

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

SEPTEMBER, 1969

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

Essone N'Dong, Gabon (April 1968). The ICFTU telephoned from Brussels to let us know that N'Dong had been released on August 28, 1969. They had the news direct from Libreville. He had served only 8 months of the 4 year sentence passed on him last November.

Father Jean Talpe, Brazil (August 1969 is free and living in Belgium. He was released but declared a prohibited immigrant in Brazil and exiled to Belgium. One of our members has received a letter from Father Jean who is greatly concerned about those who remain in prison in Brazil. His account of the severe ill-treatment received by fellow prisoners has been publicised in a number of newspapers.

Noureddine Ben Khader, Tunisia (July 1969). Several members have sent in letters they have received in reply to appeals made on behalf of this prisoner.

Crimean Tatar Representatives, USSR (April 1969). The sentences in the trial of the ten people were announced in the Times of 14.8.69. Rollan Kadyev, Izzet Khairov, Reshat Baimarov and Ridvan Gafarov were sentenced to three years imprisonment each for "spreading deliberate fabrications defaming the Soviet political system". The others were sentenced to one year's labour camp each, but were released in recognition of the year they had spent in pre-trial custody.

Barbara Torunczyk, Poland (July 1968)

Janusz Szpotanski, Poland (May 1969)

Both are reported to have been released under an amnesty proclaimed in July on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Polish People's Republic. It is believed to have included all political prisoners with the exception of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski (Card Scheme - March 1967), who are serving a second sentence of three and a half years imprisonment each. They are considered to be "recidivists", having been rearrested in March 1968 for alleged complicity in the student disturbances at that time.

Demetrio Vallejo Martinez, Mexico (December 1966). Several members have sent in letters they have received in reply to appeals made on behalf of this prisoner.

Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz, Iraq (August 1969). The secret trial of the former Prime Minister began at the end of August 1969. He is being charged, together with the former Chief of Staff Ibrahim Feisal al-Ansari and about 20 others, for conspiring to overthrow the Government. It is alleged that the trial is being held

in secret since Bazzaz was so severely ill treated in prison that he has lost an eye and the Government is reluctant to let him be seen in public. The total number of alleged "spies" executed in Iraq in the last 6 months is now 54.

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THIS MONTH'S PRISONERS

JANKO IPAC - Yugoslavia

Janko Ipac is a conscientious objector serving a 9 year sentence on Goli Otok Island. He was sentenced in 1966. Ipac belongs to the religious sect known as the Nazarenes (allied to the Apostolic Church in the States), who refuse to bear arms while on military service. The latter they are prepared to undergo, and are willing to serve even in battle areas as, e.g. stretcher-bearers, but are not willing to bear arms. Such a distinction the Yugoslav Government does not recognise and the Nazarenes (and other conscientious objectors, including the Seventh Day Adventists) are therefore conscripted into the Army and, on refusal to bear arms, are tried by military court-martial. The Yugoslav authorities justify their action on the grounds that the Yugoslav Constitution states that membership of any religious minority cannot and must not affect realisation of the rights and obligations of a citizen.

Before 1960 the Yugoslav Government immediately conscripted conscientious objectors on release from prison so that they were then sentenced again when they refused, again, to bear arms. This policy ceased but there are signs that, with the passing of the new legislation concerning the all-national defence policy adopted by the Government last year, it may be re-introduced - at least one such case has been reported to Amnesty recently. During the last few years conscientious objectors normally only served 5 years although sentenced to 9. If this is still the case, then Ipac should be released some time next year. But in view of the recent defence legislation and also the reaction in Yugoslavia to the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia, it is by no means certain that reductions will continue to be made. Thus, we feel it may help in this case to remind the Yugoslav authorities of the concern felt by many over the treatment accorded to conscientious objectors in Yugoslavia.

Cards should perhaps emphasise the fact that Ipac, like the other conscientious objectors in Yugoslavia, is willing to be employed in a useful capacity while on military service.

