

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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

NEWSLETTER

We would like Amnesty Groups to think of themselves as shareholders in the many Amnesty activities in which they may not be directly participating. They are shareholders because only their financial support and the weight of public opinion they represent enable Amnesty to exert its influence and to bring help to political prisoners and their families. Groups that may not be having great success with their own prisoners can still legitimately feel that they are helping in Amnesty's work. The big part played by Amnesty in Rhodesia is a case in point.

RHODESIA Amnesty International sent a team of three, Robert Swann from H.Q., Aiden Foster-Carter and Antonia Caccia, both from the Eton College Amnesty Group - to work as voluntary relief workers, under the auspices of the Christian Council of Rhodesia in order to distribute relief to the families of political restrictees and detainees. The group established offices in Salisbury and Buluwayo and worked closely with the Prison Education Committee (Antonia visited two of the prisons) distributing considerable sums of money. They also saw restrictees in Buluwayo African Hospital, made arrangements for bulk delivery of clothes to camps (hitherto forbidden by the regime) and got information which helped in preparing test-cases to challenge the legal validity of restriction detention orders.

The regime eventually ordered the team to leave Rhodesia but arrangements have been made which, we hope, will enable the work to go on. Subsequently Peter Benenson went out for a week and, on his return, prepared a report to Commonwealth Heads of State which attracted considerable attention.

Amnesty International has approximately 90 adopted Rhodesian prisoners and nearly all the groups responsible are giving financial help. If any Group would like to adopt a Rhodesian family in addition to their quota of prisoners, please let us know.

GROUP NEWS from the International Secretariat.

The number of groups outside Britain continues to grow at a very encouraging rate - 46 in the last 3 months! We apologise to new groups for the delay in sending them their case sheets but at the rate of 4 new groups a week, the extra work involved is considerable. There are now over 200 groups outside Britain, including 2 groups in Finland, a second group in Tasmania, a fourth group in New Zealand and the first group in Queensland, Australia.

Several National Sections have sent in substantial donations to the Emergency Fund, including £500 from the Swedish Section raised at the soiree they held in January. The students of Hellerup Gymnasium in Denmark organised a large fund raising campaign on behalf of Amnesty and succeeded in raising £207 for the International Secretariat. We are most grateful for the way in which a number of Sections and groups have responded to our appeal for funds.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE met in London over the weekend of 12th and 13th March. The heads of National Sections will be reporting back to their Groups and members about the decisions which were taken at the Meeting.

NEWS FROM BRITISH SECTION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING At last year's adjourned A.G.M. on 11th December the new Constitution was finally settled. Copies are available on request. The date of the 1966 MEETING is SATURDAY, 11th JUNE at the UNIVERSITY of BRISTOL UNION. The Threes Groups' meeting will begin about 11 a.m. Full details later. Where 10 or more people travel together British Rail offer a reduced fare. For details enquire at your local station. We shall not be arranging any overnight accommodation. If you have any items for the agenda please let us have them in good time.

RAFFLE The raffle for 1966 is being organised and you will soon be receiving details and tickets.

ART SALE Once again the KNIGHTSBRIDGE Group under the inspired leadership of Mrs. Marian Sander and with the help of Peyton Skipwith and others organised a very successful Art Auction at the Chenil Galleries, Chelsea on 7th 8th and 9th March and raised the magnificent sum of nearly £3,000 for our work. Congratulations and many thanks for the tremendous hard work.

FILM Please note that the film 'Prisoner of Conscience' is obtainable from the CONCORD FILM COUNCIL, NACTON, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK. This is a very good production and most useful for Group meetings.

TAPE The B.B.C. World Service recently broadcast a 30 minute programme on the work of Amnesty called "A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE". It includes on-the-spot recordings of Groups at work, as well as interviews with people at head office. We hope to have a tape of this broadcast recorded at $\frac{3}{4}$ i.p.s. This may be borrowed free of charge from us. This tape is very suitable for use in a small group.

DR. GANDRA In January we received a New Year card from Dr. Gandra addressed to Veronica Wolff, Eileen Murphy, Pat Rees, Peter Babe and Cathy Beach. They are not known here in the office. Perhaps this message will reach them.

