

10
monthly newsletter from amnesty international



postcards for
prisoners campaign

SEPTEMBER 1970

This month's prisoners:-

Aida Mikhailovna SKRIPNIKOVA - USSR

Aida Skripnikova, aged 29, comes from Leningrad. She is an orphan: her father, a pacifist, was shot during the war for refusing to perform armed service in the Red Army. She herself is reported to have become deeply religious at the age of 17 and first came to the notice of the authorities at New Year 1962 when she stood on Nevsky Prospect, distributing her religious poems. She was later attacked in the Leningrad youth journal (in an article entitled "Don't be a corpse among the living"), but Aida sent a spirited reply, pointing out that while atheists in the USSR can propound their views where and when they want, Christians are punished by imprisonment or deportation if they do likewise. (Soviet law places severe restrictions on religious activities and proselytising is effectively illegal). The Smena article had claimed that to give Christians freedom would be "an infringement on the workers' freedom of conscience". "If (in a kiosk) lay a Christian periodical, for example, 'the Young Christian' or 'Joyful News', then how could this be an infringement on anyone's conscience?" asked Aida. She went on to criticise the aim of "building Communism", saying: "The society you will build will never be just, because you yourselves are unjust... The goal of my life is to serve the truth."

The reply was not printed in Smena, so Aida distributed the text herself - and was promptly arrested. The charge made against her then is not known, but it was two years before she was released. She had further difficulties on her return to Leningrad in connection with her religious activities and it is believed that her permit to reside in the city was withdrawn. In April 1968 she was re-arrested and sent to the Mordovian labour camp with a three year sentence for "distributing clearly false fabrications discrediting the Soviet state and public order." Reports state that she has continued her evangelist activities in the camp. She is subjected to "ordinary regime" which is the lightest category, but according to the evidence available, even this entails malnutrition and, in winter, inadequate protection from cold.

It is believed that Aida belonged to the Dissident Baptists, although she does not mention them in her writings.

Please send your cards to:

EITHER

Mr. Aleksei Kosygin,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers
of the USSR,
SSSR, g. Moskva,
Kreml.

OR

Mr. Vladimir Kuroyedov,
Chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs,
SSR, g. Moskva,
pereulok Ostrovskogo 10.

Ashar MUNANDAR - INDONESIA

Ashar Munandar is a doctor and former Lecturer in the Medical Faculty of Djakarta University. He was arrested in October 1965 following the assumption of power by a militantly anti-communist government and since then has been detained without charge or trial as a suspected communist. In August 1970 he was deported from Djakarta to the Moluccan island of Buru, which he cannot leave and where he is working as an agricultural labourer.

Munandar is said to be a man of strong social conscience and left-wing sympathies. He was never a member of the Communist Party (PKI), which until October 1965 was a large and legal party holding 25% of the seats in Parliament. But he was connected with two bodies now proscribed as communist 'front' organisations: the Indonesian Scholars' Association (HSI) which was cultural rather than political in character and had close PKI associations; and the Indonesian Trade Union Federation (SOBSI) for which he occasionally worked as a doctor. This is almost certainly the reason for his detention.

The background to Munandar's arrest is this: On 30th September 1965 a left-wing coup was attempted in Djakarta and six prominent generals were murdered. The army swiftly took power and broke the attempt. A total purge of all PKI officials was ordered, and this rapidly became a wave of popular revanchism in which several hundred thousand alleged communists were killed in Java, Bali and Sumatra, and perhaps two hundred thousand more were arrested. About 100,000 remain in detention. Since 1965 the Government, now predominantly military in character, has argued that all members not only of the PKI itself, but also of its youth, cultural and trade union affiliates, bear individual responsibility for the initial coup attempt. Thus, membership of a mass movement -- totalling some 17 million in 1965 -- has been equated with responsibility for the action of a small PKI splinter group, whose members' precise relationship to the official Party leadership even now remains obscure. Each detainee was said to be a communist and so 'involved' in the coup attempt.

Dr. Munandar's detention must be seen against this complex situation. In his case the charge of complicity is especially hard to accept as he was in Budapest at the time attending a medical congress, and returned only on 7th October. Dr. Munandar, who is Javanese, is about 42, married, with four children: the youngest was born after his arrest. In prison he has been able to give some medical treatment to other detainees.

