

amnesty international newsletter

Vol. III No. 10

October 1973

Founded 1961

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEETS UNDER SHADOW OF CRISIS IN CHILE

As delegates from 24 nations arrived in Vienna for the Sixth International Council Meeting of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, news of mass arrests and summary executions following the military coup in Chile provided grim evidence of the enormous tasks still facing the movement in its efforts to defend Human Rights throughout the world.

The Council, which met from the 12th to 16th September in Albert Schweitzer Haus as guests of AI's Austrian Section, debated a wide range of resolutions determining policy for the coming year. Among the 54 delegates was the largest number of representatives at any such Council Meeting from Third World Nations and AI's non-European membership. National Sections represented included Bangladesh, Gambia, India, Japan, South Korea, Nepal and Peru, as well as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.S.A.

The Council was opened by Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky who defended his outspoken support for Soviet Scientist and Human Rights advocate, Andrei Sakharov, by appealing to "a higher standard of international co-operation." Speaking of the need to protect the rights of man, he said: "...one cannot be silent about the events in Chile and the death of Allende, one cannot be silent for many reasons, not the least of which is that one would otherwise forego the moral right to come out in the defence of Sakharov and his colleagues... Certainly this seems to many people a plea for mercy; but behind it lies my conviction, which no man who wishes to fight on behalf of humanity can challenge, so I believe, that it must be more useful to live for ideas than to die for them."

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Following the elections held by the Council and the first meeting of newly elected Committee, the members of the IEC are:

Chairman: Sean MacBride, S.C.

Vice-Chairman: Eric Baker (Britain)

Treasurer: Lothar Belck (Switzerland)

Dirk Börner (Germany)

Herman von Geuns (Holland), co-opted

Thomas Hammarberg (Sweden)

Kari Poppe (Norway)

Marie Jose Protais (France)

Secretariat member to be elected

In response to the events following the 11th September in Chile, the International Council unanimously asked for the intervention of UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organisation

of American States. The Council went on record as being "extremely disturbed about the reported killings and arrests of civilians by the military rulers in Chile and gravely shocked by their announced purpose to expel persons who have taken asylum in Chile", and called upon the military rulers "to stop such killings and arrests immediately and to respect the freedom of political refugees." At its formal conclusion, the Council stood in silence in memory of President Salvadore Allende.

ANNUAL REPORT DOCUMENTS "MASSIVE BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC MORALITY"

Government repression of dissent in the past year has brought a sharp rise in AI's work on behalf of prisoners of conscience all over the world. AI's efforts in defence of Human freedom during 1972-73 are documented in the Annual Report presented by Sean MacBride to the Council at its Vienna Meeting. In his Preface to the Report Sean MacBride called upon the world's churches, trade unions and professional bodies to "rise in defence of the oppressed wherever they may be; otherwise they too will be engulfed in this escalation of brutality." Copies of the illustrated Report, detailing the scope of AI's work are available from the Secretariat: 50p per copy; 30p for members.

SOVIET "GROUP 73" SENDS GREETINGS

Four members of a Soviet Human Rights Committee called "Group 73" sent greetings to the International Council. The message read in part: 'We have been used to hearing from childhood such phrases as 'mass political action' and we have come to believe that these were the things the whole world was pre-occupied with. As for words like 'conscience', 'dignity', 'convictions', we have been accustomed to apply them exclusively to the exertions and strivings of individual human beings... And so we were astonished and could not grasp at first the fact that it is possible to speak to total strangers about these things, even though they live in totally different conditions and cultures. It is this above all that we prize in your example and your activity, in so far as we are in a position to judge it. Please accept our best wishes.'

In reply, Secretary General Martin Ennals sent the following cable: "The Council of Amnesty International, which has been meeting in Vienna, warmly thanks you and your friends for your message of good wishes. It is most heartening to learn of your concern for human rights everywhere. Such concern is the basis of the work of Amnesty International. We are touched by your support."

COUNCIL PROPOSES STUDY OF VIOLENCE

In order to review problems of the definition of violence within the statute, the Council agreed to establish a committee on violence composed of Amnesty members selected by the IEC. The committee will try to resolve the recurring question of the Amnesty position on violence and human rights.

The Council also recommended more extensive use of the Borderline Committee in the resolution of adoption decisions.

It was further decided by the Council to reaffirm the stand of AI against capital punishment, especially in the cases of political prisoners.