NEW GROUPS Edinburgh University, Bromley Liberal Party, Guildford Grammar School, Chorley Day Training College, York University, Queens College, Cambridge, Hampstead Unitarians, Nottingham University, Liverpool, Kendal, Bournemouth Humanists, Girton College, Cambridge and Keele University.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY was celebrated in various ways all over the country, ceremonies were held in Lincoln Cathedral and Derby Cathedral. Other groups held film shows and had special meetings etc.

Denstone College showed great initiative by arranging a Flag Day in Uttoxeter. The boys made their own flags and sold over 900, and had a car touring the town broadcasting an appeal to buy the flags and visit a demonstration of Amnesty's work. All this happened on a very wet miserable day.

BRITISH SECTION ACTIVITIES In the last few weeks the British Section has acted in several cases where it has seemed more appropriate for action to come from the centre than from local Groups.

When Mr. Forbes Burnham paid a fleeting visit to London we sent a telegram on behalf of all Groups with prisoners in British Guiana.

At the request of the Australian Section we have investigated a refugee problem concerning West Irian and Papua.

Moves are also on foot in connection with Zanzibar and Burma. Both these involve our Parliamentary Group and action is for the moment held up, pending the Election.

Please note two corrections on the List of Threes Groups

Please change READING SCHOOL to LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL, READING

and for LETCHWOTH GROUP the joint secretaries are Mrs. Gallop of 36 William Way and Mrs. Bowyer of 9 William Way, Letchworth in place of Mrs. E. Aitken.

MARCH, 1966

The three monthly appearance of the Newsletter, and its circulation among Amnesty Groups throughout the world, is an important link between the "Library" and Groups. In fact, it is the only document that goes to all Groups, and as a means of imparting in some cases vital information, -at times it plays the role of an "Extra Information Sheet"-, it is most important for us in the "Library" to know that it is read by all members of Amnesty Groups.

We would therefore very much appreciate it if Secretaries would ensure that the Newsletter, or at least this second sheet containing news exclusively from the "Library" does in fact go to all members of your Sections.

(Andrew Mann, Head of Investigation Department)

1. Eastern Europe

At present the country we know most about in Eastern Europe is East Germany and the prisoners on our files have now been checked by three separate authorities. Although this has in itself produced complications of its own, as they do not all agree with each other the general picture is much clearer and we should now be able to avoid giving out cases of prisoners who have been already released. In November many Groups were advised that their prisoners had been reported released, and were asked to confirm the news if they could. The latter step now seems to be even more necessary because these releases have not always been confirmed by other authorities e.g. Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen, who have just returned a list to us and who are perhaps the most reliable source of information, have not confirmed every one of the releases reported in November.

Connected with the Amnesty report on prison conditions in East Germany, several members of the "Library" staff will be visiting West, and if possible East Germany during the coming months. Wherever possible additional enquiries will be made about the more difficult or obscure cases adopted by Groups.

A problem which is looming on the horizon is that of prisoners in Hungary. There have been several arrests recently of people charged mostly with "sedition" or "agitation" against the security of the state and as this charge probably concerns complaining in public about the recent price increases in the country they seem to be definite cases of Prisoners of Conscience. Many names have been given in the newspapers and on the radio and it is said that many more people are in prison whose names have not been mentioned at all. Up to now the only real source of information has been the Rev. Carl Fabian of Radio Free Europe in Munich but he has been so overwhelmed by letters from Amnesty Groups that he has suggested that he passes on all information he has to Amnesty Headquarters for us to distribute. Amnesty Groups are therefore requested not to write to him anymore. We are hoping that we will get more information about Hungary within the next month or so, and Groups are asked to be patient for the time being, to continue with their requests for information from the Hungarian authorities and to follow-up any clues that they can lay their hands on.

