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ADEN: RASTGELDI REPORT VINDICATED

British Government to Change Interrogation Procedures

FOLLOWING the publication of Dr. Rastgeldi's report on the treatment of Adeni detainees, the British Government sent out Mr. Roderic Bowen, a British barrister, to carry out an investigation on their behalf.

The publication of the Bowen Report, and the Foreign Secretary's accompanying statement in the House of Commons on Tuesday, December 20th, have been the subject of intensive publicity both in the British press and on television. Almost every national newspaper treated the matter as "front page news" and made lengthy editorial comment. The consensus of opinion was overwhelmingly favourable to us. The following extract from an Editorial in the English newspaper, *The Guardian*, is typical:

"The detention and 'extremely grim' interrogation centres have been opened up for a time to public scrutiny, and nothing is so strong a deterrent of torture. In spite of official arguments, it is doubtful whether this would have happened if AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL had not sent its own investigator."

AMNESTY's "investigator", Dr. S. Rastgeldi, took part in a discussion with Robert Swann and Mr. Roderic Bowen on B.B.C. television. Again, there seemed to be no doubt in anybody's mind that Dr. Rastgeldi's allegations were both valid and necessary. Certainly we in AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL recognise the great importance of the work done by Dr. Rastgeldi and are deeply indebted to him and to the Swedish Section for their efforts.

As we made clear in our statement to the press, we are grateful to Mr. Bowen also for the care and attention that have obviously gone into the preparation of his Report. We have no quarrel with its findings—though its terms of reference prevented Mr. Bowen examining in detail specific allegations of torture. Nevertheless, it is clear from the Report that legal and humane safeguards had been disregarded and there is little doubt that torture did in fact take place.

Here are some of the most pertinent criticisms made in the Report:

"A matter which caused me considerable concern was the fact that a person arrested as a 'suspected terrorist' was only very occasionally dealt with under the ordinary civil law and was never dealt with under the provisions relating to the prosecution of persons engaged in terrorist activities under the emergency provisions even when what was alleged would constitute an offence under them.

"The desirability of bringing to trial whenever practicable those arrested in connection with terrorist activities should be continually borne in mind.

"A person may be arrested in circumstances in which his family do not know what has happened to him . . . (maybe) until 28 days later.

"Occasionally persons are kept at the Interrogation Centre, after they have been the subject matter of a detention order, for further interrogation . . . occasionally persons who have been sent to the Detention Centre are returned to the Interrogation Centre for further interrogation. I regard both these practices as highly undesirable.

"There were a large number of allegations (of cruelty and torture) and many were of a serious nature. . . . There was a most regrettable failure to deal expeditiously and adequately with allegations of cruelty."

The Report quotes from a Memorandum by the Director of Health Services to the Deputy High Commissioner in Aden, dated November 14th, 1965:

"The injuries sustained by detainees brought from the Interrogation Centre indicates that their interrogation was assisted by physical violence. . . . I should be grateful if the allegations of physical violence which were substantiated by bruises and torn eardrums, etc., could be investigated."

Almost all the recommendations in the Bowen Report to change existing procedures have been accepted in principle by the British Government. It is clear now that it was only AMNESTY's consistent pressure that finally exposed the facts to the public.

RUSSIA

More Baptists Jailed

THE situation of the dissident Baptists continues to worry us. According to the newspaper *Pravda Vostoka*, two of their leaders, who were sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment in 1962, were on trial again in Tashkent last autumn. Three women from the Chuvash region were sentenced to 3 years' corrective labour for holding religious meetings where young people were present. The Soviet authorities may well be afraid of the appeal that the "initiativniki" (dissident Baptists) have for young people, in particular the attraction of their open-air meetings in parks and at bus and railway stations, where psalms are sung to popular melodies, accompanied by guitar and balalaika. New legislation has been added to the existing criminal code to deal with this. For example, Section 3 of paragraph 190 provides for 3 years' imprisonment or 1 year's corrective labour for people who organise or who participate in activities "disturbing public order". It is also feared that participants in street demonstrations in Moscow will in future be charged under this section.

