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Another Chinese Writer Detained
Arrest of Zhou Yuanzhi brings number of imprisoned writers to 40

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, May 6, 2008—Zhou Yuanzhi, a writer and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, has been detained in connection with his writings and could face trial for inciting subversion, a development PEN called “another troublesome indication that a crackdown on freedom of expression is underway in China ahead of the Beijing Olympic Games.”

Zhou Yuanzhi has been in custody since May 3, 2008. According to PEN’s sources, Zhou and his wife were taken away by the police of the National Security Bureau of Zhongxiang City, Hubei Province. His wife was released and placed under house arrest. Zhou is still in custody, and has been formally detained on suspicion of “inciting subversion,” a charge used against many writers in China. Calls to Zhou’s home remained unanswered as of May 6, provoking fears that his phone line has been cut.

Zhou Yuanzhi, aged 47, is a freelance writer who has published two books in Hong Kong, as well as over 500 pieces of writing under several pen names in overseas Chinese magazines and on overseas Web sites, and have included political commentaries, reportages, essays and short stories. Many of his articles have been critiques on social issues and official corruption.

Zhou graduated from the Zhongnan University of Economics in 1988 and then became a taxation official. In 1992, after an article he contributed to Voice of America was censored by the National Security police, he was dismissed from his post as deputy chief of the Downtown Branch of Taxation Bureau of Zhongxiang City and expelled from the Communist Party of China.

PEN American Center, PEN Canada, and the Independent Chinese PEN Center are among the 145 worldwide centers of International PEN, an organization that works to promote friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers everywhere, to fight for freedom of expression, and represent the conscience of world literature. On December 10, 2007, the centers launched We Are Ready for Freedom of Expression, an Olympic countdown campaign to protest China’s imprisonment of at least 40 writers and journalists and to seek an end to internet censorship and other restrictions on the freedom to write in that country. For more information, please visit www.pen.org/china2008, www.pencanada.ca, and www.chinesepen.org.

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