CONTINUING ACTION AGAINST TORTURE

In addition to formal plenary sessions, Council delegates met in small Working Parties to discuss AI policy on four major issues: the global Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, the Amnesty position on violence and Human Rights, the growth of Amnesty in non-European nations and the development of new techniques for bringing moral pressure on governments.

Of major concern was the future shape of AI's Campaign for the Abolition of Torture. Reports were received on the progress of the International Appeal to the United Nations (over 10,000 signatures have been collected in South Korea alone) and on the action plans for the December Conference in Paris. It was agreed that a strategy be developed immediately for the setting up of a continuing international machinery against torture to carry on the work which AI has launched. Such an international agency, either working with or independent of AI, would establish the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture as a world concern, thereby breaking through the popular conception that the treatment of the citizen is the concern of the sovereign state alone.

NEW AMNESTY TECHNIQUES EXPLORED AND FAR-REACHING GROWTH PLAN ENDORSED

Current AI techniques such as letter-writing, postcard campaigns, appeals, etc. were reviewed and a report received on new Secretariat techniques. The Council accepted the report of the Working Party underlining the urgent need to generate new action ideas at the group and National Section Level. The implementation of new publicity and pressure techniques will require greater organisation at the Section level and recommendations were brought forward urging Sections to supervise group activities and to strengthen co-ordination mechanisms for fast-working and effective National lobbies able to respond to Human Rights crises.

The vital importance of AI's National Sections was also stressed in the Working Party on Development. Commended by the Council to the Executive were the institution of a Field Secretary scheme to build AI's work in Latin America, Asia and Africa; experiments with new forms of AI membership; the preparation of more information in languages other than English; the establishment of an AI film and slide library and the holding of a regional AI conference in Asia this year. It was also proposed that the Secretariat prepare more ready-to-use materials for growing Sections, such as speakers' kits and fund-raising aids.

The Council also established a formal guideline for the acceptance of financial contributions from governments, social institutions and individuals.

COUNCIL TRIBUTE TO ZBYNEK ZEMAN

The resignation of AI's Head of Research, Dr. Zbynek Zeman who, after three years at the Secretariat is leaving to resume his career as a scholar and author, was announced by Sean Mac Bride, who paid tribute to the building of the Research Department which Dr. Zeman had inspired and directed.

PRISONER THANKS AMNESTY MEMBERS FOR SOLIDARITY WITH HIS PEOPLE

Asuncion, Paraguay, 27th August, 1973

Dear members of Amnesty International:

I am writing to you to express my kindest regards and my sincere thanks for the help given to me during my stay in prison.

All the prisoners and, why not say it, all the Paraguayan people appreciate and greatly value the humane work which you are extending from your far country to ours.

Thanks to you everybody knows that in Paraguay are the longest-serving prisoners in the world, cruelly treated throughout their stay in prisons.

The solidarity which you are giving the Paraguayan people has much value: economically it helps to alleviate certain difficult situations and from the human point of view, it strengthens the morale of the prisoners and their families, and strengthens the will to continue struggling to obtain the release of their loved ones, as they know that in this task they are not alone but are being supported and encouraged by everyone...

I stayed in prison one year where the cell was 3.20m x 2.20m x 2m high, with no internal sanitation. This cell was shared by five prisoners. Our physical needs were served by tin containers and bottles. In this jail I experienced the notorious chain. Twelve prisoners were tied with a collective chain, consisting of a large bar with ring and lock devices, for 23 hours a day. We suffered this system of torture for two years, with a bad and inhuman diet. This state of living damages the health, more seriously for older persons as myself. At 62 years of age, I feel that my whole body has been destroyed, especially my stomach; it is this that most affects the prisoners. Systematic torture is not only limited to prisons; beforehand, the less fortunate are savagely tortured to give confessions...



FROM PAST CAMPAIGNS

DANIEL CABRITA was released from prison in Portugal on 30 June this year and resumed his old job in July. Catarina, his only child, still lives with her grandmother, but her father takes her to his home every weekend.

William MUKARATI, SOUTH AFRICA

William Mukarati has been in preventive detention for eight years now. He was a founding member of the People's Caretaker Council, an African nationalist political organisation which opposed the establishment of white minority rule in Rhodesia during U.D.I. He was initially held at Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp, but was later transferred to Gwelo Prison where he contracted a permanent kidney disease. From then onwards his health continued to deteriorate steadily. He has had to undergo frequent medical treatment for high blood pressure, and during 1971 it was feared that he had had a nervous breakdown. During October 1972 he was moved back to Gonakudzingwa (now a detention camp), and while he appeared to be in a better frame of mind after the move, he continues to visit the hospital frequently for blood pressure check-ups and is said to be still in bad health.