Daniel and Sinyavsky

A SPECIAL effort will be made on behalf of the imprisoned Soviet writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel during the visit of Premier Kosygin to England in February. Representations will be made, and publicity sought about their case, to bring about their early release.

HUNGARY

New Clamp-Down on Criticism

THE last two months of 1966 saw many trials and prison sentences passed on people who had done no more than merely criticise the regime. A composer received 2 years' imprisonment for setting to music a "subversive" poem entitled "Hymn of the Order of St. Paul". A bricklayer, who had already served 12 years for unspecified political offences, was sentenced to 4½ years' imprisonment for making derogatory remarks about the police; he refused to recant at his trial.

WHAT FREEDOM MEANS FOR RUMANIAN PRISONERS

FATHER ION is a Roman Catholic priest. He trained in Paris and Strasbourg and returned to Rumania just before the war to work as a parish priest. He took no part in politics and did not in any way "collaborate" during the war. In 1947, the Communist Party came to power and—as in other parts of Eastern Europe—campaigns to control and reduce religious life; as part of this, all Roman Catholic priests were offered the choice of an oath of secular allegiance to the State or a prison sentence. Father Ion felt he could not swear loyalty to an atheist state and refused. In 1949 he was therefore given a 25-year sentence, part of which he spent in the labour camps of the Danube Delta and part in a variety of prisons. Some priests died during their sentences as a direct result of their conditions, but Father Ion survived until 1964, when, with 7,000 other political prisoners, his sentence was suspended and he was released. He had mild T.B.—infection was widespread in some of the prisons—but he went into a Government sanatorium and this is now cured, though he is physically far from robust.

But for Father Ion, as for everyone else released from a political sentence, the main problem was to find a job. No priest was allowed to return to the ministry; although qualified to teach, he could not do so since ex-political prisoners are not allowed jobs which place them in a position of influence with children or students. Father Ion has at last managed to get work loading scrap metal on to railway wagons for £12 a month. This places him in a much more fortunate position than many of his prison friends who are too ill or old to do manual work and, because of their political conviction, do not qualify for state pensions.

Father Ion is far from an isolated case in Rumania today. During the early 1960s, some 12,000 political prisoners were released from prison under a general act of clemency, accompanied by an official undertaking, that, having served their time, they could return to normal life.

Social Isolation

Since 1964, reports have been reaching AMNESTY which suggest that released prisoners are having the greatest difficulty in finding work, or rooms in which to live, and that it is official policy for pensions to be given to the old or ill only where they agree to give active support to the police, or have influential friends abroad. In cases where it is given, the pension—the normal right of all Rumanian citizens—is often no more than the minimum of 30 lei (£6) a month, and this is not nearly enough to cover rent, food, and clothing. Moreover, since the releases were allowed under a “clemency” rather than an “amnesty”, the remainder of the sentences have been suspended rather than pardoned, and the material possessions which were forfeited to the State at the trial—money, personal possessions like jewellery, books, etc.—have not been returned. Ex-prisoners feel that they are under constant watch by the security police, and employers and landlords are reluctant to have anything to do with people who, having once been convicted as enemies of the state, may at some future time and with a change of official policy become again suspect.

Jobs Restricted

Many of those imprisoned during the late 1940s and early 1950s were professional people, and in no case have they been able to return to their former jobs. Of course, the practical problems facing a doctor or engineer who wants to return to surgery or technical work after ten, fifteen or even twenty years' prison are enormous in any country—the doctor may no longer have the steady hands to operate, and the engineer will be out of date with recent developments in his subject. Many of the prisoners have the qualifications to teach, but contact with the young in a teaching capacity is generally prevented. And although some have managed to get minor research jobs at academic institutes, for many the only available work is manual—which may not be the most suitable work for a man weakened by years of prison life and food. For those who cannot do labouring work, the only source of food, rent or clothing is their family, who, like the employers, may be reluctant to support a man who has been “politically unreliable” and who carries the still-powerful stigma of political imprisonment.

