

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER - APRIL 1967

News about previous prisoners:

Toffazal Hossain, Pakistan (September 1966 Newsletter). Members will be delighted to hear that Toffazel Hossain was released from prison on March 29th. His release is undoubtedly partly, if not entirely, the result of protests from Amnesty.

Eleni Voulgari, Greece (February 1967 Newsletter). Members may be encouraged to hear that, apparently as a direct result of all the letters and cards sent from abroad to the Ministry of Justice about Eleni Voulgari, the Director of Prisons made a special visit to her cell to make sure that it was adequately heated and that she and the baby were being properly cared for. Recently, a member in Sweden received the following letter from Eleni herself: "Dear friend Karin, A few days ago I received the card which you sent me from Sweden with your good wishes. Thank you very much for the concern which the people in Sweden have shown - men and women. I am deeply touched by your expressions about my release from prison. We hope that all will go well and that soon I will be free. 20 days ago I brought into the world a lovely little boy, so the days in prison pass more easily. Once more I thank you all." The latest news is that an Appeal for Grace has now been officially made and that the relevant papers are with the Crown Prosecutor in Larissa, who is said to be viewing the case with compassion.

Sadi Alkilic, Turkey (January 1967 Newsletter). The Supreme Court in Ankara which has been considering Alkilic's case since February this year was due to meet on April 15th to give its final decision on this case. Further appeals either to the Court or to the Minister of Justice Mr. Hasan Dincer, in Ankara might still have some effect.

Professor Tran Huu Khue, Vietnam (July 1966 Newsletter). We have been informed by the Vietnamese Embassy in London that Professor Tran Huu Khue's case is being reconsidered by the South Vietnamese Government with a view to a possible remission of his sentence. Some Members who enquired about his case in July 1966 may also have received a similar letter. The wording makes it quite clear that the review of his sentence is the result of appeals from Amnesty. We are visiting the Charge d'Affaires in London at their invitation this week to discuss the case.

Mohamed Shante, Tanzania (January 1966 Newsletter). We recently heard from Tanzania that Mohamed Shante is in good health and allowed frequent visits from his family and friends. Shante's three wives are, however, not allowed by the Revolutionary Council to leave Zanzibar and Pemba islands, so that they are unable to see him. Conditions on the islands are reported as grave. The economy has suffered badly as a result of political disturbances and the families of those previously in power, many of whom are in prison or exiled, are on the verge of starvation.

Mrs. Caroline Okello-Odongo, Kenya (January 1967 Newsletter). The Kenyan Government recently renewed the Emergency Legislation under which Mrs. Okello-Odongo is detained. This requires the consent of Parliament to its renewal at least every 8 months. We have no further news from Kenya about any of these prisoners, who have still not been allowed to communicate with their families or see a lawyer and whose whereabouts are still undisclosed by the Government.

Captain Edgar Brecci, Colombia (February 1966 Newsletter). In his most recent letter to a member of the "Postcards for Prisoners" Campaign, Captain Brecci wrote that his Court Martial, which took place on December 7th after he had been in detention without trial for five years, was a farce; he writes that the prosecution case was so weak that he hopes soon to be freed from the charges. However, on March 14th another member received a letter from the advocate David Luna Serrano. He wrote that he was no longer representing Brecci and had no information about his case except that the outcome had been very unfavourable to him. Members who have been in touch with Captain Brecci and his wife should continue their efforts to obtain specific information about his future, but there is no point in addressing further communications to the Colombian authorities.

Teresa Asilvera Patino, Paraguay (November, 1966 Newsletter). A member of the Amnesty Group which has adopted this prisoner has received the following information from a confidential source: Teresa Asilvera's conditions of imprisonment have improved. She has been moved to another prison where she has a comfortable room and WC, and has been given a sewing machine. She is a seamstress and is now able to earn a living for herself and her child. Her health has improved as friends brought her drugs to alleviate the haemorrhoids from which she is suffering. There is a strong possibility that she will be released, and both her husband and her father have been promised their liberty. No letters should be sent either to the prisoner or the authorities as it is feared that this might prejudice Teresa's prospects of being released.

David Mitchell, U.S.A. (March, 1967 Newsletter). David Mitchell has now started his sentence. On March 21st the Supreme Court of the U.S. refused by an 8-1 vote to review his conviction.

