

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

12 Crane Court, Fleet Street, LONDON, E. C. 4.

NEWS SHEET FOR GROUPS

INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY 11 Sections will be sending delegates to the Assembly and in addition to the official delegates, about another 50 members and observers are expected. At the moment it does not look as though there is going to be an official reception as the Burgomeester of the Hague has written to say that the municipality does not give receptions on Saturdays and Sundays. There is hope, however, that some other arrangement can be made for an official reception.

The TV film* about Amnesty made by the British company, Associated Rediffusion, will be shown on one of the Dutch TV channels on September 21st. There will be additional material mentioning the Assembly and giving details about the work of the Dutch Section. It is intended that this should be followed up at the Assembly by an interview with Sean MacBride or Peter Benenson together with Drs. Cornelis van der Vlies.

The International Executive Committee will meet on the Friday evening before the Assembly and will discuss various points arising from the resolutions and suggestions that have been sent in by the National Sections for consideration at this year's Assembly.

DELEGATE'S MISSIONS Iran Dr. Hajo Wandschneider, German member of the International Executive, left for Iran on September 7th as Amnesty International's official representative. His trip is being financed by the Iranian Students Confederation.

Portugal Ian Macdonald, a London barrister, attended part of the trial of 31 students in Lisbon which was held during July and August, as Amnesty's observer. On his return he gave a press conference and his comments on the trial were reported in several newspapers. Those of the students who were finally sentenced to terms of imprisonment, are in the process of being adopted by groups and copies of Ian Macdonald's report will be sent to these groups.

THE 'CARD SCHEME' Enquiries are still arriving at the London office as a result of the article in the 'Reader's Digest' and a number of those who have enquired as to how they can help Amnesty, have now joined the 'Card Scheme'. There are now about 90 'Card Scheme' members, mainly in Canada, Britain and the United States but also in Ghana, Brazil, Ireland, France and the Netherlands. The Italian Section has launched its own 'Card Scheme' and volunteers in London are, at the moment, translating and stencilling the 'Kit' into French, Spanish and Portuguese. A number of other Sections, including the German, Swedish and Danish Sections, are considering translating the 'Kit' into their own language.

REPORTS ON PRISON CONDITIONS The reports on prison conditions in the three countries chosen at the Canterbury Assembly - South Africa, Rumania and Portugal, - have now been printed. Complimentary copies will be sent to all Groups with prisoners in these countries. Additional copies can be obtained from Head Office at 3/5 each. In addition there is a hard-cover edition comprising all three reports available at 12/6d.

ANNUAL REPORTS Complimentary copies of this year's Annual Report are enclosed with the Newsletter. Owing to the increase in size of the Report and hence the cost of printing, additional copies can be obtained from Head Office at 2/- each.

INVESTIGATION BUREAU Will all Groups making enquiries to Head Office about prisoners in Portugal, Angola and Mozambique please address their letters to Mrs. Maureen Teitelbaum who works in the Investigation Bureau and is now specialising in these countries.

PLANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY This year the London Office is arranging a commemoration in Church House, Westminster, on December 10th. It will consist of some choral items and passages of letters from prisoners of conscience through the ages, read by a number of well-known actors. The Hall, octagonal in shape, holds almost 800 people. We have once again asked the Prime Minister to give us his support. This Mr. Wilson will do in the form of a message for, as last year, he will be unable to attend in person. The full programme will be sent to you at request later in the year. May we please ask you to give serious thought to holding your own Human Rights Day ceremony.

SOUTH AFRICAN AND RHODESIA Defence and Aid, Johannesburg, which had closed down for a short time after the banning of the Chairman, David Craighead, and the Secretary, Miss Laura Hitchens, has reopened. However, Headquarters will be in Cape Town, the address of which is: Sec. D & A., 3rd Floor, C.T.C. Buildings, Plein Street, Cape Town.