From a realistic point of view, there is little that can be done to help. The answers, though fairly clear, are almost all at a Governmental level. Certainly the Rumanian Government should accept responsibility towards people whose only offence—and this under the Stalinist period—was to hold a religious belief or have western contacts (one man known to AMNESTY was imprisoned for 8 years for having a copy of *Time* magazine in which the Hungarian rising was reported). Having released these people into a Rumania where their original offences are no longer illegal—a person can work for a western embassy without risking imprisonment, as one man did in the early 1950s—the Government should either help them to return to the jobs for which they were originally trained, and which would bring them an adequate income, or, if they cannot work, they should receive the social pension which is the right of all other Rumanian citizens.

From AMNESTY's point of view, there may soon come a time when material help can be sent to these people, but as yet there are many Rumanians who fear that parcels from the western world might only bring renewed suspicion on the recipients.

Prison Conditions Report

Copies of the AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Report on Prison Conditions in Rumania are still available at 3/6 each (in hardback edition, including Reports on South Africa and Portugal—12/6).

AMNESTY AND CHINA

WE are frequently asked these days whether AMNESTY has adopted any prisoners of conscience in China. Our policy at the moment is that it would be unwise to do so. We believe that our representations would only increase the Chinese Government's suspicions about such prisoners and would aggravate rather than relieve any danger they may be in. A further consideration has been the great difficulty of getting reliable information about such prisoners, either about the charges, sentences or their whereabouts.

PETER BENENSON has gone abroad. He is proposing to continue his work for human rights from a neutral country. To enable him to do this constitutionally he has resigned as President.

HELPING RHODESIAN PRISONERS, DETAINEES AND RESTRICTEES

It is impossible to give accurate figures for those now restricted, detained or in prison in Rhodesia. It is fair to predict, however, that their numbers will increase considerably following the breakdown of the "Tiger talks" but it is still too soon to have concrete evidence of this. Numbers of detained persons are particularly difficult to gauge as press censorship forbids any mention of them: there are likely to be several hundred. A list of those restricted appears in a weekly Rhodesian Government Gazette, but once their period of restriction is over, they are often immediately re-arrested for a further period.

There are, at the moment, almost 200 Rhodesian restrictees adopted by AMNESTY Groups and another 600 known to us. About 450 of these are being helped from the general funds of the Christian Council. One cannot overestimate the valuable work being done by the Council's two offices, in Salisbury and Bulawayo, and we very much hope that they will be able to continue, in spite of the new Welfare Organisations Bill, which requires all such organisations to be registered with the government. Their work covers a wide field and as far as possible they co-operate with local government welfare services, to establish their programme on a professional basis. For example, the Christian Council pays the rent of many families direct to the municipal authorities, and pays school fees direct to the schools. The government will remit school fees for both primary and secondary schools to those receiving National Assistance. However, National Assistance is granted only to those able to prove that they are destitute, which is both difficult and humiliating.

Men wishing to study in restriction camps apply to the camp educational committees, which in turn rely for funds upon the Christian Council. (News came at the end of last year that the government had stopped giving educational grants to the camp at Gonakudzingwa.) Wives who wish to visit their husbands in camps may do so only with official permission and, again, the Christian Council has paid the fares of many who have long distances to travel. Clothes are not provided for men in the camps; the Christian Council has supplied these.

In general, conditions in the camps seem to be reasonable and men recently visited appear to be cheerful and healthy with few complaints, except perhaps that books are scarce and conditions for studying are difficult.

Apart from the contribution made by the Christian Council, prisoners and their families have come to rely on the generosity of AMNESTY Groups. The continuing gifts of cash, books, clothing and other necessities are making a

considerable difference to the welfare of those denied their freedom.

Prison Conditions Report

Copies of the AMNESTY Report on Prison Conditions in Rhodesia are still available at 4/- each (in hardback edition, including Reports on East Germany and Paraguay—15/-).

REPRESSIVE LAWS IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

THE Suppression of Communism Act of South Africa has been formally extended to South-West Africa. This provides the legal basis for the South African government to suppress opposition to apartheid. It was applied for the first time in the territory at the beginning of December 1966, when five prominent leaders of the South-West Africa People's Organisation and one of the South-West Africa National Union were arrested by the South African police.

