

Parliamentarians in prison

1977
Prisoners of
Conscience Year

amnesty
international



Among the political prisoners of many countries are men and women who were at one time constitutionally elected members of either national or provincial legislative assemblies. In August 1976 an Amnesty International document listed 132 parliamentarians imprisoned in 14 countries throughout the world. If the list had been broadened to include political leaders of parties with no parliamentary representation, the number would have been far higher. Even so it remains a stark illustration of the high price individuals may have to pay for their political beliefs.

— Many of those detained are held under emergency legislation or states of siege, without charge or trials. Some have been tortured and some have 'disappeared' after their arrest. Of the estimated 40,000 men and women detained without trial in India since the declaration of a State of Emergency in June 1975, the names of some 80 parliamentarians are known to Amnesty

International. They were all members of the national or state parliaments. In Indonesia some 20 prisoners held without charge or trial since 1965 were members of parliament at the time of their arrest.

Under legislation entitled "The Terrorism Act" and "Suppression of Communism Act," the South African government has been able to detain almost all members of opposition groups. In 1975-76 a series of major political trials and new legislative enactments enabled the government to re-inforce the machinery of repression against freedom of political expression in that country. A wave of arrests followed.

Many former members of parliament have been imprisoned in Uruguay, since the dissolution of Congress in June 1973. There have been severe restrictions on any form of organised opposition to the regime. Politicians have been victims of the notorious "Death Squads." In May 1976 four



John Marie Seroney - Kenya
John Marie Seroney was Deputy Speaker of the Kenya Parliament when he was arrested on 15 October 1975. He was detained without charge, trial or right of appeal under the Kenya Public Security Regulations.

He was detained because he had supported Martin Shikuku in Parliament the previous week when he had referred to "some people trying to kill parliament-

ary democracy in the manner KANU has been killed". (KANU, the only legal party, is the Kenya African National Union). Mr Seroney refused to rule his remark out of order on the grounds that "he was merely stating the obvious". A week later, both men were arrested together in the Parliament building.

Mr Seroney, a lawyer, has been a critic of the government for a long time, both in Parliament and in the party. Both he and Mr Shikuku belonged to the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the March 1975 murder of Mr J. M. Kariuki, who had been the center of Parliamentary opposition. The Commission's report stated that top government and security officials were implicated in the murders, but as yet no legal action has been taken.

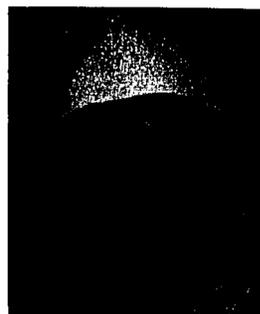
Following Mr Seroney's detention, President Kenyatta is said

to have warned that persistent critics of the government would be detained. Three other Members of Parliament have been charged with criminal offences and sent to prison: Mark Mwithaga, Vice-chairperson of the Kariuki Commission, Chelagat Mutai, an outspoken young MP and Peter Kibisu—now free. Having been in prison, these three are not eligible for re-election. Michael Koigi Wamwere, a journalist, has also been detained.

Mr Seroney and Mr Shikuku have been adopted as Amnesty International Prisoners of Conscience. The former has also been featured as an Amnesty International "Prisoner of the Month".



"Amnesty International, or, The Jailers' Peace Disturbed"
DER TAGESSPIEGEL



Morarji Desai - India
Morarji Desai, leader of the Congress (Opposition) Party and formerly Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, was arrested on 26 June 1975 in New Delhi. Most opposition leaders of right and leftwing parties were arrested after a national state of emergency was declared on 26 June. The declaration was a response to the anti-corruption campaign led by the politician Jaya Prakash Narayan, a follower

of Mahatma Gandhi, in which many political parties, including the Congress (O) had taken an active part.