Please send politely-worded postcards to: The Hon. Ian Smith, Prime Minister and to: The Hon. D. Lardner-Burke, Minister of Law, Order and Justice, Causeway, Salisbury, Rhodesia appealing for his release on humanitarian grounds.

Spyros ZYMARAS, GREECE

Spyros Zymaras, now in his late fifties, was first arrested in 1945 and sentenced in 1947 for an alleged offence committed during the Occupation when he was serving with ELAS (Greek National Liberation Army). He was sentenced to life imprisonment and remained in prison for 19 years, from 1945-64. At Easter 1964 he was released under Law 2058, with 5 years' suspension. On 21 April 1967, when the Colonels seized power, he was again arrested and deported to Yioura. In March 1968 he was charged under Law 509. During a search at the EDA office (United Democratic Left Party, which functioned legally until 21 April 1967), a list had been found with the names of those who collected money for the party and Zymaras' name was amongst these. He was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, later reduced to 3 years. This sentence for "illegal collection" cancelled the 5 years' suspension and reactivated his earlier life sentence.

During the time of his freedom (Easter 1964 - 21 April 1967), Zymaras had married and had a son born in 1966. At the time of his re-arrest, his wife was three months pregnant with another child. This second child, a girl, was born at the end of 1967 and has never seen her father. In 1970 his wife travelled from Siatista, where

she was living with the children, to visit her husband in Korydallos prison. In Omonoia Square in Athens she slipped and broke her leg. She was taken to hospital where she was found to have cancer and from there to the Agios Savvas Cancer Hospital. In two months she was dead. Thus, the two children are left without parents and Spyros Zymaras remains alone, widowed in prison.

He is excluded from the amnesty for political prisoners in Greece, which was declared on 19 August 1973, because his alleged offence was committed before 21 April 1967. However, but for the coup of the 21 April there would have been no offence of illegal collection for EDA.

Zymaras has appealed for inclusion in the amnesty, but his appeal has been rejected.

Please send politely-worded cards appealing for the inclusion of Zymaras in the amnesty to: His Excellency George Papadopoulos, President, Athens, Greece; and to: His Excellency Odysseus Anghelis, Vice-President, Athens, Greece.

Vladimir Mikhailovich BUZHOVKO, USSR

At the beginning of 1973, AI received a copy of a list of members of dissident Baptist groups who had been imprisoned during 1972 under the Soviet laws limiting freedom of religion. AI has adopted most of these cases, among them that of Vladimir Mikhailovich Bukhovko, aged 34, from the Belorussian Republic (in the west of the country, adjacent to the Polish border).

Mr. Bukhovko, who is married and has four dependants, was arrested on the 8th August 1972 and charged under Articles 139 and 222 of the Belorussian Penal Code: Article 139 governs the separation of Church and State and of schools from the Church decrees, and Article 222 concerns "infringement of person and rights of citizens under appearance of performing religious ceremonies." At his trial he was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to 5 years in a labour camp with ordinary regime. Earlier in 1972, Mr. Bukhovko's father, who lived in the same small community, had been sentenced to three years in a labour camp with strict regime on similar charges.

Please send cards appealing for this prisoner's release to: Nikolai Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; and to: Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; addressed as follows: SSR, g. Moskva, Kreml, Predsedatelyu Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Sovieta SSSR, N. Podgornomu; and: SSR, g. Moskva, Kreml, Generalnomu Sekretaryu TsK KPSS, L. Brezhnevu.

MADAME NGO BA THANH FREE

One of South Vietnam's best-known political prisoners, the lawyer and pacifist, Mme. Ngo Ba Thanh, was released last month after 2 years in prison without trial. She spent the last 5 months in solitary confinement in the police hospital in Saigon, after starting a hunger strike in April, when she vowed to take only liquids until she was freed.

Mme. Ngo Ba Thanh was adopted by Amnesty as a Prisoner of Conscience and she was the object of a world campaign on her behalf.