AMNESTY has been in contact with representatives of these organisations. According to their information, one of the leaders was released on December 20th, while the others are still held in Pretoria under the 180-day detention laws. It is not known what charges they are going to face but, whatever they may be, none of the prisoners is in a position to pay for his defence. It is anticipated that still more men will be arrested under the same Act.

HOPEFUL TREND IN NIGERIA?

THE disturbed political situation in Nigeria has still not been resolved but the Regional military leaders have at least met to discuss their problems in a neutral country—Ghana. Hitherto, the Eastern Leader, Colonel Ojukwu, had refused to meet the Supreme Military Commander, Yakubu Gowon, in the Federal capital of Lagos, fearing violence against him or his delegation. It seems from the statement issued after the Ghana meeting (which took place this month) that the leaders of the different regions will now meet again in an attempt to formulate a new constitution for the Republic.

In recent months, a number of people have been imprisoned and the pattern of arrests shows a certain sensitivity on the part of the authorities to possible criticism or any expression of opinion which may be construed as an incitement to violent action. The most prominent group among the detentions so far reported, consists of ten former members of the banned Nigerian National Democratic Party. They are alleged to have been planning to overthrow the Western Region Military Government of Colonel Adebayo and his adviser, Chief Awolowo. Awolowo was leader of the former Action Group, the party which opposed the N.N.D.P. up to the time when all political activities were banned, after the tragic and confused events

which followed the assumption of power by the army.

One recent case in which AMNESTY has taken an interest was that of Michael Onwalu, a trade union leader and journalist, who was arrested for "trying to create public panic by spreading false rumours". The I.C.F.T.U. and other organisations protested on his behalf and we have now been informed by the United Labour Congress of Nigeria that he has been released. From what the U.L.C.N. says, it seems that the trade union movement in Nigeria still remains unrestricted. Indeed, apart from a nervous anticipation of violence, not unjustified by recent events, and the continuing unsettled political climate, it would seem that the new Nigerian regime has not dispensed with the Rule of Law and, so far as the troubled situation will allow, respects the liberty of the individual.

EXTRACTS FROM KEITH KYLE'S REPORT ON HIS VISIT TO TURKEY, DECEMBER 1966

"We're not going to pay any attention to what this one or that one says: we're going to be civilised and proud of it. Look at the state of the rest of the Turks and Muslims! What catastrophes and disasters have come upon them because their minds could not adjust themselves to the all-encompassing and sublime dictates of civilisation! . . . We're going on whatever happens; we can't go back. We must go on, we have no choice . . . Civilisation is a blazing fire that burns and obliterates those who will not acknowledge her."

Kemal Atatürk.

Liberal democracy and the secular state have been forced on Turkey against the will of the majority which favours obscurantism, reaction, and the persecution of minorities.

The Kemalist ideology, embodied in the phrase: "the Turkish state is republican, nationalist, populist, étatist, secular and reformist", is fully supported by the Army, the civil service and the voters who back Kemal Atatürk's Republican People's Party. The R.P.P. which won approx. 30% of the votes in the last election is strongest in Istanbul, Ankara, Western Anatolia and among the urbanised middle classes.

There are two strands to the Kemalist legacy (Kemal Atatürk died prematurely in 1938 at the age of 57 with much of his work uncompleted)—the authoritarian, paternalistic strand which is the only one which appeals to much of the civil service and parts of the army, and the liberal democratic strand which he explicitly recognised as part and parcel of the Western civilisation which he passionately desired Turkey to embrace. Part of the Army, the R.P.P. and some of the intellectuals are attached to this legacy also.

Menderes' Crime

Adnan Menderes' (Prime Minister 1950-60) main crime was that he catered for the basically anti-democratic, anti-Kemalist and anti-secularist wishes of the electorate. Most impartial observers consider that Menderes, who was neurotic to the point at which many questioned his sanity, need not have cheated in the 1957 elections because he could have won honestly and would have won again in 1960. However he cheated, launched a final persecution of the parliamentary opposition (the R.P.P.), was overthrown by the Army, condemned for capital offences under the ordinary penal code and executed.

