

# monthly newsletter from amnesty international

## postcards for prisoners campaign

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January 1969

Here is some news of former prisoners:

Florence Matomela, South Africa (May 1966). We have had a report that Mrs Matomela, together with several others, has been released before the completion of her sentence. This is most unusual and we are happy to report it.

Mohamed Panahi, Iran (August 1968) was released from prison just before Christmas, but whether he is free on a pardon or merely on parole is not clear.

Essone N'Dong, Gabon (April 1968). In December we reported incorrectly that Essone N'Dong had been sentenced to four months' imprisonment. His sentence is, in fact, 4 years.

Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, Poland (March 1967) are charged with belonging to a secret organisation involved with the student demonstrations of March 1968. Acquaintances who have since left Poland say that all they are known to have done was to sign petitions protesting at the suppression of a Warsaw theatre production and to continue political discussions with their friends following their release in 1967. It is reported that the Public Prosecutor has asked for sentences of 7 years (in the case of Kuron) and 8 years (in the case of Modzelewski). They are also charged with collaborating with the Fourth International, a Trotskyite organisation operating abroad. Members are asked to renew their appeals on behalf of these two prisoners.

Barbara Torunczyk, Poland (September 1968) is believed to be still awaiting trial in Warsaw. It is Nina Karsow's opinion that allegations of physical ill-treatment of Polish political prisoners, notably Miss Torunczyk, are untrue.

Abu Mayanja, Uganda (November 1968). The case against Mayanja and Rajat Neogy, editor of Transition who was tried with him, was heard in the Magistrate's Court, Kampala, January 9th to 11th. Judgement has been deferred until 1st February. Mayanja was defended by the former Solicitor General of Britain, Sir Dingle Foot, and received wide press coverage.

Sabine and Horst Bonnet, East Germany (October 1968). Unfortunately a report we received that these two prisoners had been released proved false. Horst Bonnet is in Cottbus Prison; his wife is in the Women's Prison in the Barnimstrasse, East Berlin. Both are reportedly subjected to a particularly harsh regime - they are allowed no books or parcels and, although obliged to work, are not permitted to use their meagre earnings to supplement their apparently inadequate rations. They are also suffering from the cold. Our informants have emphasised that in their view only outside influence can help - please renew your appeals on their behalf.

Mohamed Shamte, Tanzania (January 1966). The three ex-Cabinet Ministers detained with Mr Shamte, whose release on November 22nd we reported in the December newsletter, have since been flown to Zanzibar where they have been detained in Langoni Prison. This prison is said to be reserved for more serious cases and we are disturbed by this development.

Ndabaningi Sithole, Rhodesia (December 1968) There are reports that the Rev. Sithole is to appear in court in Salisbury on January 20th. According to his lawyers the precise nature of the charges he will face are not known, but they understand it will probably be 'incitement to murder'. We are trying to obtain clarification of the position. Mr Sithole has been in detention for over 4 yrs.

Sadi Alkilic, Turkey (January 1967) has now been arrested in Istanbul and has begun to serve the 6 year sentence passed in 1965 as a result of a article advocating moderate socialism which he had written in 1962. In 1967, after Amnesty had given considerable publicity to the case, the Supreme Court quashed Mr Alkilic's sentence. No new trial has taken place and we do not know in what circumstances the sentence has been re-imposed.

Jusu Sheriff, Sierra Leone (December 1968) is held in Mfanta Prison, Magburaka, Northern Province. Mrs Sheriff recently came in to see us and has now returned to the United States where she is studying librarianship. We raised the issue of Mr Sheriff's detention with Siaka Stevens, the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone who is in London for the Commonwealth Conference, and with Dr Davidson Nicol, formerly Head of Fourah Bay College in Freetown and now Head of the Sierra Leone Mission to the U.N. and Ambassador in the United States.

Here are this month's prisoners:

THAI Kin Tat, Malaysia.

Mr Thai was an official of the left-wing Partai Rakyat (People's Party). He was arrested in October 1966 under the Internal Security Act - a law which enables the Government to detain without trial for an initial period of two years, which can then be extended indefinitely at the discretion of the Minister of Home Affairs. Mr Thai was one of fifty people arrested before a visit by President Johns on to Malaysia.