Mr Desai is a well-known and respected opposition leader; during the independence campaign against the British he joined the civil disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, and as a result was imprisoned for five years. He joined the Congress Party on independence but left the party at the time of the split in 1969, when he became the leader of the Congress (Opposition) Party, a rightwing faction of the Congress Party. Prior to his arrest in 1975, the aged politician Mr Desai is now 80 years old—started a hunger strike to demand that elections be held in his home state of Gujarat (elections were overdue because the state had been under direct rule from Delhi since early 1974) and that a limited state of emergency then in force be withdrawn. Following Mr Desai's

fast, elections were held in Gujarat.

Following the declaration of a state of emergency, the government immediately took severe emergency measures: strict censorship has been imposed, and a series of constitutional and legal amendments has suspended many fundamental rights of Indian citizens, including the right of habeas corpus.

Mr Desai was arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and is held in preventive detention, without charge or trial. Although he is reported to have been granted facilities such as newspapers and a radio; his right to receive visits is alleged to be restricted and he is reportedly kept in total isolation from other political prisoners. Mr Desai was adopted as a Prisoner of Conscience in September 1975.

Uruguayans, including two prominent parliamentarians, were abducted in Buenos Aires and found assassinated two days later. Death Squads were also a feature of Isabel Peron's government in Argentina. An August 1975 Amnesty International survey of 461 murders between July 1974 and June 1975 confirmed some degree of political motive in all cases.

Restrictive measures resulting in the intensification of pressures against those active in public life have been invoked in countries as geographically diverse as Pakistan, where the National Awami Party, the main parliamentary opposition party, was banned in 1975 (its leaders having been arrested and detained without trial since 1973); the Phillipines, under martial law since September 1972; and Chile, where all the parliamentarians known to have supported the Popular Unity government were detained after the military coup of September 1973, when the Chilean Congress and senate were closed.

Jose Luis Massera, Uruguay

A 61-year old engineer, holder of one of the very few academic gold medals awarded by the Uruguayan Faculty of Engineering, J.L. Massera has gained worldwide reputation as a mathematician. He has written several specialized studies on mathematics which have been published in a number of countries, including the US and the USSR. For many years he taught in the Faculty of Engineering in Montevideo, where he held a professorship - he was also appointed Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Humanity and Sciences.

Massera is at the same time a well known political figure in Uruguay. As a leading member of the Uruguayan Communist Party he represented them in the House of Representatives during several legislative sessions - until Parliament was abolished by a Government decree on 27 July 1973. The Communist Party was later outlawed in December 1973.

As political prisoners, parliamentarians and other political leaders are subjected to the same indignities and brutalities which befall other persons arrested for their political views. However, they tend not to be the "forgotten prisoners" who make up the bulk of the political prisoner population of the world. Their very prominence may serve as a protection. The fact that they are known and respected outside their own countries gives an opportunity for international pressure to be brought for their release.

However, the fate of leaders and political supporters of the Dubcek government in Czechoslovakia, and the death sentences imposed on seven former leaders of the Lon Nol government in Cambodia serve as a constant reminder that in a world of power-bloc politics, the occupant of the president's palace may next day be a political prisoner.

Since his detention on 21 October 1975, J.L. Massera has been kept in solitary confinement in army units. Neither his family nor his lawyer have been allowed to visit him, and he has not been charged or tried. His arrest was not officially acknowledged until December 1975. In October 1976 he was unofficially reported to be at the Army Artillery Regiment No. 5, in Montevideo, but he was still being kept incommunicado. He was subjected to severe and prolonged torture; the fact that he was brought to the Central Hospital of the Armed Forces with a serious fracture of the pelvis and underwent a major operation there in December 1975, is most probably attributable to such treatment. No sooner had he been discharged from hospital than he was again taken by the armed forces to an unknown destination where visits were not allowed.

Political persecution has also affected Massera's family.

Massera's present wife, Marta Valentini, a solicitor, was detained while she was petitioning the military authorities for information on her husband's condition and state of health. She has been kept in prison ever since, without being brought to courts. His daughter Ema Julia Massera Garayalde, a teacher, and her husband Jose Miguel Aroztegui, an architect, were both arrested and tortured, and later set free. Mr. Massera became an AI adopted prisoner of conscience in December 1975.