There is, however, no reason to suppose that Menderes forfeited the support of his basic electorate—the Anatolian peasantry. The present ruling party, the Justice Party, is considered to be the reincarnation of Menderes' Democratic Party (though it is a criminal offence to say so in Turkey). But the Army and the 1961 Constitution see to it that the Justice Party regime, led by Süleyman Demirel, does not respond to the will of the electorate in many things. Demirel, who is a much more sensible man than Menderes, lives with these limitations quite happily, being himself fairly pragmatic and liberal. His backbenchers however have to be allowed some sops to their voters if these are not to feel totally betrayed. Anti-communist gestures are convenient for this purpose—provided they do not upset Russia too much—because they are one of the very few things that are popular with the electorate and not likely to be resented by the Army.

Public opinion and the press in Istanbul are either right or left. There is scarcely any room for objectivity. For example the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* owned by the wealthy Nadi family, which is considered to be independent ("like *The Times*"!) by itself, by the left and by long-established British residents, is rated on the right as extremely leftist. The Communist Party is and always has been illegal. So is any party remotely connected with religion. In general bans applied to the left are neatly matched by bans applied to the right. The rationale is that democracy, secularism and nationalism are none of them yet strongly enough rooted in Turkey for complete free speech to be feasible.

Amnesty Reports:

While in Istanbul Keith Kyle made discreet approaches to the œcumenical patriarchate and conducted a detailed enquiry into the case of Sadi Alkiliç, now a prisoner in Turkey.

Sadi Alkiliç is a civil servant who was arrested in 1962 for having published in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* an article advocating socialism. The article was submitted as part of an essay competition

and was one of a hundred or so published on the subject: "Socialism or Liberalism for Turkey?". Approx. 60 of these were in favour of socialism but Alkiliç's was the only one to incur legal proceedings.

Severe Sentence

Sadi Alkiliç was arrested, acquitted by two different Penal Courts but finally sentenced (after a decision by the General Assembly of the High Court) to 6 years 2 months imprisonment to be followed by 2 years exile under Section 142/1 of the Penal Code. The wording of this section, which was taken direct from Mussolini's Criminal Code and is very vague, enables the Public Prosecutor to harry writers, journalists and public speakers more or less at will. The actual offence is to:

"seek to establish the domination of one particular social class over other social classes, to eliminate a social class or to overthrow the social and economic order established in the country in any of its particulars".

It has, however, seldom been used with such severity as in the case of Sadi Alkiliç.

What makes Sadi Alkiliç's imprisonment particularly indefensible is the mildness of the wording of his essay. It does not contain communist propaganda (as the prosecution maintains) by any reasonable contemporary definition of this term. Moreover, indisputably communist propaganda such as the works of Marx and Engels is easily obtainable in Istanbul. Lastly, Alkiliç must at least share responsibility for publishing his essay with the editorial staff of *Cumhuriyet* and the Committee who selected his essay for publication—all of whom must have known considerably more than he of the laws affecting publication.

A letter of appeal embodying these and other points has been sent to the Supreme Court in Ankara who are due to consider Sadi Alkiliç's final Appeal on February 3rd.

Keith Kyle's Report on his visit to Turkey and Greece will shortly be available for general distribution. Please order your copy soon.

The French Section writes:

FRENCH ARMY RECOGNISES HUMAN RIGHTS

By a decree published in the official journal, the French Ministry of Defence has brought about important changes in the regulations affecting the army. The most important changes concern a greater respect for the individuality of the soldier and for prisoners of war. These changes give hope that an understanding of liberty and the rights of man may be introduced into the relations between ranks.

Discipline is in future not only to be "the

principal strength of armies" but also the rule guiding each person in the accomplishment of a difficult task. Henceforth, it does not command the blind execution of an order but requires the person executing the order to show his spirit of initiative.

Article 22 says: duties and responsibilities of subordinates—it is laid down that an order received by a subordinate that does not appear to him legal can be refused with the proviso that it must be referred to the competent authorities. Article 34 says that a soldier must consider as prisoners of war, members of armed forces or voluntary militias on condition that these persons wear a distinctive sign (uniforms, arm-bands, etc.). A soldier must treat any fighting man who is wounded with humanity. It is forbidden to force nationals of the opposing party to take part in war operations against their country.