Amnesty members will no doubt have read in the newspapers of the trial of the writers SINIAVSKY and DANIEL in the U.S.S.R. and British members will have been particularly concerned about GERALD BROOKE. All these people are adopted by Amnesty Groups but it should be pointed out that Amnesty's work is most valuable when it brings attention to cases which are unknown and not favoured by world attention. An example could be of the young Russian writer VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY who is confined to a Mental Institution for his political views and for his active support of his fellow writers Siniavsky and Daniel.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe we have little to report. The Swedish Section have formed a committee to work on their prisoners in Czechoslovakia and are fighting hard to get information from that rather silent part of the world. From Czechoslovakia, we had received very little of import until today when a letter arrived from a prisoner and his mother expressing their thanks for Amnesty's work on his behalf.

(Bruce Laird)

2. Rhodesia

a. A resume of impressions as reported by the Johannesburg Sunday Times - 13.3.66.

Taking the average white Rhodesian, spirits are high in a stubbornly determined sort of way. Any deviation as suggested by liberal university groups are looked

upon as a sure beginning of black domination. Members of Parliament go so far as to compare "Rhodesia 1966" with "Britain 1940".

The Deputy Minister of Information, Mr. van der Byl justifies Press censorship and morale-boosting propaganda on the grounds that Whites need help to sustain high morale and determination. One teacher says: "I suppose one reason why we are so willing to face the odds is because we don't really know what these odds are".

The local Press is censored so that any news item likely to arouse alarm and despondency - or even doubts - is simply deleted. Criticism of the existing order in editorial comments is represented by the blind, silent stare of black, white spaces. Anything "unfavourable" in overseas and other non-Rhodesian newspapers and periodicals can only be speculated on, because such publications never get as far as book stands.

Radio services are similarly filtered disturbances in "Black States" emphasised, and pro Rhodesian support, no matter how insignificant, prominently presented.

Unemployment

There is a certain amount of unemployment amongst the White workers and a great deal of unemployment amongst the Africans. Everything possible is attempted to find alternative work for the Europeans, but nothing at all is being done for the Africans. In an effort to avoid large-scale retrenchment, manufacturers are being encouraged to make greater use of hand labour in place of machines - an industrial revolution in reverse!

But... THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, as stated by a leading Salisbury professional man. What he does not say is that since December of last year NO LABOUR FIGURES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED.

b. Groups are reminded, that if they wish to send monies to their adopted restrictee or prisoner in Rhodesia, they should write out a cheque to "Amnesty International" and send it into Head Office in London. We will ensure that the money is transferred to Rhodesia and that our office in Salisbury is informed of this transfer.

(Mrs. Maryls Deeds)

3. Yugoslavia N.B.

Some 40 cases of political prisoners on the prison-island Goli Okok were listed in an anonymous letter received by an Amnesty Group in Switzerland this January. In most cases, these prisoners were sent out for adoption as "Investigation Cases".

Unfortunately, it very soon became clear that several, if not all of these prisoners are not Prisoners of Conscience.

Subsequent to a recent visit by two members of the "Library" staff to the Yugoslav Embassy in London, it was felt that, although we cannot be sure in all cases, these investigation prisoners should be returned to the "Library" for further research at Headquarters.

On the other hand, we are at present preparing a Background Paper on Yugoslavia which will bring particular attention to the type of prisoner that Groups may come to adopt, either as bona fide Prisoners of Conscience or Investigation Cases. In view of this, Groups may prefer to wait until they receive further advice before returning these prisoners. However, this Paper is unfortunately delayed until earliest mid-April.

Whatever Groups finally decide, please bear strongly in mind that unless we adopt extreme tact and discretion with the Yugoslav authorities, we are likely to seriously prejudice our reasonably good relations with them. After all they are not likely to be as eager as ourselves to see the difference between a bona fide Prisoner of Conscience and a simple investigation case.

(Andrew Mann)

4. What has been known as the "Library" at Head Office has recently begun to develop a new section, i.e. a 'real' library of books. The purpose of this scheme is twofold:- 1) to build up a reference library of new and reliable books on countries where there are Prisoners of Conscience and on questions concerning them, and 2) to gather as comprehensive a collection as possible of any books by and on Prisoners of Conscience present and past. All these books are and will be available in London to anybody working with and for Amnesty International. We hope to publish short reviews and recommendations of books regularly in the Bulletin.

As the precarious position of our finance is well known, gifts of books, old and new, would be very welcome!

(Mrs. Christel Marsh)