

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



MISSIONS

United Nations: In March, the Secretary General visited the United Nations headquarters in New York, where he met Dr Kurt Waldheim. They discussed the wider application and distribution of the Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners, and the possibility of a convention on the treatment of prisoners and elimination of torture. Dr Waldheim also talked about his visit to S. Africa and Namibia. Martin Ennals gave him the draft convention prepared by Amnesty, plus a copy of the recently published report on the treatment of prisoners in N. Ireland. While at the U.N., Martin Ennals also addressed the U.N. Committee on Colonialism and the special U.N. seminar on Apartheid.

ORGANISATION

Annual Report: It was agreed at the Luxembourg Meeting that a summary of the main activities of each Section should be included in the Annual Report. Sections should let the International Secretariat have their reports in not more than 300 words BY MAY 26th.

International Executive Committee: The Committee met in London from 7 - 9 April. Mr Gerd Ruge, an Amnesty founder member, was welcomed as a newly co-opted member from the German Section. He is a well-known, widely-travelled journalist and broadcaster who has spent long periods in both Moscow and Washington. The Committee endorsed the Treasurers' Meeting budget recommendations for the financial year starting May 1. After considerable discussion about the working of specialist groups, the Committee decided to put new proposals before the International Council in September. Meanwhile, no new specialist groups are to be established without the agreement of the International Secretariat. As regards missions, the Committee re-affirmed that no one of the nationality of the country concerned should be sent on an Amnesty research or negotiation mission to his own country. On "investigation cases", the Committee decided there was no objection in principle to sending relief or legal aid funds to prisoners' families, provided the dispensing of such were adequately supervised.

Bangladesh Section: The Section previously recognised in Dacca, E. Pakistan has asked to be considered the Bangladesh National Section. The International Executive Committee agreed to this. The Secretary, Mr Hafizullah's address is:- Orr Dignam and Co., 195 Motijheel, Dacca 2, Bangladesh.

German Rhodesia Specialist Group: An incorrect address for this group was given in the March 9 circular sent to all groups with Rhodesian prisoners. The right address is:- Rhodesian Specialist Group, Amnesty International Berlin, Berlin 19, Eichhampstr. 34, W. Germany.

Note to Groups with S. Vietnamese Prisoners: When writing to Mr Tuong Vi, please use ONLY his private address. Relief should be channelled through the German Vietnam Specialist Group only. Their new address is:- Mr Frank Johannwerner, 53 Bonn-Lengsdorf, Von Kettelerstrasse 2, W. Germany.

Letters to Governments: The Brazilian Minister of the Interior wrote to us on March 8 as follows: "I would...point out to you that in certain instances the correspondence (from Amnesty members) has been very unfortunately worded, in a way that would ordinarily not merit a proper reply...I have appreciated the good will and honourable intentions shown in some of the other letters." Groups are reminded that polite letters to governments on behalf of prisoners are likely to achieve better results than a derogatory tone.

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(Secretary General: Martin Ennals - Director of Research: Zbynek Zeman - Executive Secretary: Martin Enthoven)

Chronicle of Current Events: We apologise for the late publication of issue No. 22. Unforeseen delays over the arrival of the MSS from the USSR make it impossible to ensure absolute regularity of publication.

COUNTRIES

S. Africa: The Very Rev. Gonville French-Beytagh, ex-Dean of Johannesburg, won his appeal against conviction under the 1967 Terrorism Act. He had been charged with incitement to violence and distributing money for relief (allegedly from a banned source) to banned people and families of prisoners. This could mean that, now, S. Africans will be less afraid of accepting money for relief from overseas funds. A week after the Dean's acquittal, Mr Jacobsen, a British photographer, was also acquitted of charges under the Terrorism Act, having been held since October 1971. Both he and the Dean had been adopted by German Amnesty Groups.

Sierra Leone: A special appeal is being made for funds to help George Panda, released from Pademba Road Prison, Freetown last November. Mr Panda, aged sixty, was arrested in April 1968 and charged with treason, along with a number of other prominent Sierra Leoneans. After a long trial, he was sentenced to death in April 1970. He then spent over a year in the condemned cells, until, in May 1971, he won his appeal. Nevertheless, he was still detained until late November. He contracted eye-trouble, which almost made him blind. Immediately after his release, he came to London for an operation which saved his eyesight. This operation and the special lenses he now needs cost him almost £600. His large family has been impoverished by his long imprisonment; hence this appeal for donations, which should be sent to the International Secretariat.