Hugh Vodden, social worker for Legal Aid and Welfare, has returned to England due to the refusal of the Rhodesian Government to extend his work permit for a further period. Letters should be addressed to Legal Aid and Welfare, Box 2097, Salisbury.

Parcels of clothing to Rhodesia carry customs duty on all articles, unless sent through an approved society (i.e. Missions, Oxfam etc.) Amnesty are applying for exemption from duty and are in correspondence with the Minister.

All clothing sent to South Africa, whether sent through a charitable body or not, carry the minimum duty of 3/6d per article.

GROUP NEWS

Ireland The Irish Section has been trying to obtain an amnesty for Dr. Christian Soumokil, one of their prisoners, who is in gaol in Djakarta. The Section hoped to obtain an exit permit for him from Indonesia and an entry permit into Ireland. They have been in touch with the head of the Political Mission, Republic of the South Moluccas in Rotterdam. This organisation has agreed to finance the trip for Dr. Soumokil and his family and also undertake to support them when they arrive in Ireland. The latest news, however, from the Irish Section is that the Minister for External Affairs has notified them that the Irish Government cannot see its way to admitting Dr. Soumokil. They are now going to pursue other avenues of approach in the hope that it may still be possible to bring Dr. Soumokil and his family to Ireland.

One of our members, who returned from a trip to Moscow at the end of July, reported that Josif Brodsky, the Russian poet, has been released and is now back in Leningrad. This information was provided by the Soviet Writers' Union. He also reported that a high-up Soviet defence lawyer, sympathetic to Amnesty, told him that any enquiries about prisoners in the USSR should be concentrated on the Ministry of the Interior, as he thought it unlikely that other officials would reply.

Denmark (30) has received a letter from David Craighead, their banned South African prisoner, who was chairman of the Defence and Aid Fund. Part of his letter is quoted below:

"Dear Mrs. Borrild,

I am both grateful for the letter that you have written to me and proud of having been chosen as the person your Group wishes to assist. Receiving such a letter makes one feel in harmony with world trends and opinions instead of being one of a small and

and isolated white group in this country. When one is under attack for opinions held, such a feeling of comradeship is particularly valuable....."

Denmark (24) has received a letter from their Mexican prisoner, Gilberto Rojo Robles, thanking them for their efforts in obtaining his release. They have also heard that Snr. Roble's lawyer is convinced that the action of Amnesty International has done much to help the railway workers imprisoned in Mexico since 1959 when they were sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment for "social dissolution". The lawyer hopes that the law against "social dissolution" will be abandoned this autumn, which will very probably mean that the remaining eight prisoners, sentenced after the Railway Strikes in 1959, will be released.

Pakistan Group Sajjad Ali, Secretary of the Pakistan Group, has had a long article on the work of Amnesty published in the 'Pakistan Observer' and a further article is planned.

New Groups Abroad Since the August Bulletin was published five new Groups have been formed, one in Germany, one in Adelaide and three in the Faroe Islands.

BRITISH SECTION

Press Publicity between June and August the office has received copies of press cuttings from the following groups: Shrewsbury, Hull University, Denstone College, Uttoxeter, Lincoln, Bristol University, Oxted and Redbourn.

Five of these were reports of public functions in the form of a fair, a concert, an exhibition and a prison compound and one had constructed a barbed wire compound near a bus station., attracting maximum attention.

Redbourn organised an 'Amnesty Display' with the assistance of a printer, Mr. Ronchetti's group used 8 panels of approximately 3' x 3' to show the case histories of their own prisoners, the photographs of the last three 'prisoners of the year' and further, showing the aims of the movement.

Should any others wish to use these panels, Mr. Ronchetti will be only too glad to transport them to you, providing you live in the London area, or else to send them to you.

Plymouth had a coffee evening and plan another function this month. Although a very small group, they managed to raise over £16 in spite of 'appalling, soaking, continuous rain!'

