

# monthly newsletter from amnesty international

## postcards for prisoners campaign

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News about previous prisoners:

June, 1967.

Ilias Iliou, Greece. (May 1967 Newsletter). Largely, it appears, as a result of the widespread publicity given to this case Ilias Iliou is now back in Athens. He is thought to be in a military hospital there but may be now have returned to his own home. Since he was badly beaten up when arrested and subsequently became very ill this is extremely reassuring news.

Mohamed Harbi, Algeria. (October 1965 Newsletter). This prisoner is now being kept in barracks at Annaba, which means an improvement in his position. The use of torture has apparently stopped, but reports say that he is in very poor health and it does not seem likely that he will be released in the near future.

Dr. Ruzena Vackova, Czechoslovakia. (December 1966 Newsletter) Dr. Vackova was at last released from prison at the end of last month. Sentenced to 22 years imprisonment for her Catholic activities among students in 1952 she spent over 16 years in prison serving a savage Stalinist sentence. Although due for an amnesty last year she was denied this because she had tried to smuggle a letter to the United Nations out of prison. Now aged over 65 she is reported to be staying with relatives in Prague.

R.B. Sobukwe, South Africa. (June 1965 Newsletter). The South African government, which has again prolonged his indefinite term of detention, has however made a concession. His wife and children will now be allowed to stay with him for 28 days each year.

Bon Octavio Jorda Laligia, Spain. (April 1967 Newsletter). Sr. Jorda was tried and unfortunately sentenced to 2 years imprisonment. Members who received replies from the Spanish authorities are encouraged to write again appealing against his sentence.

Mrs. Caroline Okello-Odongo, Kenya (January 1967 Newsletter). Two of the opposition members arrested at the same time as Mrs. Okello-Odongo have been released. President Kenyatta stated that he had been convinced that they "were not communists". Members are asked to renew their appeals to the Kenyan authorities asking that she should also be released.

Sao Hkun Hkio, Burma (May 1966 Newsletter). It is now five years and three months since Sao Hkun Hkio, former Foreign Minister of Burma, was arrested. He has been held in solitary confinement since 1962, has lost weight and is suffering from dysentery. This news came from his wife, Mabel Hkio, who was expelled from Burma in April of this year and is now living in Cambridge with her two sons. She was only allowed to see her husband four times since his arrest, the last time being to break the news of her expulsion on April 14th. Members are asked to send additional cards to:

General Ne Win, Rangoon, Burma.

in which they should plead for his early release so that he can leave Burma and spend the rest of his life with his family in England.

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Karam Singh - Malaysia

Mr. Singh, a 33 year old lawyer, was detained under the Internal Security Act of 1960 on 20th April 1967, at Kajang Police Station, near Malacca. The law allows for preventive detention without trial.

He had gone to the police station as the legal advisor of the United Malayan Estate Workers Union to arrange bail for 70 striking workers.

He was issued with a detention order for two years after an interrogation period of about 1 month. Under the general heading of "acting consistently in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia" he was held on eleven charges, some of which were: that he was legal advisor to several banned organisations which were alleged to be communist fronts, that he called for the removal of foreign troops from Malaya, that he made statements which were consistent with the illegal Malayan Communist Party manifesto of 1st September 1957, that he opposed the formation of Malaysia and in effect supported the Indonesian policy of confrontation, that he was in possession of two communist books which were deemed prejudicial in March 1967, and that as legal advisor to the United Malayan Estate Workers Union, he exploited a labour dispute for the communist cause.

Letters of appeal may be sent to:

Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Dato' Hussein SNN  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs,  
Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.

or to the Malaysian Ambassador or High Commissioner in your country.

Sister Agnes Timar - Hungary

Sister Agnes Timar, a Roman Catholic nun, was arrested last Christmas and brought to trial early in the New Year. She and five other religious sisters were accused of organising meetings at home, of holding religious services and of leading a life similar to that of a religious order. The other five sisters, although sentenced, were eventually allowed to go free but Sister Timar was sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment with an additional suspended sentence of two years.

