

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



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MISSIONS

Northern Ireland: Dr. Zeman visited Belfast on a fact-finding mission on 16 and 17 August. He talked to politicians, lawyers and the civil and military authorities. Following this mission Amnesty intends to enquire into whether any of the detainees are persons who have neither used nor advocated violence, but in the meantime has made preliminary recommendations regarding internment. These recommendations embody legal proposals for the protection of the rights of detainees and at its next meeting the International Executive Committee will consider the overall situation in Northern Ireland.

Morocco: A third observer has been sent by Amnesty International to cover the closing stages of the trial of 193 persons at Marrakech. Dr. Woesner of Karlsruhe arrived in Marrakech on 21 August and is expected to remain there until 3 September.

Lesotho: Miss Joan Lestor M.P., visited Lesotho on behalf of Amnesty early in August. During her visit she met defence lawyers, government officials, and the Commissioner of Police, but was denied permission to visit prisoners and restrictees. She brought back the names of over 100 detainees.

Sudan: Following the abortive coup attempt in July, over 1,500 persons are said to have been arrested in the government's campaign against the Sudanese Communist Party, whose leader - Abdel Khalek Mahjoub - was executed shortly after the Nimeiry government regained power. Amnesty has asked the Sudanese Embassy in London for an assurance that the persons now arrested will be allowed fair and open trials, and is sending Mr. John Platts-Mills, Q.C., to Khartoum in order to put Amnesty's views to the governments and obtain more immediate information about the present situation. Mr. Platts-Mills is expected to be in Khartoum from 29 August to 3 September.

ORGANISATION

International Council and Assembly: The European Parliament and the local and national governments of Luxembourg are generously assisting in arrangements for the Council and Assembly meetings. Late registrations are still being received and a few more beds are available for last minute observers and delegates.

Treasurers' Meeting: It is most important that as many Treasurers as possible attend the Treasurers' meeting to be held on 23 September at the Kirchberg in Luxembourg. Details of budget proposals have been sent out and it is essential that representation at the meeting should be as wide as possible. If the Treasurer and/or Chairman of a National Sections cannot attend please arrange for other qualified representation. The proposal from the International Executive Committee is that there should be an integrated budget including all income and expenditure set at a level of £90,000 for 1971-2 and £120,000 for 1972-3. The income would be drawn from National Sections and not limited to group fees.

Rhodesia: In the February Newsletter we mentioned the "self-help" or rehabilitation schemes for released detainees operated by Christian Care, and many groups have enquired about these schemes. Those concerned should write direct to Christian Care Rehabilitation Scheme, P.O. Box 708, Bulawayo, giving all details about their particular ex-prisoner so that Christian Care can decide whether he is a suitable candidate. The group should also find out if their adoptee is willing to enter this scheme.

Note to groups with Taiwanese prisoners: The opening of the next General Assembly Meeting of the U.N. is scheduled for 21 September. As the membership of mainland China and the commensurate position of Taiwan will be one of the items on the agenda, groups should give their cases, and the general situation, as much publicity as possible around this date. It will be an appropriate time to repeat appeals to the Taiwanese authorities for the release of prisoners. Before doing so we suggest that you contact the U.N. representative of the Republic

International Secretariat, Turnagain Lane, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone 01-236 0111/3

(Secretary General: Martin Ennals - Director of Research: Zbynek Zeman - Executive Secretary: Martin Enthoven)

of China accordingly: His Excellency, Mr. Liu Chieh, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, 801 Second Avenue, 9th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017. Also may we remind you that Taiwan celebrates its National Day on 10 October, a customary day for general amnesties of prisoners.

COUNTRIES

Pakistan: A letter from the Chairman of Amnesty International, Mr. Sean MacBride S.C., has been sent to General Yahya Khan, expressing concern over the manner in which the trial of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is being conducted. Mr. MacBride recently visited Pakistan as a lawyer briefed to speak on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his letter appeals for trial by civil court, instead of by a military tribunal, and for a public hearing. It also requests an opportunity for the defendant to consult international lawyers. Since the publication of this letter it has been reported that Sheikh Mujib is to be defended by a prominent Karachi lawyer.

Indonesia: In August, Amnesty published its memorandum on political detention in Indonesia. This memorandum, which was submitted to President Suharto in February, puts forward a number of legal and humanitarian steps designed to bring detention conditions closer to internationally-accepted standards. In publishing the memorandum, and so drawing attention to the continuing detention of at least 70,000 untried political prisoners, Amnesty is appealing to the newly-elected Indonesian Government to review its present policy on political imprisonment. It asks for a new approach, in keeping with the concept of social justice laid down in the Pantjasila, the Indonesian national philosophy.