TWENTY GREEK PRISONERS STILL HELD

Two of the prisoners who remained in prison after the amnesty for political prisoners which was declared 19 August have now been released. They are ELENI VOUGLARI GOLEMAS and CONSTANTINOS NIKOLOPOULOS. According to the most recent reports from Athens 20 political prisoners are still detained. AI Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS has written to President PAPADOPOULOS appealing for the inclusion of these remaining prisoners in the amnesty.

AI ACTS TO FREE DETAINEES STILL KEPT BY PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

Following the agreement to release Pakistani POW's in India and stranded Bengalis in Pakistan (September Newsletter), MARTIN ENNALS wrote to President ZULFIKAR BHUTTO seeking official assurances that the categories of Bengalis not specified in the agreement will be released: 260 civilians arrested in May, 1,000 Bengalis believed detained for attempted border crossings, a number of Bengalis sentenced by military tribunals to long terms of imprisonment early last year and 39,000 Bengali military personnel who took no part in the 1971 war yet who are detained in 15 camps in Pakistan.

The number of persons detained in Bangladesh on broad charges of collaboration was estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000, following an AI research mission to the region this summer. Based on the research mission report, the Secretary General is now requesting the Bangladesh Government to announce a general amnesty on the 16th December, the second Bangladesh independence anniversary, to include all alleged collaborators who did not commit criminal offences during the liberation war.

HUNGARIAN POET BROUGHT TO TRIAL

After five years of harassment, MIKLOS HARASZTI, a young Hungarian poet, has again been brought to trial to face charges of 'subversion'. Haraszti, first imprisoned in 1968 on conspiracy charges has a long record of conflict with the Hungarian authorities. In 1969, his poem about Che Guevara was criticised as leftist by the party organ *Nepszabadsag* and in 1970 and 1971 he was barred from University and placed under police surveillance which was lifted only after he resorted to a lengthy hunger strike.

After working in a factory, Haraszti wrote a book critical of the conditions of the 'piece-rate' workers. Publication of this work was refused in Hungary but it circulated in manuscript form. It was this that led to Haraszti's latest arrest on the 22nd May.

GRIGORENKO IN NEW MENTAL HOSPITAL

One of AI's longest-suffering prisoners, ex-Major General PYOTR GRIGOREVICH GRIGORENKO has been transferred from the Special Psychiatric Hospital at Chernyakhovsk where he has been confined for the past three years to an ordinary mental hospital at Stolbovaya, 35 miles outside Moscow. He is to receive compulsory 'treatment' there for a further six months.

AI SEEKS END TO ADEN FIRING SQUAD

AI again urged the Secretary General of the Arab League, MAHMUD RIAD, to intervene to prevent further executions in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Hundreds of men have been shot to death since the communist wing of the NLF party assumed power in Aden four years ago.

AMNESTY PATRON PABLO NERUDA DIES

Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet and statesman, died in a Santiago hospital 12 days after the coup that overthrew President Salvadore Allende. Pablo Neruda, a figure of great stature in the world community both as a literary giant and a deeply committed political activist, was one of the original patrons of Amnesty International. Secretary General Martin Ennals conveyed the sympathy and respect of Amnesty International to the poet's wife.

AI PROTESTS SOUTH AFRICAN KILLINGS

South African police shot dead 11 African miners who were striking over pay increases, in what officials claimed as a riot situation. The incident took place at the Western Deep Level Mines, Carletonville, on 12 September.

Accounts of the tragedy have conflicted but it is established that police were called in when the mine's machine operators, who were striking over pay differentials between themselves and unskilled workers, refused to accept the management rejection of their demands. South African Prime Minister, B.J. VORSTER and the Deputy Minister of Police stated that police opened fire to protect themselves and mine property and had no option but to shoot; however, Mr. Vorster has refused a judicial inquiry into the events.

The British Section of AI in conjunction with the Secretariat condemned the shooting. A statement said that the police claims were "unacceptable" and contradictory. British Section Director, VICTOR JOKEL, expressed concern that the police action might signal renewed and severe repression in reaction to the series of illegal strikes by African workers since December 1973 to improve their working conditions.

RESEARCHERS SOUGHT FOR SECRETARIAT

Two researchers are being recruited for the International Secretariat:

- EAST ASIA: Languages required - Chinese and Vietnamese and/or Japanese
- EASTERN EUROPE: Languages required - German and/or Russian useful

Salaries negotiable. APPLY: Administrative Manager, International Secretariat, 53 Theobald's Road, LONDON WC1X 8SP.