

CARD SCHEME NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1966

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

12 Crane Court, Fleet Street, LONDON EC4.

ENGLAND.

On Boxing Day we heard the news that Kamrani and Mansouri, the two Iranian students sentenced to death for complicity in an attempt on the Shah's life (see the case of Parviz Nikkah in the December newsletter) had had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment. In connection with this case we must apologise for an error in the third paragraph. We said that Shamsabadi was sentenced to life imprisonment at the first trial before a military court in October, when in fact this should have referred to Parviz Nikkah. Shamsabadi was shot while making his attempt on the Shah's life.

Andrei Siniavsky (December newsletter) is expected to be tried very shortly. The maximum sentence he can get for the charges levelled against him is seven years in prison. In connection with this case three young people - one a writer, the other a poet and the third a sixteen year old schoolgirl - have been confined to a psychiatric clinic for having campaigned for a fair trial for Siniavsky. They have all since been adopted by Amnesty Groups.

Mrs. Thetis Kotsaki, wife of the Greek political prisoner Spyros Kotsakis, has written to thank Amnesty and particularly all members of the Card Scheme who have sent her letters and cards of encouragement, she writes "I have received so many nice letters of comfort and I am very moved". In fact, Mrs. Kotsaki may have written to some members. Nevertheless the news coming from Greece at the moment is not all that encouraging. In fact, the King has refused three of the ten recommendations put before him for reduction of sentence of some of the Greek political prisoners; this is so recent that it is difficult to calculate what are the full implications of the step. Card Scheme members will be interested to know that the present Minister of Justice, Mr. Stephanopoulos, was one of the leading defence lawyers for prisoners charged under Law 375, that he has actually written a book on behalf of the prisoners and that he granted an interview to an Amnesty investigator in Summer 1965.

The number of Card Scheme members continues to grow at an encouraging rate and there are now over 300 kit holders. A number of articles have appeared in newspapers both in Britain and abroad on the work of Amnesty and particular mention has been made of the Card Scheme.

Eduardo CIERCO Sanchez (SPAIN)

He is a young Madrid lawyer who was sentenced on 11 November 1965 to one year's imprisonment on charges of illegal propaganda. An appeal has been lodged against this conviction and is due to be heard this month, January 1966. Senor Cierco is not actually detained, although of course his sentence stands.

In May 1965 Senor Cierco defended two students in court; they were both political prisoners, and the first political cases he had ever defended. Both students were alleged to have been maltreated during their detention in prison. On their behalf Senor Cierco wrote on May 22nd to the Archbishop of Madrid pointing out the irregular treatment suffered by them at the hands of the police. This letter was subsequently published by the French publications "Nouvel Observateur" and "Temoignage Chretien", and it is the publication of this letter in these two papers that constitutes the "illegal propaganda". At Senor Cierco's trial the Defence, conducted by the Dean of the Madrid Bar, maintained throughout that Senor Cierco did not himself send the letter to the Archbishop for the purpose of publishing it abroad, and that all his actions were totally in accordance with his duties as Defence Counsel. If it was published, it was certainly against Senor Cierco's wishes, and it should never have got into the hands of these French papers. Indeed the Editor of the "Nouvel Observateur" signed an affidavit saying that the letter came indirectly into the possession of the paper, and certainly unknown to Senor Cierco.

As Senor Cierco was previously responsible for an action which he won on behalf of his client A. Novais, the Madrid correspondent of Le Monde against the Minister of Information and Tourism, Sr. Fraga Iribarne, he is not highly considered in the ruling circles in Madrid. Equally because of this international pressure ought to insure that justice is done and that no element of personal animosity is brought into this action.

You should send your appeals on behalf of Senor Cierco, for reversal of sentence at the appeal hearing, to:

Minister of Justice,
Sr. Don Antonio Maria Oriol Y Urquijo,
Madrid,
SPAIN

Additional appeals may be sent to:

President,
Tribunal de Orden Publico,
Madrid,
SPAIN

His Excellency, General Franco,
President of the Republic,
Madrid,
SPAIN

MOHAMED SHAMTE HAMADI

(TANZANIA)

(There are no notes on Tanzania in your Kit, but you will get an idea of the background of this man's continued detention since January, 1964, from the following notes).

Mohamed Shamte was Premier of Zanzibar until the revolution of January, 1964, when he and ten fellow members of his Cabinet were arrested, and the ruling Sultan, Seyyid Jamshid bin Abdullah, was exiled. (He is now living in England). At the same time, there began a series of massacres and continued persecution of the then ruling Arab minority, although democratically elected, and thousands were arrested.

Mohamed Shamte was replaced as Premier by Sheikh Abeid Karume, who later that year negotiated a constitutional union with the President of Tanganyika. In April, 1964, Tanganyika and Zanzibar became the new state of Tanzania.

Although Mohamed Shamte and his colleagues were arrested in Zanzibar, he is at present detained on Tanganyikan soil, under Tanzania's Preventive Detention Act.

Despite several recurring troubles, both on Zanzibari and Tanganyikan soil, and subsequent arrests, there have been constant releases in Tanzania over the last two years. In Zanzibar itself, compared with the thousands originally arrested, there are thought now to be only approximately 300 still detained. On December 12th, 1965, 106 Zanzibari prisoners were released. However, the official figure for the whole of Tanzania of prisoners held under the Preventive Detention Act is 22, including the 11 Zanzibar former Cabinet Ministers.

The Tanzanian authorities are unofficially alleged to be considering releasing Mohamed Shamte and his colleagues, but the main problem is where they can go after their release.

You should send your appeals to:-

His Excellency,
President Julius K. Nyerere,
President of Tanzania,
Dar-es-Salaam, TANZANIA

You may want to send Mohamed Shamte AMNESTY's best wishes and encouragement for the future. He can be written to at the following address:-

c/o The Officer-in-charge,
Remand Prison Keke,
P.O. Box 9190,
Dar-es-Salaam, TANZANIA.

Tibor PAKH (HUNGARY)

Tibor Pakh is a writer, whose great grandfather was one of the heroes of the Hungarian Revolution 1848-49. In 1960 he sent a memorandum to the United Nations asking for their intervention on behalf of those Hungarians arrested for the role they played in the 1956 Uprising and at present detained in Siberia. This memorandum fell into the hands of the Hungarian Government who arrested Pakh; he was put up for trial on charges of "High Treason" and sentenced to death. Fortunately this sentence was commuted to 15 year's imprisonment, and we now have reliable evidence that Pakh is still detained in Budapest in particularly severe conditions.

Apart from the fact that both the original sentence and the sentence of 15 year's imprisonment are both particularly harsh, even absurd, punishment for writing a mere memorandum to the United Nations, it is all the more ridiculous that Pakh is still detained since the vast majority of the Hungarian 1956 revolutionaries held in Russia have been released. In your appeals on behalf of Pakh you should stress this point.

You should send your appeals to:

Janos Kadar,
First Secretary of the Hungarian Communist
Party,
Budapest,
HUNGARY

(Mr. Kadar resigned in 1965 from the Premiership).

For increased effect you may send a copy of your appeal to the Hungarian Ambassador in your country.

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