Article 35 states that every prisoner has the right to respect for his person and his honour. At no point in this article dealing with the treatment of prisoners is there any mention of questioning military strategy.

Article 45 allows a soldier to wear mufti on leave, a practice hitherto forbidden except in specific cases.

Article 58: liberty of expression and association. This allows soldiers the right to give public lectures or publish writings on political subjects, subject to authorisation.

Article 98 states that a soldier has the right to file a protest if he feels that he has been the object of unjustified procedure. We think that this law will give soldiers, particularly conscripts, and prisoners of war the impression that they are still men.

Conscientious Objectors in Italy and Switzerland

In the autumn of 1966 we became somewhat disturbed at reports reaching us from Italy that, in spite of a large amnesty in the summer, conscientious objectors were still being sentenced to prison, some of them for the third or fourth time. The news was particularly disappointing in that the movement in Italy to obtain a legal status for conscientious objectors appeared to be gaining rapid ground and that a bill had been presented to Parliament to this effect. A letter to the Ministry brought a courteous reply but it was clear that they do not consider that conscientious objection is justified, in spite of the fact that nearly all the men in question are Jehovah's Witnesses. It was therefore decided to put all the imprisoned men on the Kit Scheme en bloc, and to thereby ask for the release of all of them. In addition an Amnesty supporter who was visiting Italy went to find out what certain prominent people thought about Amnesty International and about

the problems affecting Italy in particular. Her enquiries met an enthusiastic response from everyone she met, and it is hoped that this will prove to be a good start in both the work on behalf of the imprisoned conscientious objectors and in making Amnesty International more widely known in Italy.

Conscientious objectors continue to be sentenced to prison in Switzerland on account of their refusal to perform military service, but the sentences are not usually long enough to merit adoption. The situation varies from canton to canton, some having instituted a kind of alternative service. We hope to try and do something for Swiss conscientious objectors in the near future.

BACKGROUND TO PERSECUTION IN MALAYSIA

AMNESTY has been working for some time on behalf of political prisoners in Malaysia and Singapore. At the present moment 13 are adopted by groups and a further 230 cases are being considered by the Investigation Department. A summary of the legal background to the political detentions is given below.

Malaysia as a free independent political entity came into being in September 1963. Comprising the former states of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia, rich in human and mineral resources, poor in technical prowess, has inherited the problem of extremes of poverty and wealth that beset many other Asian countries. The situation is further aggravated by a racial problem, the complexities of which are not easily resolved.

Further the central governments of the various territories of Malaysia have been faced, from time to time, with armed uprisings. Latterly direct military confrontation with Indonesia certainly did nothing to alleviate the strain that was already there.

With the political eclipse of Sukarno in Indonesia, confrontation has come to an end and with it many of the immediate political problems. But the basic problem remains—the poverty of the mass of the people. Such an economic climate obviously breeds criticism, criticism, in the main, of the political party in power but sometimes of the very foundations on which the society is based.

Faced with such criticism, governments are either moved by it, feel sufficiently strong to ignore it, or they stifle it. The government of Malaysia appears to have chosen the latter course.

In 1960 the Internal Security Act was passed in the then Federation of Malaya and has since become part of the law of the state of Malaysia.

This act, originally designed to protect the state against subversion, has, unfortunately, and like all oppressive legislation, been used by government in some cases to silence its critics by censorship and in other cases to remove them by imprisonment.

The objections to the Act voiced by many members of the opposition when it was being debated in bill form were:

1. It provides for preventive detention without proper safeguards. Detainees have no right to have the issues on which they are arrested tried in a court of law nor are they, as a matter of right, to know on what charges they are arrested and by thus knowing them possibly to refute them.

2. The Act appears to be directed not only against violent but even peaceful opposition to the government. Public meetings which are deemed to be against good order and discipline are subject to banning and since it is the government that decides what is good order and discipline, any meeting likely to be critical of government policy can be (and is) banned.

3. Under the Act very wide and arbitrary powers of arrest are given to the police and mere suspicion may be grounds for jailing a man for years without trial.

