AMNESTY NEWS

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February 1962

A FEW RELEASES - AND MORE IMPRISONMENTS

There are between 13,000 and 14,000 political prisoners in Eastern Germany, according to estimates of the West Berlin Association of Former Political Detainees. Recent arrests included three schoolboys from Ankilam sentenced to penal servitude of five and three-and-a-half years for going to school on September 21st, 1961, in black suits and draping the master's desk in black cloth with the remark that 'they were burying their future'. On the credit side three American students, Victor Searles Pankey, Gilbert Page Ferrey and Frederic Pryor, together with an Englishman, Joseph Collett, and two Arabs, arrested last autumn for helping East Berliners to escape, have been released. Henri Pierrot, a Dutch businessman, found guilty on the same count, is still in prison.

There has been a recent wave of arrests in Spain; 14 people were arrested at Eibar and Dava in the Basque provinces following labour demonstrations there; three students, Frederico Sanchez, Joaquin Sempere, and another man, were arrested in Barcelona for 'democratic demonstrations at the University'. Joaquin Satrustegui, a monarchist, was fined £148 for making a political speech last November which contained 'ideas hostile to the national political organisation'.

In Ghana, Mr. D.K. Apedoh, an Opposition M.P., and about 80 others were arrested in February. There are now about 500 people detained under the Government's Preventive Detention Order.

In Indonesia 700 people were arrested after the attempted bomb attack on President Sukarno, among them eminent politicians

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BRINGING IN NEW MEMBERS

It is essential that Amnesty attracts more members and subscribers. To help do this we are appealing to our present members to write to their local press describing the work that the movement is doing.

Enclosed with this copy of Amnesty News is a draft letter which members may find helpful as a basis for their own correspondence. If friends in other places can be persuaded to write as well, this will greatly increase the coverage.

We should be particularly pleased if members would follow up the broadcast on Amnesty on Sunday, March 4th, in the 'Way of Life' programme by letters to their local papers.

'LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVE'

A radio programme on AMNESTY in the Home Service
'Way of Life' series

Sunday March 4th, 7.45 p.m.

MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN AND PERSUADE YOUR FRIENDS TO LISTEN

MORE IMPRISONMENTS (continued)

from both left and right wing parties. In Poland two Silesian priests in Lodz were sentenced to three years' imprisonment each for making typewritten copies of a Western book on relations between Poland, the U.S.S.R., and other Socialist countries and circulating these without permission. Miss Ana Rudzinka, former Secretary of the Warsaw Club 'The Twisted Circle', has been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for passing on to a Polish emigre newspaper in Paris a book said to be libellous to Poland. Since December there appears to have been a tightening up on freedom of expression, when several Polish intellectuals were detained by the police for questioning.

REPORT ON 'THREES'

Neville Vincent, Honorary Treasurer of Amnesty, visited Portugal at the end of February to investigate conditions of prisoners there. 'Threes' with Portuguese prisoners on their lists will be informed of any changes affecting them when Mr. Vincent has been able to submit his report.

The Hampstead 'Three' organised a 'bring and buy' sherry party on Sunday, February 18th, to raise funds for one of their three prisoners, Mr. Quaidoo, a Ghana M.P., whose family is suffering financial hardship. Peter Benenson spoke briefly at the party. At the end of the morning £15 had been raised to send to Mrs. Quaidoo.

The Clapham 'Three' drew attention to the plight of Dr. Agnostino Neto in a recent letter in 'The Spectator'; new groups have been formed in Thanet, Hornchurch, Lausanne and Melbourne, Australia.

Anyone wishing to form a new 'Three' may be interested in taking up the cases of the following prisoners:-

SANDOR RACZ - One of the leaders of the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council; arrested in December 1956 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

LAXMIKANTO BEMBRO - lawyer and former leader of the Goa Nationalist Movement. He was arrested in 1946 and imprisoned for four years in Lisbon. Though on parole since 1950 he has not been allowed to rejoin his wife and children, who have gone to live in India. Since India's annexation of Goa he has been sent back to the Caixeas Prison in Lisbon.

K.G. MUSTAFA - former news editor of the Bengali daily 'Sangbad' in Dacca and sub-editor on the daily 'Pakistan Observer'. He was arrested in April 1961 for 'subversive activities'.

TALKING ABOUT AMNESTY

There are growing demands for speakers on AMNESTY. During February Peter Benenson was able to speak at a number of meetings, and it is hoped that many more will be arranged during the next few months, particularly in University cities.

"There is no doubt" Peter Benenson reports "that there is growing interest and enthusiasm in the universities, not only among undergraduates, but among the teaching staff as well". Following the first of these University meetings at Oxford last November, a flourishing movement has been built up, with more than 800 undergraduates holding local membership cards. Other meetings have been held at Birmingham and Cambridge.

An encouraging development this year has been the interest in Amnesty shown by Sixth Forms at senior boys' and girls' schools who have asked for speakers. Several such forms have suggested forming a 'Three' group. Because of the problem caused by the continuous change in the composition of the top form, Amnesty is asking that one or two members of the staff should undertake to join a group to ensure continuity before a Three is formally established.

Other speakers have been to the Hornchurch Humanist Group, the South Place Ethical Society, and various local groups.

Membership Appeal

Many people are receiving the benefits of Amnesty membership without having paid their subscription for 1962. Are you one of them? Amnesty has great ambitions but they cannot be fulfilled without wide financial backing.