Recently some releases have taken place, and all those detainees not regarded as communists -- over half the total -- will be freed within the immediate future. Munandar has been placed in an intermediate category, due neither for release nor trial but for apparently permanent restriction in one of the 'resettlement areas' to be established in remote parts of the Indonesian archipelago - in his case, Buru island. The more courteous your cards, the more effective.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

President Suharto,
Secretariat Negara,
Djalan Veteran 17,
Djakarta.

OR

The Indonesian Ambassador in your country.

Father Joaquim Pinto de ANDRADE - PORTUGAL (ANGOLA)

Father de Andrade was first arrested in 1960. He then held office in the archdiocese of Luanda in Angola. He had read theology and philosophy in Europe and on his return to Angola he dedicated himself to working for his people and the church. In 1957 the Portuguese political police (PIDE) intensified action against Angolan nationalists and carried out a large number of arrests. Father de Andrade helped the prisoners' families and visited regularly the prisoners in the fort Penedo and the Sao Paulo prison in Luanda. He also received a delegation from the International Commission of Jurists.

At the same time his own situation worsened. PIDE made his work in the archdiocese difficult and his articles for the diocesan weekly -- he was its editor -- were censored. Months of persecution culminated in Father de Andrade's arrest in June 1960. During the following eight years he was in prisons, exiled to an African

island, or living under a variety of restrictions. No charges were brought against Father de Andrade and he remained untried. His health was undermined. Finally, in 1968, he was allowed to study law in Lisbon after intervention by Pope Paul VI.

In those years, when he was being persecuted, Father de Andrade never once attacked the Portuguese government or showed bitterness in any other way. In Lisbon he travelled every morning to celebrate mass wherever his services were needed.

Two of the Angolan priests who were imprisoned and exiled to Portugal have died; others have been allowed to return to Angola. Father de Andrade was re-arrested in April 1970 and is awaiting trial.

His arrest must be seen against the background of the continued struggle for independence in Angola, a war which is costly to Portugal. Lisbon has refused, in contradiction to the efforts of the United Nations, to relinquish its colonies in Africa. They are about twenty times the size of Portugal and rich in natural resources.

Father de Andrade is accused of supporting the MPLA, the Angolan liberation movement, of which his brother Mario is one of the leaders. The charges against him are that he has been in regular contact with Angolans in Portugal who were members of MPLA and that he passed on to them printed matter of a subversive nature. Father de Andrade apparently also offered to ask a foreign friend of his to take a parcel to France from Portugal. The parcel is said to have contained MPLA papers.

When interrogated by the security police Father de Andrade was not allowed the services of a defence lawyer. The charges constitute a crime punishable under §172 and §173 of the Penal Code by 8 - 12 years imprisonment.

The trial is expected to take place in October 1970. As Father de Andrade has personally not committed any acts of violence will you please send cards pleading for leniency and early release to:

EITHER

Exmo Senhor
Primeiro Ministro,
Marcelo Caetano,
Lisboa,
Portugal.

OR

The Portuguese Ambassador in your own country.

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Some news about prisoners who have been on this campaign:-

Rizal and Quintin Yuyitung - Taiwan (June 1970) - On the 14th August 1970, a military court in Taipeh sentenced Rizal to three years' and Quintin Yuyitung to two years' confinement for "reformatory education" for spreading communist propaganda in the Philippines, through the Chinese Commercial News, a paper published by the brothers in the city of Manila.

The Yuyitung brothers were arrested in Manila on the 23rd March 1970 on presidential orders and were held for some weeks for interrogation. They were then suddenly deported to Taiwan in the early morning hours of the 5th May on board a military plane. Our view of the situation is that the Taiwan Military Tribunal had no jurisdiction over the brothers: they were born in the Philippines; they had never visited Taiwan before, and they had renounced their Taiwanese citizenship. The act of deportation was questionable. The procedure at the trial also seems to have been in some regards unsatisfactory. The defending lawyer was furnished with a copy of the indictment only four days before the trial and had insufficient time to prepare his defence.

No cross-examination by defence counsel was permitted and no witnesses for the defence were allowed. In addition the defence lawyer was not allowed to talk to the brothers during the trial. At present, petitions and appeals for their early release are under way.

Dr. Malgorzata Szpakowska - Poland (March 1970) - Dr. Malgorzata Szpakowska was reported to have been released in July. The other "mountaineers" are still in prison, so far as we know.

Abu Mayanja - Uganda (November 1968). Abu Maynja has been released, together with 27 other long-term detainees.

GREECE - the Greek Government announced on 10th August that 500 prisoners would be released in the coming weeks. We know so far that 238 have been released, of whom 22 are women from Alikarnassos Prison on Crete.

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