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NAMES



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world briefs

COSTA RICA

The highest court in Costa Rica has found that the Universidad Internacional de las Americas violated the country's constitution when it expelled men with long hair because they do not uphold traditional Costa Rican values. Charges that the school dismissed students and faculty for being gay or lesbian, however, could not be proven in court because no gay or lesbian person was willing to speak publicly about his or her experience. The school has defended its policy of expelling gays and lesbians—and men who wear earrings or lycra shorts, or have long hair—because it has an obligation of upholding traditional values. Letters of support for the students and faculty are encouraged. The address for the school is: Lic. Miguel Angel Gutierrez Alvarez, Rector de la UIA, Apdo. Postal 1447-1002, Paseo de los Estudiantes, San Jose, Costa Rica. The address of the Ministry of Education, which oversees the school, is: Lic. Rafael Garzona, Secretario, CONESUP, Ministerio de Educacion Publica, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica.

EUROPE

Various neo-fascist groups are forming in Europe that have connections with similar groups in the United States. *Der Einblick*, a publication from the "anti-antifa" (or "anti-anti-fascist") movement, contained the names and addresses of 250 anti-fascists, including trade union leaders and journalists, and their organizations and meeting places. In Germany, the neo-Nazi groups *Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* and *Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neue Front* have established ties with the group *Combat 18* in Great Britain and another neo-fascist group in Denmark. The GDNF also has ties with a neo-Nazi group in Nebraska which considers itself the successor of the German Nazi Party. *Combat 18* was formed with the help of Harold Covington, who lives in North Carolina and whose post office box has served as the U.S. contact for *Combat 18*. Covington was a leader of the Confederate Knights of America, which praised the 1979 assassination of five Communist Workers Party members by neo-Nazis in Greensboro, N.C. In *Der Einblick*, the top leadership of the German neo-Nazi network calls on followers to "neutralize all anti-German, anti-nationalist" forces and urges them to "stop squandering the enormous violent potential" of the neo-Nazi movement.

INTERNATIONAL

The International Lesbian and Gay Association will hold its 16th annual world conference in June 1994, in New York City, in conjunction with the Gay Games and Stonewall 25. In 1993, the group became the first lesbian and gay organization to have consultative status with the United Nations. Conference topics include AIDS, lesbian visibility and regional activism. For more information, write to Center ILGA Committee, c/o Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, 208 W 13th St., New York, NY 10011, or call (212) 620-7310.

MEXICO

In Chiapas, an official of the state's police force was arrested earlier this year on charges of trafficking arms, kidnapping and murder. Among the murder victims are some 25 gay men and transvestites, who were killed between June 1991 and February 1993. The Gay Cultural Circle, a Mexico City-based group, has suspected the man, Ignacio Flores Montiel, of directing the murders in Chiapas. The group is skeptical, however, of the effectiveness of the arrest because of past human rights violations and cover-ups. "Local authorities have let crucial evidence go unexamined, have promoted judges who participated in the cover-up, and have convicted innocent people to protect

the guilty," said Jorge Cortinas, program director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. Chiapas is the site of an uprising earlier this year by the Zapatista Army for National Liberation, brought on, in part, because of lack of trust in the Mexican government regarding human rights.

A permit for the Miss Gay Tijuana beauty contest, planned for Dec. 18, has been denied by the Tijuana city council. The council justified the denial by saying that the local sexual minority community does not "contribute to the development of our community," and that



the council has a responsibility to preserve the "harmony" of the city. Activists say the denial is a violation of the basic right to assemble.

ROMANIA

The Romanian Senate changed the country's ban on gay and lesbian relationships to allow only those that do not cause a "public scandal." The Romanian Penal Code calls for a prison sentence of one to five years for anyone in a same-gender sexual relationship. Activists say that the senate's change is only a cosmetic one and that it will not end the government's persecution of sexual minorities. The Romanian government maintains that the law is not enforced. Human rights activists, however, say that at least 57 people are currently in prison for engaging in consensual sex with a partner of the same gender. Cosmin Hutanu, a 21-year-old man, is serving a one year and two months' sentence for engaging on one occasion in private and consensual sex with a man. Along with adding the "public scandal" clause, the senate also made it a crime to publicly or privately promote homosexuality, punishable with one to five years in prison.

RUSSIA

The destruction by fire of a Jewish synagogue in Moscow is fueling fears that anti-Semitism is on the rise in Russia. "There is reason to be concerned because of the political situation [in Russia]," said Rabbi Berel Lazar, an Italian-born Lubavitcher who has been working since the fall of communism to rebuild Russian Judaism. Ultra-nationalists have gained seats in recent Russian parliamentary elections. Two other Jewish institutions, a school and a warehouse, have also been partially destroyed by fire.

Compiled by Pamela Lyons