Portugal: Amnesty is investigating information on a wave of arrests in Portugal in May, June and July. Those arrested seem to be mainly trade unionists, but include some members of the Movement for a Democratic Opposition. Reports contain allegations of torture and indications that those arrested have not yet had access to a lawyer or been accorded the customary weekly visit from a relative. One of those arrested is Alvaro Monteiro who was on trial in 1970 as a member of the Movement for a Democratic Opposition. He was released at that time, together with seven others, when the court ruled that the Movement was not a subversive organisation but merely a "movement of opinion".

Burundi: In reply to enquiries from the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, the Minister of Information of the Republic of Burundi has confirmed that 450 political prisoners were freed on 1 July, the anniversary of Burundi independence. Some of these prisoners had been in jail since 1965 and others were imprisoned in 1969 following a series of political trials.

Namibia: "It is impossible to visit Namibia without realising that of all the territories in the world, this is probably the one in which human rights are most conspicuously absent." This was the verdict of Mr. John Ennals, who visited Namibia in mid-December 1969 and gave his testimony as a witness for Amnesty International before the ad hoc Working Group of Experts of the Commission on Human Rights in London in July 1970. This testimony is now available as an article in the U.N. Quarterly Objective: Justice, Vol. 3 No. 2, in which the general situation regarding legal rights, political opposition, apartheid and deportation is described. Mr. Ennals is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

HELEN VLACHOS (ED) "Free Greek Voices; a political anthology". Doric Publications Ltd., 1971. 10 Gayfere St., London SW1P 3H9. £1.80. (Mrs. Vlachos has generously said that if any Amnesty group orders the book 80 pence of the price will be donated to Amnesty). VALENTYN MOROZ "Among the Snows: Protest Writings from the Ukraine." Ukrainian Information Service 1971. 200 Liverpool Road, London N.1. 50P. PUBLICATIONS OF THE MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP- "The Religious Minorities in the Soviet Union", "The Two Irelands", "The Crimean Tatars and Volga Germans: Soviet Treatment of Two National Minorities", "The Southern Sudan and Eritrea" - are all obtainable, price 30P each plus postage, from the MRG office, 36 Craven St., London WC2N 5NG. For those who read Ukrainian four books can be recommended: they are published by SMOLOSKYP Ukrainian Publishers, of Baltimore, U.S.A., and the full address, together with a list of these publications, is available from the International Secretariat.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGNNews of Prisoners who have been on this Campaign:-

Agnes Timar - Hungary (June 1967). We have at last heard that Sister Agnes Timar was released in September 1969. She now works for a firm in Budapest and is under police surveillance.

Vladimir Mijanovic - Yugoslavia (December 1970). We have received a report that Mijanovic was due to be released on 23 July but we have been unable to confirm his release.

Erhard Weiner - East Germany (August 1970). Erhard Weiner has written to Amnesty to express his thanks for all that was done on his behalf. He was released from prison in June this year and allowed to leave for West Germany.

Vladimir Skutina - Czechoslovakia (April 1971). The August Newsletter stated that Skutina's sentence had been increased to four years' imprisonment by an appeal court in Hradec Kralove. This was inaccurate in that the proceedings constituted not the appeal but a completely new trial with new charges based on an act of indictment prepared in 1969 but not used for the trial in March this year. Skutina will be required to serve the four-year sentence passed at the second trial. The first sentence of two years has been invalidated.

This month's prisoners:Pavlos Nepheloudis - GREECE

Pavlos Nepheloudis is a 60-year-old journalist. He is in Aegina prison on the island of Aegina, serving a life sentence.

Mr. Nepheloudis was an active member of the Greek Communist party, until this was banned in Greece in 1949 after the Civil War. He was imprisoned from 1948 to 1952 for having been a member of the Communist Party, and soon after being released from prison was exiled. He returned to the country in 1964 to become a very active member of the EDA party (the only left-wing political party in Greece) and the editor of the newspaper Patrida. In August, 1967, after the military coup, Pavlos Nepheloudis was arrested. For a long time he was detained without charge but was eventually charged with subversion, under Law 509, and sentenced by a military court in 1969.