Cards should be sent to:

EITHER

OR

The Federal Secretary of Home Affairs,
Mr Radovan Stijacic,
Kneza Milosa 100,
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

Your local or nearest
Yugoslav Ambassador

LEE Tze Tong - Singapore

Mr Lee, now aged about 33, was born in China but has lived in Singapore since he was a child, and had become a citizen of Singapore before his arrest. He was formerly Secretary of the Singapore Bus Workers Union, and as a member of the left wing opposition Barisan Sosialis Party, was elected to Parliament in September 1963. However, he was arrested on October 8, 1963, before he could take his place in the Assembly.

The Barisan is a left wing splinter group of the ruling Peoples' Action Party of Singapore, which strongly opposed the union of Singapore with the proposed Federation of Malaysia, and also supported the Indonesians during Confrontation. Prior to the elections of 1963 the more vigorous opponents were detained in "Operation Cold Store" (in which over 100 Left Wing supporters were detained without trial). The Peoples' Action Party won the election with a large majority. Afterwards, Mr Lee was arrested with two other Assemblymen.

In 1967 Mr Lee was one of the six political detainees (among whom were "Cold Store" prisoners), who took Habeus Corpus proceedings against the Minister of the Interior and Defence. The applications of five of the prisoners were granted on the grounds that a technical error had been made in the orders of detention and the Chief Justice ordered their release. This was carried out, but they were immediately rearrested. Not long after this, Mr Lee was deprived of his citizenship. On February 21, 1968, he was served with a Banishment Order. Mr Lee was unwilling to be deported, and the situation was further complicated by the fact that China will not accept any deportee against his wishes.

Mr Lee is now detained in quarters especially reserved for the Banished. Here the conditions are extremely arduous; he is not allowed to write or receive any letters, and is virtually isolated from the outside world since he is allowed no visitors and has no access to books or radio.

Letters and cards addressed to Mr Lee will probably not reach him, but they will most definitely remind the Singapore Government that his case has not been overlooked or forgotten by the outside world. Cards protesting against Mr Lee's conditions of detention, and appealing for his release should be addressed to:

EITHER

OR

Prime Minister The Rt. Hon. Lee Kuan Yew,
City Hall,
Singapore 6

The Rt. Hon. Lim Kim San, MP,
Pearl's Hill,
Singapore 2

EUGENIA KATSOURIDOU - Greece

Eugenia Katsouridou was an employee of the Greek Telephone Service (OTE) for 14 years and President of the Greek Telephone Workers Union. She was also a member

of the IPTT, the International Postal and Telegraph workers union. She has now been detained for nearly two and a half years. Mrs Katsouridou was arrested at work on May 16, 1967, and taken to the offices of Inspector Lambrou where she was threatened with court martial for her trades union activities (in which she had been involved since 1964).

Her protestation that this threat was illegal resulted in her being placed in solitary confinement. That same day her flat was broken into by the police who removed her books and personal papers. Her first period of solitary confinement in a cell 2 x 2 metres lasted 45 days, broken only when she was taken before police officer Papaspyrou who demanded that she sign the Declaration of Loyalty to the regime, which would mean a complete denial of her trades unionist beliefs. If she did not sign she was told she would lose her job, be deported to the desert island of Yaros, cut off from her family and ruined. She refused. The Declaration of Loyalty is a document which has to be signed by anyone wishing to be employed in the civil service or teaching profession at any level, and is otherwise used as a test of political allegiance. When the police realised that she was not going to sign they kept her without food for two days and on the failure of that method threatened her with torture and death. After again refusing to sign she was returned to solitary confinement and then transported to Yaros Island and a year later to Alikarnassos prison in Crete, where conditions are appalling. She is at present still in Alikarnassos and there is little hope of her release unless she signs the Declaration of Loyalty, which, of course, she will not do.

Mrs Katsouridou has two children Pantelis, 9, and Panaghiota, 6, whom she has not seen since she has been detained.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

OR

Mr Kyriakopoulos,
Minister of Justice,
Sokratous & Piraeus Streets,
Athens

Mr P Tzrvelekos,
Minister of Public Order,
3 Septemvriou,
Athens

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 E C 4