N. Ireland: On April 7, William Whitelaw, new Secretary of State for N. Ireland, announced the release of 47 internees and 26 detainees. Fifteen of the former were Amnesty adoption or investigation cases.

Paraguay: Amnesty-adopted Isabel Ortiz da Casal (detained since February 1965 without charge or trial) has recently been freed, after an Amnesty group had telegraphed President Stroessner on her behalf. Groups should note that May 14 - 15 is Paraguayan Independence Day. They should inform the International Secretariat of any plans for action on that day so that these can be passed on to others.

Indonesia: Recently, several Amnesty groups have received letters from Indonesian prison officers responding to correspondence addressed to inmates. These replies suggest that the prison authorities are now viewing Amnesty enquiries more favourably. The Commandant of Buru Island detention camp is Brig-General Wadly Prawirasupradja. He is also a senior official in the Attorney-General's office. Groups with prisoners on Buru Island may wish to write to him requesting further information about their prisoners. Letters should go to the Buru Camp or the Attorney-General's Office, BAPRERU (Executive Board for Buru Resettlement) in Djakarta, Indonesia.

Greece: Amnesty's Chairman marked the fifth anniversary of the Greek regime by appealing to the Greek Government for an amnesty for all political prisoners. For the moment, please make only OMNIBUS appeals on behalf of ALL political prisoners, rather than for individual releases and suspended sentences.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

CLOGG, RICHARD & YANNOPOULOS, GEORGE (EDS): "Greece under Military Rule." Secker & Warburg, London. 1972. £3.00. FERBER, MICHAEL & LYND, STAUGHTON: "The Resistance." Protest Movements in the U.S.A. Beacon Press, Boston. 1971. \$2.95. KOLASKY, JOHN: "Two Years in Soviet Ukraine." Peter Martin Associates, Toronto. 1970. \$3.95. MAXEY, KEES: "From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe." Fabian Research Series 301. London. 1972. 45p. MEDHURST, KENNETH: "The Basques." MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP REPORT No. 9. London. 1972. 30p. SINYAVSKY, ANDREY: "Unguarded Thoughts." Translated from the Russian by Manya Harari. Collins & Harvill Press, London. 1972. 95p. VAMBE, LAWRENCE: "An Ill-Fated People." Zimbabwe before and after Rhodes, with a foreword by Doris Lessing. Heinemann, London. 1972. £3.50.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

News of Prisoners who have been on the Campaign

YAP Pak Leong - Malaysia, Sabah (August, 1971): was released in February 1971. He has resumed work as a chartered accountant. Members are urged to write to the Prime Minister, Tun Haji Abdul RAZAK, at his office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, expressing appreciation over Mr Yap's release.

Revolt Ivanovich PIMENOV - USSR (November, 1970): Issue No. 23 of the Chronicle of Current Events contains the following statement: "In reply to the offer of help by the Netherlands committee of Amnesty International, which was reported in Chronicle No. 22, R.I. Pimenov has sent a letter of thanks to J. Budde-Hesp, a representative of the committee. All he would like to be sent by the committee is a Dutch dictionary and information on the subject of persecution for one's beliefs in various countries."

This Month's Prisoners:-

The Rev. Frigyes HAGEMANN - HUNGARY

Frigyes Hagemann is a Hungarian Catholic priest. Debarred by the government from practising as a priest, he earned his living by working in a Budapest textile factory, together with other priests and nuns who were similarly restricted. In private, he worked with young people interested in religion, and gave spiritual counselling to those who requested it.

While both Catholic and Protestant Churches in Hungary operate, and religious freedom theoretically exists, the Communist regime is committed to atheism and imposes restrictions on pastoral work, seminaries and other Church affairs. It especially disapproves of proselytising among the young. Most of the religious prisoners of conscience adopted by Amnesty in the past have been gaoled for doing this.