4. Although provision is made for review of the continued detention of individual detainees by an independent review body, the findings of this review body are not bound to be accepted by the minister. Even under the Emergency Regulations of the previous colonial administration, the review committee's finding was peremptory and the minister could not intervene to have it set aside.

5. From a purely legal point of view one of the most offensive features of this Bill relates to the admissibility of confessions. In most modern systems of law, certainly in the Democracies, stringent safeguards are observed before admitting so damaging a statement in a court of law. This Act removes all those safeguards—usually confessions are admissible only if they are shown to have been freely and voluntarily made by a person in his sound and sober senses and without having been unduly influenced thereto, provided further that if such confession is shown to have been made to a peace officer other than a magistrate or justice, it shall not be admissible in evidence unless it was confirmed and reduced to writing in the presence of a magistrate or justice. None of these requirements is demanded by the Act. Further, Malaysia being a multi-lingual country one might reasonably expect that a statement of a self-

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incriminating kind made in one language and taken down in another would necessitate it being interpreted back to the person making it. The Act, however, makes no such requirement and it is not difficult to see that the possibilities of abuse abound.

This legislation, as with all other laws which limit political expression, tends towards the re-emergence of the kind of autocratic despotism in which the government and the state are synonymous and political criticism of the one is deemed subversion of the other.

TROUBLE IN KASHMIR

At the moment, almost the only prisoners in India with whom AMNESTY is concerned are Kashmiris. Students, communists, Sadhus and others have been arrested in large numbers for inciting or using violence, but have generally been released within a few days. Kashmir, however, remains a permanent sore-spot, perpetually exacerbated by conflict between India and Pakistan.

Democracy in Danger

A correspondent writes: "The people in power themselves all seem to have very local and limited allegiances, each defining himself by his caste, community or region. This is the easiest way to get votes, but the result is that one feels there are no *Indians* left in India now". This assessment is only one of many we have received, all laying blame for the country's present difficulties, including that of famine, at the door of irresponsible government. This is sad news. Any signs of disintegration of a country which adheres to the principle of constitutional parliamentary government, with genuine freedom of speech and worship, should be a matter of concern to all of us.

New Indian Section

An Indian Section of AMNESTY has now been formed, headed by a distinguished lawyer and ex-Attorney-General, Shri M. C. Setalwad. This is one piece of good news to come out of a country whose people are at present undergoing more than their fair share of misfortune.

A Member Writes:

WHY CAN'T WE ADOPT HUGO BLANCO?

HUGO BLANCO was a student of agronomy who abandoned his studies in order to help organise the peasants of El Cuzco, one of the most feudal regions of Peru.

He was a Union organiser who disassociated himself publicly from the M.I.R. guerilla movement which was formed while he was in prison. In an open letter to the M.I.R., Hugo Blanco said that it "was impossible to bring any social change in Peru through violence".

His own efforts were orientated towards the education and mobilisation of the peasants of La Concepción Valley region, in order to demand the abolition of forced labour, the re-distribution of land, and wages for work done. Landowners of this region have always maintained the feudal practice of demanding that the squatter gives his labour in payment for his squatting rights, without receiving any other remuneration. Hugo Blanco founded an agricultural workers' Union which grew in numbers and in strength but, after bringing about some radical social changes, splintered into smaller groups. One of these groups marched with their women and children into uncultivated lands controlled by absentee landowners. These Latifundistas (owners of large land-holdings) put pressure on the Government to suppress this threatening social development. The Government did so swiftly and violently, using well-equipped military forces. In one of the clashes, two *guardias civiles* were killed and Hugo Blanco is now held responsible personally for their deaths. He now faces a possible death sentence.

Amnesty Replies:

We cannot adopt Hugo Blanco because there is considerable doubt whether or not he committed violence. We have, however, sent a letter to President Belaunde Terry pleading for clemency. This letter makes the point that whatever Hugo Blanco's offences against Peruvian law may be, the sentence imposed on him—25 years at the first trial and a possible death sentence at a second trial for the same offence—has aroused the gravest disquiet. It seems that Hugo Blanco has received news of our plea because we have just received a post-card from him thanking us for our efforts on his behalf.