

# monthly newsletter from amnesty international



## postcards for prisoners campaign

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January 1970

First some news about prisoners who have been on this Campaign:

Thich Thien Minh, South Vietnam (October 1969), who was released in November 1969 (see December KIT), has been sending postcards to a great number of Amnesty members all over the world, thanking them for their concern about him and hoping that our meaningful activities will contribute a lot to the restoration of peace and freedom in his war-torn country.

Stefan Gardonyi (August 1968) Rumania, who was released in 1968 has now been allowed to leave Rumania and join his family in West Germany.

Pramudya Ananta Tur Indonesia (February 1969), was among the first group of detainees to be moved to the island of Buru to 'resettlement' areas there. They have had no trial, are held in detention camps on the island, work by day on agricultural projects, and no date has been set for release.

Major-General Grigorenko, USSR (August 1969), is reported to have been declared insane. He is therefore subject to an indefinite period of detention in a mental institution. There is some doubt as to which mental institution he is being detained in but it is probably the Serbsky Institute in Moscow, the address of which is as follows: SSSR, Moskva, Kropotkinsky Passazh 23, Institut Sudebnoi Psikhiiatrii imeni Serbskogo, Professoru Morozovu.

Professor Morozov is the director of the Serbsky Institute.

Noureddine Ben Khader, Tunisia (July 1969). Ben Khader's wife was arrested in the last week of December 1969. It is not yet known whether she has been charged or tried.

Mohammed Ben Jennet, Tunisia (October 1968). During the last few months most of the prisoners arrested with Ben Jennet and Ben Khader have been released in a succession of amnesties. Now less than 40 remain in prison. Another amnesty was announced in December and it was hoped that this would apply to the last remaining people in prison. However, the amnesty will in fact only apply to those prisoners "who have manifested evident signs of repentance". This means in practice that it is unlikely that any of this group will be released.

Henry Fahnbulleh, Liberia, (November 1969). Reports from reliable sources indicate that Mr Fahnbulleh is being seriously ill treated in prison. He has now been charged again with other offences which carry the death penalty, and it is believed that he will appear in court this month.

Here are this month's prisoners:

Dr Fricis MENDERS, Latvia (USSR).

Dr Menders, a retired lawyer and Social-Democrat leader, sentenced on November 1st 1969 to 5 years in a labour camp, is 85 years old. He was born in Riga, when Latvia was part of Tsarist Russia. He participated in the first Russian revolution in 1905 and was later arrested and sent into Siberian exile, from which he escaped abroad in 1907. When he returned to Latvia after the Russian revolution of 1917, he helped to found the independent Latvian republic and was active as a political writer and member of parliament for the Social-Democrats; he also represented his party at international conferences.

Dr Menders' second term of imprisonment occurred after the right-wing coup in Latvia in 1934, when he spent a year in a concentration camp. From the time of his release he was obliged to do his political work underground, first under the Latvian dictatorship and later under the Nazi occupation of 1941-1944.

In 1944 the Soviet forces reoccupied Latvia (the country was invaded by the Soviet Union and forcibly annexed in the year prior to the Nazi invasion). In 1948 Dr Menders was arrested and sentenced to ten years in a labour camp on two charges: 1) refusing to form a united front of Social-Democrats and Communists in pre-war Latvia, and 2) possessing allegedly anti-Soviet literature. After 8 years in the Mordovian labour camps he was released at the age of 70, following appeals from abroad.

Since 1955 Dr Menders has lived in retirement in Riga without restriction, except for being refused permission to travel abroad. In the spring of 1969 he was visited by an American historian collecting information on the revolutionary period in Latvia of 1917/1918. Dr Menders is believed to have given him some documents on this subject, including a copy of the manuscript of his memoirs. The American was arrested on leaving the USSR and his papers confiscated. Dr Menders was also arrested and on November 1st 1969 he was sentenced on charges of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. He is believed to have been sent to the same Mordovian labour camps where he was from 1948-1955. Reports from these labour camps indicate that the treatment of prisoners can be harsh and arbitrarily cruel; the diet is poor and totally insufficient for the needs of working men.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

Mr Aleksei Kosygin,  
Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. His address is:

SSSR,  
g. Moskva,  
Kreml Predsedatelyu Sovieta Ministrov SSSR,  
A Kosyginu

OR The Supreme Court of the USSR  
SSSR,  
g. Moskva,  
ul. Vorovskogo 15,  
Verkhovny Sud SSSR

Frederick Vallantyne Opwapo Ogai, Kenya

Mr Ogai was arrested on April 1st, 1968, and has been detained ever since. He is held under the Preservation of Public Security Act 1966, and the Government has neither made any attempt to bring him to trial nor given any reason for his detention. Before his arrest he was bodyguard to the leader of the Opposition, the Kenya People's Union (KPU).

The KPU has long been subjected to both official and unofficial harrassment. The political situation in Kenya deteriorated after the murder of Tom Mboya in September 1968, which was followed by reports of Kikuyu oathings and minor disturbances among the Luo (Mr Mboya's tribe and the tribe among which support for the KPU is strongest). In October 1968, shortly before the General Election, the KPU was banned and most of its leaders were placed in detention. Among those arrested was Mr Oginga.

Mr Ogai was solely responsible for the support of his widowed mother and two brothers and three sisters. His brothers and sisters can no longer attend school, since there is no one to pay their school fees.

In your cards, request that Mr Ogai be either charged and tried, or released. Write to:

EITHER

Mr Daniel Arap Moi,  
Vice President and Minister for Home Affairs,  
Office of the President,  
Box 30510,  
Nairobi,  
Kenya.

OR The Kenyan High Commissioner or Diplo-  
matic Representative in your own country:  
if there is none, write to:

Permanent Mission of the Republic of  
Kenya to the United Nations,  
886 United Nations Plaza,  
Room 486,  
New York, NY 10017, U S A

Benedict Lambrinos, Greece

Be nedict Lambrinos is a 45 year old engineer, married with no children. He was arrested in Athens during August 1967 and taken to a suburban police station where he was charged with distributing pamphlets "insulting to the king and Government". It is reported that he was tortured while at this police station. He was tried by a military tribunal in November 1967, found guilty and sentenced to 12 years. He is at present de tained in Aegina Prison, Aegina Island, Athens.

The charge against Mr Lambrinos was made under the notorious Law 509, one of the few laws passed during the Civil War not yet repealed. Law 509 outlaws the Communist Party and affiliated groups as well as all groups "with the direct or indirect aim of putting into practice ideas aimed at the violent overthrow of the state and Social Regime in their present form". In practise Law 509 is so vaguely worded that it could be interpreted to cover almost anything and has been used to suppress all forms of left wing and other activities displeasing to successive Greek governments, and in particular the present Military government. It is farly certain that there was nothing in Mr Lambrinos' pamphlets advocating violence since, had this been the case, the police would have charged him with advocating the violent overthrow of the government.

His pamphlets were presumably critical of the Military Government and the King, who at that time seemed to be cooperating with that Government.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

Your local Greek Embassy

OR

Colonel George Papadopoulos,  
Prime Minister,  
Palaia Anaktoria,  
Queen Sofia Avenue,  
ATHENS

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Several members have asked us not to acknowledge every reply they send in to the Secretariat. While we appreciate their wish to reduce the work of the staff here, it is in fact very difficult to keep a record of which people (out of a membership approaching 1,000) don't want an acknowledgement. It would help us if you could write NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT NEEDED on each reply sent in should you not want its receipt acknowledged.

Amnesty International,  
London EC4