What you or your party can do to support Prisoner of Conscience Year

- 1 Join Amnesty International and encourage colleagues to do the same.
- 2 Subscribe to Amnesty International publications to be kept informed of Human Rights violations around the world.
- 3 Join the Amnesty International Urgent Action network and send telegrams in cases of extreme urgency.
- 4 Join the Prisoner of the Month scheme and send cards to selected cases of prisoners in need of help, such as those included in this brochure.
- 5 Allow yourself to be contacted from time to time to intervene in particular cases of imprisoned colleagues.
- 6 Sign the Petition on the reverse side which Amnesty International is presenting to the United Nations and the world's governments.

- I/We want to join Amnesty International and enclose £ membership fee.

- Send the following number of copies of the Petition
- 100 500 1000

- Put me/us on the mailing list for the Amnesty International Newsletter during POC Year.
-

- Send details of Amnesty International publications.
-

- Send the following number of copies of this brochure for distribution

100 500 1000

(nominal charge on application).

- Send sample copies of lists and brochures of prisoners as they become available.
-

- I/We enclose £ as a donation. I understand funds are urgently needed.

Name, address and organisation (if any)

Petition

for the Release of Prisoners of Conscience

During 1977 Prisoners of Conscience Year, Amnesty International supporters will be circulating the petition below. We welcome your help in obtaining signatures from colleagues and friends:

"We, the undersigned,

OUTRAGED that in many parts of the world, men and women who have neither used nor advocated violence suffer imprisonment solely because of their political or religious beliefs, their race, colour, or language;

this, despite the many humane and noble declarations of the assembled nations of the world, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights three decades ago,

URGE the General Assembly of the United Nations

to take swift and concrete steps to ensure strict observance in all countries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

and urge each and every government in the world

to act for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience."

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS, with your signature, and return with coupon on back to:

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____

Amnesty International, Promotion Department, PO Box 1341, Luxembourg.

Name _____

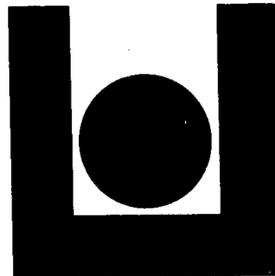
Address _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____



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The Year 1977 has been declared Prisoners of Conscience Year. In a coordinated campaign, the groups and members of Amnesty International will seek to intensify public awareness and concern about violations of human rights wherever they occur and to bring greater support to prisoners of conscience throughout the world. Special contributions are being made by outstanding figures in the world of art, film, music, literature and design. Signatures will be collected in all countries for a petition urging: 1) the General Assembly of the United Nations "to take swift and concrete steps to ensure strict observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," and 2) urging all governments "to act for the immediate

release of all prisoners of conscience."

Funds raised during this special year will be administered under the authority of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International and will be devoted to the strengthening of the national programs and structures of the Amnesty International movement and for capital expenditure within the International Secretariat. The headquarters for the coordination of these activities has been established in Luxembourg:

Promotion Department
PO Box 1341
Luxembourg

During Prisoner of Conscience Year Amnesty International will be producing lists of prisoners who are adoption or investigation cases in the following categories. These lists do not include all prisoners of conscience in the relevant category.

- Trade Unionists
- Journalists/Writers
- Parliamentarians/Politicians
- Medical Personnel
- Students/Teachers/Academics

And brochures on the following topics:

- Journalists/Writers
- Parliamentarians
- Medical Profession
- Lawyers
- Business World
- Peasants
- Churches
- Trade Unionists
- Women
- Teachers and Schools
- Youth Movements

amnesty international

... is a worldwide human rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology or religious creed. It works for the release of men and women imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. These are termed "prisoners of conscience".

... opposes torture and capital punishment in all cases and without reservation. It advocates fair and speedy trials for all political prisoners.

... seeks observance throughout the world of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

... has consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC), UNESCO and the Council of Europe, has cooperative relations with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States and has observer status with the Organization of African Unity (Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees).

... is financed by its members throughout the world, by individual subscription and by donations.