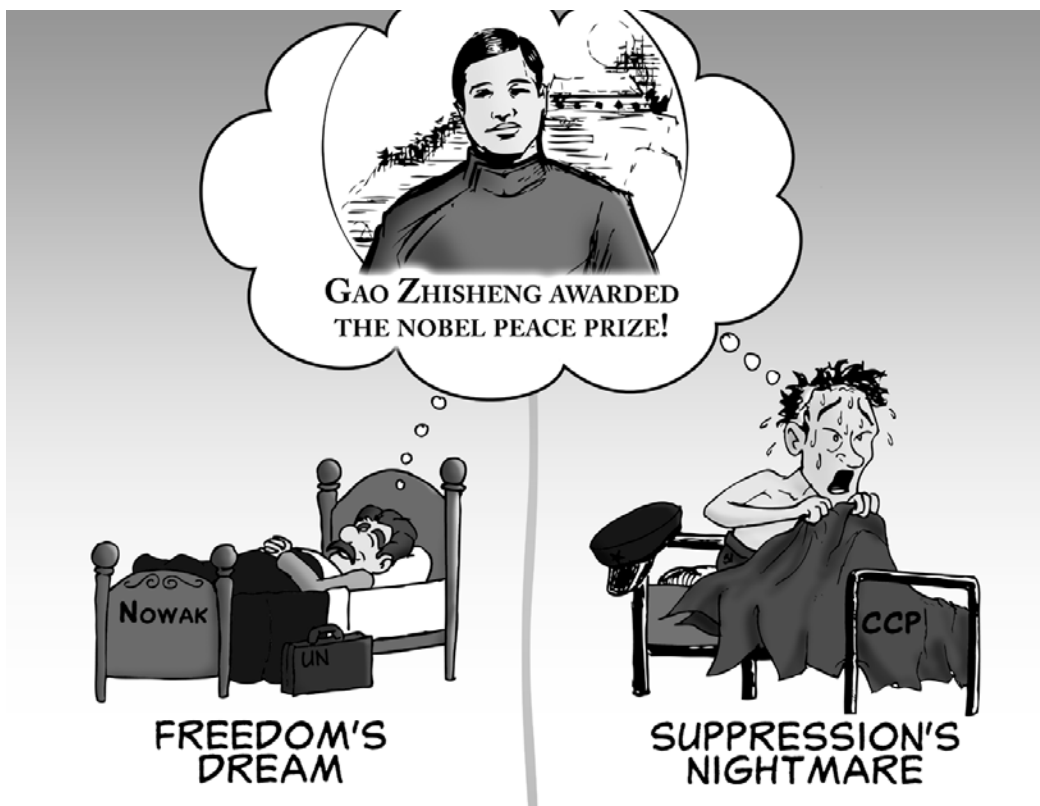
Gao Zhisheng's account of 50 days of torture

In the following hours of torture, I passed out from time to time because of lack of water and food, and heavy sweating. I was lying down on the cold floor naked. I felt several times someone come and open my eyes and shine a flashlight in them to see if I was still alive.

When I would come to, I smelled the strong odor of stinky urine. My face, nose, and hair were filled with the smell. Obviously, but I don't know when, someone had urinated on my face and head.

Then, the electric shock batons were thrust all over me. And my full body, my heart, lungs and muscles began jumping under my skin uncontrollably. I was writhing on the ground in pain, trying to crawl away. Wang then shocked me in my penis.

My begging them to stop only resulted in laughing and more unbelievable torture. After a few hours of this I had no energy to even beg, let alone try to escape.



JEFF NENARELLA/THE EPOCH TIMES

Prince and Princess of Asturias Welcomed by Romanian President

By GINA NEAGU
Epoch Times Staff

Prince Felipe and Princess Letizia of Spain are paying an official three day visit to Romania that began on Monday July 27. Immediately after their arrival in Romania yesterday, their Royal Highnesses went to Cotroceni Palace where they were received by President Basescu and his wife, Maria Basescu.

Prince Felipe said he was glad to visit Romania, and stressed that although a certain geographical distance separates Spain and Romania, the two states are close due to their cultural proximity.

The Prince of Asturias (Asturias is the area in Spain officially linked to the crown) is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Emil Boc and the Deputies' Chamber Speaker Roberta Anastase on Tuesday.

The visit by Spain's Crown Prince Felipe supports the trend that is occurring in Romania, a country which Spain considers a "strategic partner" in a Europe that is ever "more prosperous, fair, and mutually supportive."

The prince made his remarks during an official dinner hosted by the Romanian President.

Bucharest can learn from Spain's experience with managing European Union funding extended to the bloc's less affluent member-states, the prince said.

"The Spanish experience in managing and utilization of

structural funds, as well as the large number of firms from our country with experience in that area, can be of great interest and usefulness to Romania," said Felipe.

"Bucharest can learn from Spain's experience with managing European Union funding extended to the bloc's less affluent member-states"

He had emphasized the support from Spanish businesses investing in the Balkan nation despite the international economic crisis.

Around 80 Spanish business executives are accompanying the royal couple on the trip to Romania.

The prince emphasized bilateral links and noted "the deep human and professional relationships that around a million Romanian residents in Spain have woven with Spaniards, fostering their integration into the society."

GLOBAL Q & A

What do you think of your country's education system?

A country's schooling system touches everyone, whether student, parent, employer or co-worker. It shapes the future of every country. And as such, it also evokes philosophical reflection, or so Epoch Times reporters from the Gold Coast to Gothenburg found out when they asked local citizens, "What do you think of your country's education system?"



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Felipe Barros, 30, Musician

I think our education system is maturing. Although it still needs to achieve a better quality, it has already had an improvement. Now, we have less, much less, illiteracy in the country, more universities outside the capitals, more vacancies for the students and a closer link between academic production and society. I believe that if the communities situated around the schools could get closer to them and participate more in education, the quality of public education would improve a lot.



Wellington, New Zealand
Martin Viereg, 35, Student Teacher

How many Maori teachers I've had in my entire schooling career (from when I was 5 till now when I'm 35) is one. I've had one Maori teacher that whole time, and yet what we've been told is that we're meant to be teaching this whole bi-cultural perspective. There's this massive void, so it's hard for me to teach a bi-cultural perspective when I have not really experienced it firsthand myself.

[Editor's note: Maori are the native peoples of New Zealand]



Montevarchi, Italy
Lorenza Renzini, 42, Librarian

In past years, the system of education changes every time the government changes. All new governments think they can do it better. The system was good, but education needs a cycle, a time for foundation. When the first grade begins with one type of system in one type of cycle, and then finishes in another system in a system of education, it's very confusing. In the last years, we have this situation and the result is great confusion. The education now is poor.



New York, USA
Simone Lee, 21, Hair Model and College Student

I think that the education system is very good at conditioning people to follow the status quo. Education would benefit more if it focused more on individual expression instead of trying to condition people into a gray crowd. As Nietzsche put it, "the biggest issue of mankind is suppression." People think that college follows high school because that's the way it works so they are conditioned to think that the world will fall in on them and make them out to be failures. The education system supports a dog-eat-dog competition mentality where people try to rise above other people. It is a fear-based, not a love-based system. Society tries to tell you this is what 'perfect' is. You should just accept yourself, love yourself. As Joseph Campbell said, "follow your bliss."

Look for the Global Q&A column every week, when Epoch Times correspondents interview people around the world to learn about their lives and perspective on local and global realities. Next week's global question: "What misunderstanding do you think foreigners have about your country?"