

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY/INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT.FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Since the coup d'etat of 15th January 1966 the situation in Nigeria has been too fluid for Amnesty to trace political arrests effectively. The Gowon regime, in power since July 29th, has released a large number of political leaders imprisoned under the first Republic; most notably the Yoruba Action Group leaders Chiefs Awolowo and Enahoro, and the Tiv leader, J.S. Tarka. Widespread disruption, especially after the massacre of the Ibos (Easterners) in the North during the summer, has made the authorities sensitive to criticism. Several arrests have occurred in the Mid-West of Ibos advocating the inclusion of certain Mid-Western towns in the Eastern Region, more information about them is expected soon. Amnesty has made one adoption in Nigeria since the establishment of the Federal Military Government. A trade unionist, Michael Onwalu, was arrested in Benin for publishing a critical article likely to cause public unrest. He was reported badly beaten-up. As yet he has not been brought to trial, but we are in touch with trade union officials in Nigeria who we hope will keep us informed. It is significant that Onwalu is a member of a press union, and it seems that his article was critical of press restrictions. The ICFTU has pointed out that trade unionism in Nigeria is still functioning as freely as it did under the old regime.

As yet there is no agreement on a new constitution in Nigeria, but it now seems that Lt.Col. Gowon has consolidated support amongst the majority of the army, and has the support of the police, navy and airforce. A major difficulty is the dispute between Gowon and Lt. Col. Ojukwa, military governor of the Eastern Region, over a solution to the present political stalemate.

(Ian Piper)

PORTUGAL

I would like to warn all Groups who have taken part in the letter demonstration against the detention of prisoners in Portugal, that they might be getting unsigned rude letters back in reply. So far the only replies which came in in this way came as a reply to letters sent to the Minister of the Army. I hope Groups will not be alarmed by this and that they will react appropriately, that is to say with the usual Amnesty politeness.

(Maureen Teitelbaum)

TURKEY

We have recently heard that Sadi Alkilic - a 60 year old retired civil servant arrested in 1962 for having written an article advocating socialism is still in prison in Turkey to-day. Alkilic's article was entered for an essay competition set by the newspaper CUMHURIYET on the subject: Socialism or Liberalism for Turkey? It is, in fact, an extremely moderate argument for socialism containing little orthodox marxism and making almost no reference to violence or revolution. Although it was alleged at the trial that Alkilic had asked the editor to cut any offensive sections, the article appeared unabridged and both the editor of Cumhuriyet, Keyhan Saglamer and Alkilic were immediately arrested.

Saglamer was released one week later but Alkilic, after a number of trials and re-trials was eventually sentenced under Article 142 of the Penal Code to 6 years and 3 months imprisonment to be followed by two years forced exile. Article 142 makes it illegal to: "seek to establish the domination of one social class over other social classes" and has been used since 1960 to suppress left-wing activities in Turkey. Alkilic's sentence and present imprisonment seem particularly severe when compared with the present moderation of the government and the acquittal of three writers arrested and tried earlier this year for publishing extracts from the press from the translated works of the 18th century French revolutionary, Babeuf.

(Elizabeth Gordon)

RHODESIA

AN URGENT REMINDER TO ALL GROUPS WITH RHODESIAN PRISONERS

Will all groups with Rhodesian prisoners please remember never to use Amnesty-headed paper when writing to prisoners or to the Christian Council Relief Offices in Salisbury and Bulawayo. Mail is censored both in and out, since the recent crisis censorship is likely to be tightened yet more, and we recommend you not to refer to the political situation in any way. For the same reason, do not expect the restrictionee to tell you the reasons for his arrest nor about the conditions in the restriction camps.

We also remind Groups not to send money direct to the prisoner or his family, but to send cheques through us, making them payable to "Amnesty International"

An up-to-date background paper on Rhodesia is being prepared and will be sent out to Groups soon after Christmas.

(Sarah Richardson)

Sarah Richardson has taken over responsibility for Rhodesia from Mrs. Marlys Deeds and in future all correspondence regarding Rhodesia and Rhodesian prisoners should be sent direct to her.

GUYANA

The present State of Emergency ceases at the end of December 1966, and the restrictions to which many of the political ex-detainees were subjected have been progressively lifted so that few of them now suffer any serious inconvenience as a result. However, the government is still clearly determined to use strong-arm measures to contain Cheddi Jagan's Opposition Party. New legislation has recently been passed in Guyana which gives the government wide powers to detain and restrict without trial. This security legislation will become a permanent feature of the ordinary law of the land. Amnesty will watch developments anxiously.

(Stella Joyce)

SPAIN

The "Neue Züricher Zeitung" of 3rd, 5th, 9th and 13th November 1966, carried long, extensive and very interesting articles on the present climate in Spain. German-speaking Groups with Spanish prisoners might well be interested to get hold of these.

(Mrs. Eva Blumenau)

CHRISTMAS CARDS

We have already begun to hear from some of the prisoners whom Christmas Cards were sent to. They clearly appreciate the gesture of support and interest very much.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRISONERS, TRIALS, ETC.

We are trying to build up a comprehensive "Photographic Library" at the International Secretariat which can be used both as reference and material for television programmes, and newspaper articles ect. Photographs published in newspapers frequently present copy right difficulties and any case need to be paid for. Would any Group who have photographs of prisoners, their families, arrests, trials etc., please send them to the Investigation Department, and if they are in correspondence with the prisoners families to ask for more.

TRANSLATORS

We should like to hear of any members willing to do occasional translation, from any particular language. Offers, with details of which language, should be sent to the Secretary of the Investigation Department.