Clevedon - Their Rhodesian, now released, wrote a very distressed letter, describing the poor condition he found his mother, without adequate clothing and without any food. Since then Mrs. Jones and members have sent more money and clothes for the whole family. Like some others, the Clevedon branch was also able to arrange for a correspondence course for Chaka Mtate through the Central African Correspondence College, Salisbury. It may interest you to hear that this college will grant free correspondence courses for detainees for which they have passed qualifying examinations.

Ashford and District had a reply from the retired Director of prisons in Iraq, giving helpful information. One of their members also had a letter from their Iraqi prisoner as well as an acknowledgement for cigarettes received. He sent a message of thanks for Amnesty's concern from 'the other 1200 political prisoners'.

St. Mary's Association, Liverpool received a letter from Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi, S. Africa who expresses her distress at the daily visits of the police, the constant questioning and her inability to earn any money with dressmaking, since the friends she used to work for live outside the area to which she is confined.

Renewal Group a letter to Brian Forst from M.G.Pardhan, a Tanzanian barrister, expressing deep gratitude for help received. He hopes to be of assistance to Amnesty once he has established himself in Canada.

The Scottish Committee sent out to 35 Scottish directors of education a circular letter setting out the aims of Amnesty with particular emphasis on the commemoration of Human Rights Day, together with a sheet of suggested hymns and prayers for schools. Within a week they received favourable replies from just over half of them.

Southampton are preparing a large public meeting for Human Rights Day with a film show, a well-known speaker, also inviting the dignitaries of the area.

NUMBER OF RELEASES reported in Britain since last June.

Brazil 1; Czechoslovakia 2; Cameroons 1; E.Germany 5; Hungary 1; Iraq 1; Mexico 1; Nigeria 1; Portugal 3; Rumania 1; Rhodesia 3; S.Africa 4; Spain 1; Tanzania 1; Thailand 1; Turkey 1; USSR 1.

Two of the three Portuguese received suspended sentences. Whilst we must assume that some of these 28 would have been released in any event, we must not discount the influence Amnesty has had over early releases of others.

An EXHIBITION is being arranged by Miss E.J.Coupland of her mother's paintings, and she would like all the profits to go to Amnesty International. Miss Coupland lives in Pinner, Middlesex, and would appreciate the help of a group in arranging this. We hope to receive some offers of help.

AN ART SALE AND AUCTION in MARCH 1966. Although this is still some months ahead, we would like to let you know what is planned. The Chenil Galleries, Chelsea, have been booked for 3 concurrent days. It is intended to have objects d'art, paintings and pop-art. The quality paintings, which we hope to receive from artists will be auctioned, as once before in 1963. If you have any objects d'art that you would like to give, you can send the items any time to 12 Crane Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

DONATIONS were received from two artists. Mrs.Isobel Kemp sent £100 and a half share of all Royalties on her book 'God Within'. Mr.Frank Marcus donation £140 and the promise of all royalties for his play 'The Killing of Sister George' to be performed in S.Africa (currently running in London).

BRITISH EMBASSIES ABROAD Some of you may have had good response from our embassies abroad; however, you cannot take such help for granted, for it may be a risk for members of H.M.Government to appear to take sides in the internal affairs of the guest country. Sometimes - if they are well-informed embassy staff maybe able to give you addresses of organisations, more likely to be of assistance to you.

A VISIT FROM AN EAST GERMAN PRISONER. We were honoured by a visit from Jurgen Buchmann - at one time looked after by the Central Somerset Group. He left prison a year ago, a very sick man, suffering as a result of 4 months of solitary confinement, when he was not even allowed to see prison staff. Food was pushed through a hole in the wall. He served a total of 16 months out of a sentence of 8 years.

He is now re-united with his family. Although still under psychiatric treatment, he is radiant to be free and to have found work in his own field and to be re-united with his family in W.Berlin. The friend with whom he came to see us, had been more fortunate than Buchmann; he swam across.