Frigyes Hagemann was arrested in September 1970 and later sentenced with three other Catholic priests to five years' imprisonment and a heavy fine for allegedly organising a conspiracy. The trial was held in secret, but the text of his defence speech to the court became available. It shows conclusively that he was sentenced for his activities with young people. He said: "It has never been our intention to act against the system or to incite the youth against it...we only concerned ourselves with those who wished for a religious community training. Every person comes to development in a community. That is why we formed a community of friends. We wished to actualise the modern image of the Church in the Spirit of the Council."

Please send cards to:- Dr Jenő Fock, Prime Minister of the Hungarian People's Republic, Miniszterelnökség, Budapest, Hungary. Additional cards can go to:- Dr Mihály Korom, Minister of Justice of the Hungarian People's Republic, Igazságügy Miniszterium, Budapest V, Szalay utca 16, Hungary.

Huynh Tan MAM - S. VIETNAM

Huynh Tan Mam, a twenty-six-year-old medical student, was arrested without a warrant on January 5, 1972. He is Chairman of the Saigon Students' Union, and Chairman of the Provisional Representative Board of the Students of S. Vietnam (a group representing student unions from all five major universities). He had just been attending a meeting in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Saigon. As he was leaving the university building on the back of a Honda, four plainclothesmen arrested him. They handcuffed him, hailed a jeep, pushed him in and drove off.

He was arrested this time (having been detained on many previous occasions) probably because of a statement he made on January 2 deploring American policy in Indochina and calling on his fellow students, compatriots and people generally to oppose the prolonging and expansion of the war. According to a reliable source, he neither used nor advocated violence, nor possessed firearms.

A student recently freed from the Saigon Metropolitan Police Station's prison reports that he saw Mam being tortured by the police. He claims he saw him with "blood flowing from his eyes and ears", that a liquid (possibly sodium pentathol) had been injected into his arm, and that for several days he had spent much of the time unconscious.

Some days after Mam's arrest, the Saigon authorities informed pro-government newspapers that Mam had fled to the other side and was being searched for by the police. Friends in Saigon believe this may be a fabrication, used to conceal the fact that he has been arrested and brutally treated. Some believe he may eventually be eliminated.

Please send cards to:- President Nguyen Van THIEU, President of the Republic of Vietnam, Saigon, S. Vietnam; and to:- Lt. Col. Nguyen MAU, Chief of Special Branch, National Police Headquarters, Saigon, S. Vietnam.

Carlos Alberto Libanio CHRISTO P.P. (Brother Betto) - BRAZIL

Twenty-eight-year-old Carlos Christo, once a journalist, joined the Dominicans in 1966. He is a former President of the Joventude Estudantil Catolica - the secondary school branch of the Young Christian Workers. This organisation, together with the Dominicans, has tried to ameliorate the lot of impoverished workers and draw attention to the excesses of the military regime: its violations of human rights and alleged cases of torture. (Since 1968, the tension between the progressive clergy and the powers that be has developed into more positive repression).

Carlos Christos was arrested on November 9, 1969 in Porto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul state, and tried on 13 - 14 September, 1971. He was one of a group of eighteen, which included five Dominicans, two secular priests and a Jesuit seminary student. During the trial, the public prosecutor was obliged to retract certain accusations and admit that the Dominicans had never joined in any terrorist activity. Carlos Christos was charged with having helped people whom the military were trying to capture -- but our source of information denies that he was, and says the charge was simply used as a pretext for further intimidation of the Church by the military regime. Whether or not the charge is true, it does not mean Carlos Christo used or advocated violence, but merely that he carried out the Christian practice of offering asylum. He was therefore adopted by Amnesty.

After seven hours in camera, the court decided that fourteen of the accused should be freed because of lack of sufficient evidence against them. One got a six month sentence. Three Dominicans, including Carlos Christo, were sentenced to four years. They were the only ones remanded in custody from the moment of arrest; the others had merely been kept under surveillance pending trial. By the time they were brought to trial, therefore, these three had already spent nearly two years in gaol.

Prison conditions are very bad. The State Governor admits this and deplors the fact. The three Dominicans are in a 6 by 2.5 metre, unlit, unventillated cell. In summer, the temperature exceeds 40 degrees centigrade. The primitive toilet facilities are in the cell.

Please send cards to:- General Garrastazu Medici, Brasilia, Brazil; and to:- Dr Alfredo Buzaid, Ministerio da Justica, Espl. dos Ministerios, bloco 10, Brasilia, Brazil.