Religious orders were dissolved in Hungary in 1950 and their members were mostly forced to seek secular employment. Nuns were probably worse off than priests in this respect and apart from the very few who are allowed to teach in the two church schools for girls which, by a special church-state agreement are still allowed to function, they have had to abandon their religious duties and dress and live as ordinary citizens, It is known that Agnes Timar worked in a secular institute but it appears that she continued her religious life in private. The Hungarian authorities claim that there is freedom of religion in Hungary and although churches are open and the clergy are able to fulfill their religious duties to a limited extent, at least twenty five priests are known to be serving long prison sentences on unsubstantiated charge of conspiracy.

The denial of Sister Timar's right to manifest her religious belief both alone and in association with others is further evidence that freedom of religion in Hungary is in serious doubt.

Send your cards to:

The President of Hungary Mr. Jenő FOCK  
Miniszterelnökseg. Budapest. Hungary.

or  
The Minister of Justice Mr. Mihály KORM,  
Igazságügy Miniszterium,  
Budapest V, Szalay utca 16. Hungary.

Sister Timar is imprisoned in Kőbánya prison in Budapest. You could send cards to her either via the Minister of Justice or to the following address:

Gefängnis bei Kőbánya, Budapest. Hungary.

Unfortunately there is little prospect of your cards reaching Sister Timar. You may therefore prefer to address them to the prison governor.

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Geoffrey Boon - St. Kitts (West Indies)

In February 1967 St. Kitts with the two islands, Nevis and Anguilla achieved Associated Status with Britain i.e. it is autonomous except for defence and foreign affairs. The Labour party is in power, led by the Chief Minister, Mr. R. Bradshaw.

On June 10th 1967 15 members of the opposition, People's Action Movement, were arrested, among them Mr. Geoffrey R. Boon, 43 year old lawyer who is the son of Sir Geoffrey R. Boon, Q.C., "elder statesman" of the islands. Mr. Boon was not previously known as an opposition supporter and appears to have been recruited only in the last couple of months. His arrest seems to have been the result of an article he published in the opposition weekly "Democrat". "Democrat" while vocal politically has never at any time supported violence and the article could not reasonably be construed as inflammatory. The government has attempted to portray the opposition party as a white sugar oligarchy and it is believed that Mr. Boon's arrest is an attempt on their part to identify the opposition party and the disturbances on the islands with the ruling white plantation group (only 2% of the population).

The arrest of the opposition leaders was the last step in a series of events apparently set in motion by independence, but really the result of endemic poverty and under-employment on the islands. Like most of the West Indies the group relies on one crop, sugar. Economically non-viable the islands are dependant for survival on subsidies from the British government. The Labour party, which has been in power since independence, has not been in a position to deal with the severe economic problems which face the group and its Chief Minister, Mr. Bradshaw, formerly Finance Minister of the ill-fated West Indies Federation, has become increasingly personally unpopular.

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At the present moment the government is at odds with the opposition, which draws its support from the small group of white sugar planters descendants of the old Creole families, and from the two smaller islands, Nevis and Anguilla which resent the alleged "domination" of St. Kitts. A government prosecution against opposition party leaders who have criticised and repeatedly flouted the recent government ordinance requiring police permission for any public meeting is now pending. Concurrently trouble started independently on Anguilla, the smallest and most impoverished island. Since the end of May Anguilla, led by their only M.P., an opposition member, has been in a state of open revolt. The entire police force (20 men) has been expelled, the Administrator's house burned down and the Anguillians have asked for direct British rule until elections can be held before it becomes an independent state, eligible for membership of United Nations.

Disturbances on Anguilla were accompanied by a series of violent incidents in the capital Basse-Terre, including a fire in the broadcasting station which each of the two parties accused the other of starting. On May 31st the Chief Minister declared a State of Emergency and appealed for British troops in order to repress the revolt of Anguilla. (Discontent on Anguilla has been stronger than on Nevis partly because of the failure of the government to set up the local council which Anguilla complained was promised on independence.)

You should send your cards to:

Mr. Robert Bradshaw,  
Chief Minister,  
Basse-Terre,  
St. Kitts,  
West Indies.

and to:

Mrs. Judith Hart, M.P.  
Joint Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs,  
Commonwealth Relations Office,  
Downing Street,  
London S.W.1.

N.B.

Replies to Members who have sent in letters received from authorities.

We regret that due to the absence of holiday of people in Head Office there has been a slight delay in answering. We hope to answer all of them within the next few days.