Mr. Katzenbach has been replaced as Attorney General by Mr. Ramsey Clark. We apologise for our oversight. An American Member has pointed out that the wording of the original case could be misleading. The Appeal Court did not "reverse" his conviction, but ordered a new trial because of a flaw discovered in the conduct of the first one. Here are this month's prisoners:

Don Octavio JORDA Laliga - Spain

This young man from the province of Alcanté is awaiting trial (Sumario No. 71 of 1967) before the Public Order Court in Madrid. He is on bail, though the prosecution is asking for a sentence of two years and a large fine. The trial is likely to be within the next month or six weeks. The charge will be 'illegal propaganda and illegal association'. Sr. Jorda was arrested by the Spanish Guardia Civil at the Spanish-French border at Perpignan. According to Spanish

Newspaper reports he was found to be carrying Communist leaflets and progaganda literature. According to his lawyer, with whom we are in touch and who is reliable, the leaflets and books he carried were literature produced by the P.S.O.E., the Socialist Party of Spain, who since the end of the Civil war have operated from Franch. Both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party are clandestine in Spain. For a long time the Socialists have tried to push the regime into recognising them as a valid opposition force and there has been considerable pressure from other western Socialists in this direction. This is yet one more case on which they will push for further recognition, and the defense will base its case upon the fact that the literature which Sr. Jorda carried is accepted Socialist literature which is permitted in every free western democracy.

Letters urging acquittal at the proposed hearing against Sr. Jorda should be sent to:

The Minister of Justice,
S. Ex. Don Antonio Maria Oriol y Uruijo,
Ministerio de Justicia,
Madrid, Spain.

The Minister of Information and Tourism,
S. Ex. Don Manuel Fraga y Iribarne,
Ministerio de Informacion y Turismo,
Abenida del Generalissimo, 39,
Madrid, Spain.

Satya Sen, Ranesh Dass Gupta and Aghar Sharish Kashmiri - Pakistan

Three Pakistan journalists detained under the Defence of Pakistan Rules, which allow for indefinite detention without trial. Satya Sen and Ramesh Dass Gupta who wrote on the Dacca daily "Sengbad" were arrested in June 1966, and Aghar Sharish Kashmiri, editor of the Lahore weekly "Chatten", was arrested in December 1966.

Mr. Kashmiri is said to have been seriously ill in Lahore Jail and Mr. Satya Sen is seriously ill in Dacca Central Jail. It is alleged that Sen and Dass Gupta have been detained under "C" Class conditions (reserved for criminals). The International Press Institute and East Pakistan Journalists Association have both expressed grave concern over their cases. Letters of enquiry and protest should be sent to:

Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan,
Government Office, Rawalpindi,
West Pakistan.

Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs,
and Mr. Syed Mohammed Zafar,
Islamabad,
West Pakistan.

Gunther Seigewasser - East Germany.

On January 15, 1961, a boarding house in Frankfurt am Main in West Germany reported that one of their lodgers was missing. He had not taken any of his personal possessions with him and since he left East Germany as a refugee only four weeks previously a serious view was taken of his disappearance by the West German authorities. The son of the East German Minister for Church Affairs, Hans Seigewasser, he had been an officer in the People's Police (Volkspolizei) before his flight and in his capacity as head of department at the Institution of Contemporary History was a Party group Secretary of the SED, the Socialist Unity Party.

As many people were kidnapped from West Germany and West Berlin during the 1950s it was feared that Gunther Seigewasser had met the same fate. These fears were strengthened by reports in the West German press at the end of last year which said that he had been sentenced to 7 years imprisonment by an East German court for alleged espionage, incitement endangering the state, embezzlement and disloyalty to the detriment of the Party. These press reports have been confirmed by the findings of the Amnesty Group working on the case. The real reason for Seigewasser's sentence is said to be the fact that he sent an open letter to Ulbricht which appealed for the release of imprisoned opposition Communists. The letter caused a sensation at the time.

Gunther Seigewasser was last reported to be imprisoned in Bautzen II prison, which is in the centre of the town of Bautzen. The address is: BAUTZEN, Zuchtthaus Objekt II. Send your cards to:

Oberste Staatsanwaltschaft der DDR,
Berlin N. 4.
Scharnhorststr. 737,
German Democratic Republic.

(This is the public prosecutor's office.)

Additional cards can be sent to:

Herr Walter Ulbricht
Vorsitzender des Staatsrats der DDR,
Berlin-Niederschonhausen,
Ossietskistrasse,
German Democratic Republic.