

PICKING QUARRELS AND PROVOKING TROUBLE

Jeremy Goldkorn

DURING 2013–2014, the authorities increasingly used the criminal charge of ‘picking quarrels and provoking troubles’ 寻衅滋事 to detain activists, writers and dissidents, including all those listed below. Another criminal charge authorities have used against political dissidents or critics is that of ‘gathering a crowd to disrupt public order’ 聚众扰乱公共场所秩序罪, for which the noted lawyer Xu Zhiyong is currently serving a four-year prison sentence (see Forum ‘Xu Zhiyong and the New Citizens’ Movement’, p.292).

2013

14 September: Cao Shunli 曹顺利

Cao Shunli, a lawyer and rights activist, is detained at Beijing Capital Airport on her way to a human rights conference in Geneva. A month later she is formally arrested on charges of ‘picking quarrels and provoking troubles’. Despite suffering from tuberculosis, liver disease and uterine fibroids, she is denied medical help and dies in detention on 14 March 2014, two weeks short of her fifty-third birthday.



Cao Shunli, a civil rights activist, was arrested on charges of ‘picking quarrels and provoking troubles’
Photo: renminbao.com

2014**8 April: Wang Quanping** 王全平

The lawyer Wang Quanping drives to Beijing from Jiangmen city, Guangdong province to attend the trial of members of the New Citizens' Movement (see Forum 'Xu Zhiyong and the New Citizens' Movement', p.292) in a car covered with satirical slogans such as 'Citizens are welcome to disclose their assets — public servants excepted' 欢迎人民公开财产 人民公仆就免了. He is detained by plainclothes security personnel at the courtroom door and charged with 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles'.

22 April: Lin Dong 林东

Lin Dong, a prominent labour activist whose organisation helped organise strikes for social security and other benefits of some 40,000 workers at sports shoe factories in Dongguan, Guangdong province, is detained for thirty days. He is subsequently charged.

3 May: Xiang Nanfu 向南夫

A citizen journalist for the US-based website Boxun, Xiang Nanfu is put under criminal detention and paraded on

state television in a green prison vest (see Forum 'Orange as the New Black', p.316).

6 May: Pu Zhiqiang 浦志强

Pu Zhiqiang, a civil rights lawyer who gained prominence through his campaign to abolish labour camps, is detained after attending a private commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown (see Chapter 6 'The Sword of Discipline and the Dagger of Justice', p.260). One of at least four other human rights lawyers detained in May 2014 ahead of the anniversary, Pu is formally charged on 13 June.

14 September: Tie Liu 铁流

The eighty-one-year old writer, underground publisher and vehement critic of the Communist Party, Tie Liu (real name Huang Zerong 黄泽荣) is detained and accused of 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles'.



Tie Liu
Photo: rfa.org

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