

CARD SCHEME NEWSLETTER

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
12, Crane Court, Fleet Street, London E.C.4.

News of previous Kit Scheme prisoners:

MOHAMED SHAMTE, Tanzania (January 1966 Newsletter). The Tanzanian Prime Minister's Personal Assistant, who is visiting England, informed us that the Government had been very surprised to receive so many letters from so many parts of the world on behalf of Mohamed Shamte. Many of these were from Kit Scheme members and those who have not yet received replies need not think they did not arrive safely.

MIRZA AFZEL BEG, India (April 1966 Newsletter). Members of the Kit Scheme who wrote to this prisoner may be interested to know that a member of the London Group who have adopted him received a letter from Mirza Beg in July. He says that he was unable to reply earlier, but wants to thank all those who have written to him for their "warm sentiments and sympathy". He mentions nothing about his detention conditions, but says that he is receiving good medical care and that his diabetes and other ailments are being well controlled. We were pleased to note that he has heard from members in Scandinavia, North America, Canada and Australia, as well as England.

DENNIS BRUTUS, South Africa (August 1965 Newsletter). He has now left South Africa on a one way exit permit (which means that he will never be allowed to return) and arrived in London on July 30th. He is at present in Jamaica for the Commonwealth Games, representing the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, of which he is President. He sends his sincere thanks to Amnesty members.

Mrs. FLORENCE MATOMELA, South Africa (May 1966 Newsletter), has, we are sorry to report, been sentenced to a further 3½ years imprisonment. She is not allowed to receive more than one letter every 6 months and suffers from diabetes.

ANDREI SINYAVSKY, U.S.S.R. (December 1965 Newsletter). News reached us recently that Sinyavsky's health appears to be suffering from the heavy physical work and poor quality food in the forced labour camp. His friend Yulii Daniel is in a worse condition as the strain of the work has caused an old war wound to open and he has not succeeded in obtaining an exemption on grounds of ill health.

TIBOR PAKH, Hungary (January 1966 Newsletter), is now sharing a cell with Istvan Tabody and is receiving visits from his family.

LUDWIG HASS, Poland (April 1966 Newsletter). There is no fresh news about Hass, but Kit Members may be interested to know that he is being considered as a candidate for the 1967 Prisoner of the Year.

MELANIE BOEK, East Germany (February 1966 Newsletter); was sentenced to 5½ years imprisonment in April and is now in Berlin-Pankow, Borkumstrasse prison. She is reported to be in poor health and it is hoped that pleas on her behalf will not go unheeded.

Here are this month's prisoners:

CHRISTOS KAZANIS - Greece.

Christos Kazanis is one of 18 Jehovahs Witnesses who are serving prison terms for their refusal to bear arms as a result of their pacifist beliefs. All 18 are imprisoned in Boyati Military Prison, near Athens and, unless they abandon their position as Conscientious Objectors, will probably remain there for a 12 year period.

Military service is compulsory in Greece. The initial sentence for a Conscientious Objector is 3 years, but on completion they are returned again for basic training. The second refusal to do Military Service will entail a return to prison for another 3 years and if they refuse a third and fourth time they may receive further 3 year sentences for each refusal, making an average total of 11 years imprisonment between the ages of 21 to 33.

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You should send your cards of appeal either to:

His Majesty The King of the Hellenes,
The Royal Palace,
Athens.

OR

The Prime Minister,
H.E. Mr. Stefan Stefanopoulos,
Athens.

Letters or cards of encouragement can, of course, be sent to the prisoner himself.

ATO. BELATCHEW SABOURE - Ethiopia

Belatchew Saboure, who is a writer, was employed by the Ethiopian Foreign Office in Addis Ababa. An easy going individual who is a fairly heavy drinker, he was arrested after the 1960 coup and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for insulting the Crown Prince when drunk and speaking in favour of the coup. The Crown Prince's role during this period was ambiguous. He broadcast to the nation at the time of the coup, (to which he was known to be favourable), but believed after its failure was stated to have "acted under duress". It is believed that Saboure was a minor scapegoat sacrificed to save the vacillating Crown Prince and the Royal family from embarrassment. Although his sentence expired in 1963 it is believed that he has not been released.

You should send your cards of appeal to:

H.E. The Minister of Justice,
Ras Lisela Sefer,
P.O. Box 1370,
Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia.

OR

The Emperor Haile Selassie,
Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia.

MARIA BRAUN - Kirghiz

U.S.S.R.

Maira Braun was a Baptist Sunday-school teacher in the town of Sokuluk in Kirghizia, one of the Soviet Central Asian Republics. She and her assistant Yelena Chernetskaya instructed approximately 80 children in the psalms and bible study. In March this year both women were sentenced to 5 years "deprivation of liberty," i.e. prison, for illegally founding a school of religious instruction.

The school was not registered with the State authorities as the two women belonged to one of the Baptist sects which in 1962 broke away from the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, which is now the only legal Baptist organisation in the U.S.S.R. The newspaper "Soviet Kirghizia" claimed that the children had been enticed to the school with offers of ice cream without their parents knowledge and that the womens teaching had an "anti-patriotic" character.

The only offence Maria Braun and her colleague committed was failing to register their school (which, in any case, they would not have been allowed to do). The Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of anti-religious propaganda, but only the latter is fully respected. Although a limited number of churches are still open and people are not prevented from going to them, the authorities are very anxious to prevent children from being "contaminated" by contact with religion of any kind and any parents who want their children to attend scripture classes tend to run into difficulty.

You should send your cards of appeal to:

Ministr Yustitsii,
Franza,
Kirghiz SS,
U.S.S.R.

OR

The Council for the Affairs of
Religious Cults,
10 Ostrovsky Pereulok,
Moscow,
U.S.S.R.

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