There seems little chance that he will be released soon, as later this year a general election will take place. In recent years the Malaysian Government has arrested its left-wing critics before each election and held them in detention for the period when an opposition campaign could be organised. Within the last few months 150 left-wing party officials have been arrested. It therefore seems unlikely that the Government will release Mr Thai unless considerable pressure is exerted on his behalf.

The Malayan Communist Party has a policy of armed revolution and the Government claims that all those detained are held because they are communists. But, although most detainees are indeed left-wing Marxists, there is little evidence that they have worked for or would support the violent overthrow of the Government, and in any case none have been brought to trial. The majority, including Mr Thai, are held to prevent them expressing criticism of the Tunku's Government which might well undermine its strength at the polls.

In August 1968 Thai Kin Tat took part in a hunger strike in protest

against the bad conditions in the detention camp. These have now been slightly improved.

Please send your cards to:

EITHER

Tunku Abdul Rahman  
Prime Minister's Office,  
Jalan Dato Onn,  
Kuala Lumpur,  
West Malaysia.

OR

Tun Abdul Razak,  
Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Jalan Dato Ahmad,  
Kuala Lumpur,  
West Malaysia.

You could also send cards to Mr Thai himself. Send them c/o Muar Special Detention Camp, Muar, Johor, West Malaysia.

Clodsmit Riani, Brazil.

Clodsmit Riani, who is an electrician, was the President of the National Confederation of Industrial Workers. An active supporter of the former President, Joao Guilart, and the Labour Party - Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro - he was arrested after the right-wing military coup d'etat in April 1964.

The coup was almost bloodless and the military acted promptly in arresting its most prominent opponents. A considerable number were able to flee the country to avoid arrest, but many others were tried by military courts on charges of subversion. In most cases the acts of 'subversion' (which are seldom specified in the charges) were not illegal at the time they were committed, i.e. before the coup. Many communists, trade unionists and leaders of the Peasant League Movement were forced to go into hiding or exile and by March 1964 over 450 persons had been deprived of their civil rights.

Clodsmit Riani was tried, together with 7 other trade unionists by the Military Tribunal of Minas Gerais in December 1965 and was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment. The charges of 'subversion' appear to have been based solely on his trade union activities.

In July 1968 his lawyer made a successful appeal and the Superior Military Tribunal reduced his sentence from 17 to 10 years. There are allegations that he has been tortured while in prison. Clodsmit Riani is married and has several children.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

President Arturo da Costa e Silva,  
Palacio Presidencial,  
Brasilia,  
Brazil.

OR

Your local Brazilian Embassy.

Lev Kvachevsky, U.S.S.R.

Lev Kvachevsky is a 30-year old engineer from Leningrad. On August 1st 1968 he was arrested in the flat of a lawyer friend of his, Yury Gendler. Unofficial reports from within the Soviet Union say the Kvachevsky, Gendler and other friends had composed a letter protesting at the Soviet policy in Czechoslovakia, in which they wrote: "We consider it our duty to defend the honour of the Russian people."

The trial lasted from December 17th until December 26th and Kvachevsky was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment under Article 70\* of the Soviet Penal Code for anti-Soviet propoganda. According to reports in the foreign press no mention of the letter appeared in the charges. The defendants were accused of possessing and distributing among students and intellectuals forbidden literature. Kvachevsky is reported to have agreed that the facts presented by the prosecution were correct, but to have denied that he had committed any crime.

\* Article 70 of the Soviet Penal Code provides for up to 7 years imprisonment for anyone "carrying out agitation and propoganda with the purpose of subverting or weakening the Soviet regime". The same penalty can be imposed on anyone guilty of "dissemination or production or harbouring for the said purpose of literature of similar content". Therefore it is possible that Kva- chevsky was sentenced merely for having been in possession of allegedly anti-Soviet literature. The phraseology of this paragraph is elastic and could cover material whose anti-Soviet nature might appear indeterminate. For exam- ple the writers Sinyavsky and Daniel were sentenced under Article 70 for hav- ing published abroad mildly satirical works on Russian life.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

Mr Alexei Kosygin,  
Chairman of the Council of Ministers  
of the U.S.S.R.;  
The Kremlin,  
Moscow,  
U.S.S.R.

OR

The Leningrad City Council of Workers  
Deputies,  
S.S.S.R., Leningrad,  
Gorodskoi Soviet Deputatov Trudyash-  
chikhsya,  
U.S.S.R.

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