Mr. Nepheloudis was ill in the prison hospital earlier this year. His wife is ill and has had several operations for malignant tumours and the family is living under very strained conditions. His brother was also imprisoned but has been released. Letters to the authorities should plead for Mr. Nepheloudis' release on humanitarian grounds, especially in view of his age. Please send your cards to: H.E. George Papadopoulos, Prime Minister of Greece, Palaia Anaktoria, Queen Sofia Avenue, Athens, Greece; or, Archishop Hieronymous, Patriarchion, Athens, Greece.

Vladimir Lvovich GERSHUNI - USSR

Prior to his arrest in October 1969, Vladimir Gershuni, a Russian Jew from Moscow, worked as a bricklayer. He has also been an active member of the unofficial civil rights movement in the Soviet Union: his signature appeared on the appeal by the Action Group for the Defence of Civil Rights in the USSR to the United Nations, forwarded to New York by Amnesty International. The basis for his arrest was his possession of 20 copies of a leaflet in defence of Major-General Grigorenko. Witnesses confirmed that Gershuni had condemned the use of Soviet armed forces in Czechoslovakia, that he had views critical of the Soviet leadership and that he had brought to work copies of Czech newspapers from the pre-August 1968 period. All denied that he was mentally ill, and emphasised his good character and performance at work.

Having been diagnosed by psychiatrists as being allegedly of unsound mind, he was excluded from his trial according to Soviet law. The case against him was based on Article 190, section 1 of the RSFSR Penal Code, "distribution of clearly false fabrications discrediting the Soviet State and public order." The court concluded that Gershuni should be sent to a psychiatric hospital of "special type" and should be "released from custody on arrival".

The meaning of the latter phrase is unclear. Gershuni was sent to Butyrki prison hospital in Moscow and kept in a cell with criminals. He went on hunger strike and was eventually moved to a cell occupied by political prisoners. The latest reports state that he is in a psychiatric hospital in Orel, a former prison. He has written a diary, the text of which was smuggled out by a visitor. It tells a horrifying story of overcrowded conditions, the physical effects of the "treatment" with large doses of the drugs Aminazin and Halperidol and acts of brutality by the administration. The diary is lucid and coherent, although Gershuni complains of the loss of memory and fatigue caused by the drugs. Gershuni was sentenced to ten years' labour camp in 1949 for participating in an anti-Stalinist youth group. He served part of his sentence in the labour camp described in "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" by Solshenitsyn. Send your cards to:

EITHER

Lieutenant-Colonel Baryshnikov,
Superintendent of the Orel Special
Psychiatric Hospital,
SSR,
g. Orel,
uchrezhdenie IZ-55/1,
Podpolkovniku Baryshnikovu.

OR

Mr. N. Podgorny,
Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,
SSSR,
Moskva,
Kreml,
Predsedatelyu Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo
Sovieta SSSR,
N. Podgornomu.

Mohammed Maqbool Damnoo - INDIA (Kashmir)

This prisoner is about 30 years of age and comes from a poor Sopore family living 30 miles north of Srinagar. An old widowed mother without any source of support is his only relative.

Kashmir has been a focus point of bitter dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947. The majority of the population is Muslim but the ruler of Kashmir in 1947 was a Hindu who decided, as a temporary measure, that the state should become part of India. The Indian Government agreed to hold a plebiscite for Kashmir to decide its own future, but has not done so. At the present time it is impossible to say what percentage of the population of Indian Kashmir would favour a change in the state's situation, although two main organisations campaigning for self-determination - the Plebiscite Front and the Awami Action Committee - have widespread support. India's refusal to consider any form of self-determination remains absolute. Relations between Pakistan and India have deteriorated dramatically since March 1971 and this may well be reflected in Delhi's attitude to events in Kashmir.

In January 1971 the Indian government announced the mid-term general elections for the Federal Parliament, in which Kashmir has six seats. The Plebiscite Front declared that they would contest and were prepared to work within the framework of the Indian Constitution. The Indian government banned the Front and arrested political workers and sympathisers. Although there were some releases after the elections Mr. Damnoo remains in detention.

Mr. Damnoo, who is a believer in non-violence, was first arrested in 1965 on charges of subversive activities. We are told that he was tortured while interrogated. He was jailed under the Preventive Detention Act. In 1969 he was released following a written petition. At the time of his second arrest, in July 1970, he was working as Secretary to the Muslim Education Trust, Sopore, which is a philanthropic non-political organisation that helps to finance students. The charges against him are not known, and he has not been brought to trial.

Please send your cards to: The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. G.M. Saddiq, Srinagar, Kashmir, India; or to the Indian Ambassador in your country.