

monthly newsletter from amnesty international



postcards for prisoners campaign

August
JUNE 1970

First some news about prisoners who have been on this campaign:-

Dr. Johannes Braun - East Germany (April 1970) - has been released.

Maciej Kozlowski- Poland (March 1970) - was released at the beginning of July.

Madam Loh Miaw Gong - Singapore (April 1970) - was released on June 24th 1970 after nearly seven years of political detention in Singapore. She was detained for her involvement in a general strike called by the banned Singapore Association of Trade Unions in October 1963. A statement by Madam Loh, issued on the day of her release, made it clear that she renounced all communist beliefs and would take no further part in political activities.

Dr. Telo de Mascarenhas - (Portugal, September 1966). He was released from prison a few weeks after the amnesty was pronounced in April 1970. He first spent some time in his daughter's home in Portugal. Thanks to rest and medical care his health has now improved. In July he spent two days in London where he visited the International Secretariat and saw members of the adopting group and other people who had been working for his release. His visit received some coverage in the British press. Dr. Mascarenhas has now left for India and will join his wife who is living in Goa.

Rizal and Quintin Yuyitung - (Taiwan, June 1970). We have just been informed that the trial will take place on August 14th in Taipeh before the military court. The charges are not yet known.

This month's prisoners:-Ahmed Benjelloun - MOROCCO

Ahmed Benjelloun was deported to Morocco from Spain in February 1970 at the request of the Moroccan authorities. No legal charges were outstanding against him in Spain at the time of his deportation and none has been brought against him since that time. No extradition agreement exists between Spain and Morocco: the deportation was thus, in effect, kidnapping.

Monsieur Benjelloun is a member of the left-wing opposition party, Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (UNFP) which was led by Ben Barka until he disappeared in 1965. Another member of this Party was deported to Spain with M. Benjelloun, and UNFP sources say that 19 of their members inside Morocco have disappeared in the last nine months.

It is thought that M. Benjelloun and other UNFP prisoners may be charged with plotting to overthrow the governments of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria for the benefit of Eastern Arab governments. If this charge is justified the prisoners will of course be ineligible as prisoners of conscience. But in view of precedents in recent Moroccan history we intend to regard M. Benjelloun as an Amnesty prisoner unless his guilt is proved.

Meanwhile, the place of M. Benjelloun's detention has not been revealed; he is thought to be held for questioning by the police. No lawyer has been allowed to see him and no date has been set for a trial.

Morocco is now returning to constitutional rule with a 'status exception' which has lasted for five years. Pressure should be brought on the Moroccan government to regularise the situation of prisoners such as M. Benjelloun as part of the return to democracy.

Cards should be sent to:

EITHER

King Hassam II,
Palais Royal,
Rabat,
Morocco.

OR

The Moroccan Embassy in your own country.

They should ask that a date be set for M. Benjelloun's trial and ask what provision has been made for his legal defence.

Erhard WEINER - EAST GERMANY

Before his arrest in January 1965, Erhard Weiner was a manager in a trading organisations in East Berlin, where he also lived with his wife and daughter. He was born in 1931 in Breslau, the capital of Silesia province, which then belonged to Germany.

After the war Silesia and the other territories east of the rivers Oder and Neisse were placed under Polish administration by the Allies. Almost all the German population fled to West Germany where many of these exiles formed their own associations. Erhard Weiner, living in East Berlin, belonged to one of these - the Schlesische Landsmannschaft or Silesian Countrymen's Organisation. He had to keep this secret - such organisations are forbidden in East Germany, which recognised Polish sovereignty over the Oder-Neisse territory in 1949.

In Western Europe liberal opinion favours the recognition of Polish sovereignty over these territories and tends to regard such organisations as the Schlesische Landsmannschaft as nationalist extremists. There was some doubt at first as to whether Erhard Weiner could be adopted by Amnesty International. However there appears to be no crime in belonging to an organisation which advocates the reunification of all German territory, both present and past. Violence as a means to this end is certainly not practised and does not appear to be advocated.

It is believed that Erhard Weiner received his twelve years prison sentence for "agitation" (Hetze). This charge is commonly brought against people who criticise the State. It is known that Erhard Weiner's political views were anti-Communist - he is supposed to have expressed such views in letters to foreign radio stations. He also travelled on holiday to Silesia, photographing objects of particular interest to Germans - the former house of the writer Gerhard Hauptmann, historic ruins and the graves of German dead which had been desecrated during the period of Polish administration. He published the photographs in West German newspapers.

Erhard Weiser was sentenced under two laws; one forbids the passing of information to banned organisations and the other declares among other things that incitement against the State is an offence. Both are laws in common use against prisoners of conscience.

Send yours cards to:

EITHER

Die Generalstaatsanwaltschaft de DDR,
DDR- 104 Berlin W.4.,
Scharnhorstr. 37.,
German Democratic Republic.

OR

Walter Ulbricht,
Vorsitzender des Staatsrates der DDR,
DDR - Berlin- Niederschönhausen,
Ossietskistrasse,
German Democratic Republic.

Ochola Ogayo Mak'Anyengo - KENYA

Mak'Anyengo is one of Kenya's foremost trade unionists and, until his arrest in October 1969, was Secretary-General of the Kenya Petroleum Oil Workers' Union. This is his second term of detention: his earlier imprisonment was from August 1966 until July 1968. On neither occasion have any formal charges been brought against him, nor has he appeared in a court. He is popular as well as prominent in the Kenya trade union movement; in 1968, on his release, he was unanimously re-elected to the General Secretaryship of the Oil Workers' Union.

In June 1970, Mak'Anyengo announced his intention of hunger striking as a protest against his detention. In a statement written in prison, he categorically denied that he had acted illegally against the Government - an official allegation made at the time of his arrest, but for which no evidence has been brought.

Mak'Anyengo is a Luo by tribal origin. Like many trade unionists he sympathised with Oginga Odinga's left-wing parliamentary opposition party, the Kenya Peoples' Union. In the summer of 1969 tensions increased between the major tribal groupings, of which the Luo and Kikuyu are the most influential, following the assassination of Tom Mboya, the Minister of Economic Planning who was a Luo. In October, the K.P.U., which drew much of its support from the Luo, was banned after an incident in Kasumu in which a visit by President Kenyatta was marked by violent demonstrations in which 11 people lost their lives, possibly at the hands of the police. The Government arrested all K.P.U. members of parliament and also a number of its prominent supporters. It was at this time that Mak'Anyengo was detained. No evidence has ever been brought to connect him with planning or any involvement in tribal disturbances.

In August 1970 several of those then detained were released, including five of the K.P.U. Ministers. Mak'Anyengo, however, remains in prison. Members should write to President Kenyatta congratulating him on the twelve releases, but expressing regret that Mak'Anyengo was not among them. They should urge that Mak'Anyengo be released or charged and brought to trial.

Send your cards to:

President Jomo Kenyatta,
P.O. Box 30510,
Nairobi,
Kenya.

Additional cards may be sent to the Kenyan Embassy in your country.