

Solving the Financial Crisis

Past issues of this Newsletter have been devoted almost entirely to reports about Prisoners of Conscience. It is fitting that this issue should report first on our financial situation. As has already been made clear to Groups, the success of our work for prisoners depends ultimately on our ability to maintain an effective, economically viable Secretariat. Ever since the full extent of our financial difficulties became known, the Secretariat has been concerned with this problem above all others. How successfully has the Movement been so far in solving it?

The first task was to make all our Groups and members aware of the critical situation and of their financial responsibility to the Secretariat. There can be no doubt now that the message has been received and understood. Perhaps for the first time in some instances, it was recognised that realistic financial support was an important aspect of the Group's obligation to its Secretariat. The next step was to ask for immediate help. This too has been forthcoming. Although it is too soon to assess the success of the appeal, an encouraging start has been made. So far, Groups from 12 National Sections have responded with contributions of £3,756. An appeal to individual members has raised £2,059, of which all but £84 came from British members. Support from other sources includes a generous offer of an interest-free loan of £2,500 - not yet taken up - and a gift of £500 from a British charitable trust. As a result of our appeals, therefore, the available resources of the Secretariat at this time have increased by nearly £9,000.

The Secretariat is, of course, also initiating its own direct appeals for funds: one has recently been sent to 23 major European Trade Unions. Efforts are also being made to intensify fund-raising in Great Britain, through the wider use of publicity material, the launching of a monthly collection scheme, and appeals to trusts and foundations.

This is not the end of the story. Many Groups have not yet responded to the appeal. Until they do, the Secretariat cannot consider the crisis at an end. Even assuming they do all respond, it then remains for Groups to sustain their increased contributions into the foreseeable future.

Amnesty's rate of growth cannot easily be pre-determined. The demands made upon us are regulated not by computer but by the ebb and flow of political and religious persecution. We cannot ignore a new wave of arrests, but neither can we readily accept new cases without the staff and facilities to deal with them adequately. The only way out of this dilemma is to guarantee the financial strength of the Secretariat - strength that will make it possible to plan a steadily expanding programme and to ensure sufficient reserves to withstand the demands of emergency situations. Nothing less than this will do justice to those whom we have chosen to help.

(Peter Burns, PRO/Appeals Secretary)

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY/INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

One of the most encouraging things in the first half of 1967 has been the unusual number of releases of prisoners whose cases have been taken up by Amnesty Groups, or put on the Postcards for Prisoners Campaign. Frequently, when a prisoner is freed, it is impossible to assess how much Amnesty's activities have contributed; often a government's decision to order a release is clearly the result of internal political factors, or of pressure from other sources.

For many of these recent releases it is possible, however, to say that Amnesty's intervention was a crucial factor, in some the only factor. One man, a liberal lawyer in Latin America, was released within six weeks of his case being taken up. Two Africans in black African states were released within a matter of months. In the Far East, we have been informed by the government, a university group is to be released. "As a result of appeals from Amnesty...." These and others owe their freedom to the persistence and initiative of Amnesty members. Others again have been freed as a result of the combined efforts of ourselves and related international organisations, or because of appeals from individuals whose help groups have enlisted.

Some of Amnesty's "successes" have attracted attention. Members may also be interested to read the New Statesman for 16th June, which includes a piece in 'Londoner's Diary' giving details of a number of Amnesty prisoners set free in the last few months. In fact, these are only a few of the prisoners whose releases were directly affected by Amnesty action.

(Stella Joyce)

ALGERIA

Although arbitrary imprisonment still continues in Algeria, there have been some general signs of improvement. Arrests are still made but a number of political prisoners have been released in the course of the past year. Terms of imprisonment have, in some cases, been altered to "residence surveillé" and more prisoners are now able to receive letters and parcels. We hope soon to have precise details of individual cases so that members may send letters to the appropriate people. An inquiry made by the International Red Cross has revealed that the conditions of the political prisoners are "normal for the country" and that they may receive medical attention when necessary. It was not, however, possible to confirm this report.

The political climate of Algeria makes it impossible for any pressure to be brought on the authorities from within the country and it therefore becomes important that a high level of activity should be maintained from outside. A certain amount of international attention has been focussed on the situation. An appeal for the Algerian political prisoners was made to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights but this body is not apparently empowered to intervene in such a case. However, even when there are no normal legal channels to follow, any form of pressure or concern may have some effect.

Would all the Groups involved please note that Mrs. Makouf can no longer act as a contact and does not want to receive any inquiries or give any information on political prisoners.

(Rosamund Linell)

TURKEY

Sadi Alkilic who was adopted by the Clevedon Group in Somerset and on the Postcards for Prisoners Campaign in January 1967. (He was arrested on Christmas Eve, 1962 and sentenced in 1965 to 6 years and 2 months imprisonment to be followed by two years forced exile and a loss of civil rights solely because of an article on socialism which he had written and had published in the Turkish paper CUMHURIYET). In May this year we received the welcome news that his appeal to the Supreme Court had been successful and that, with two years of his sentence still to run, Sadi Alkilic had been released on bail while the court that had sentenced him reconsidered his case. Now he is to be re-tried on a lesser charge involving most a sentence of 1½ years, a term which he has already served, and at the least, wholesale acquittal and pardon.

Earlier this year the Group received a letter from Mrs. Alkilic expressing her gratitude for the work they were doing and saying what a comfort it was to her to know that others in other countries were concerned for her family in their troubles. Alkilic's was one of the cases investigated by Keith Kyle in December last year and Amnesty, having sent a number of petitions to the Supreme Court, may feel at least partially responsible for this most welcome development.

GREECE

We have naturally been most concerned here over events in Greece since the military coup of April 21st and particularly over the arrest and continued detention without trial of over 6,000 people. At the beginning of May Eric Baker wrote to the new Prime Minister, Mr. Constantine Koliass, asking for an impartial investigation into the conditions under which the detainees were held. (Either by Amnesty or by a delegate from the International Red Cross.) The letter also expressed Amnesty's "grave disquiet" over the news that arrests were still continuing and asked that "those against whom there may be legal charges should be brought to trial immediately before civilian courts with full opportunity to defend themselves."

In co-operation with the National Sections the International Secretariat has also written to the Council of Europe and the British Foreign Secretary about the situation in Greece and the breaches by Greece of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

We are now investigating possible channels for the distribution of relief to adopted detainees in Greece and their families. Groups who have Greek prisoners will be kept informed of any arrangements made as soon as possible. We are also making plans to send an observer to Greece to investigate, as far as possible, the conditions on Yioura, and the other islands where detainees are held and to try and ascertain the government's plans for bringing to trial those who are still held. We are anxious not to make any further financial demands on Groups, but if any Group felt that such a mission would be particularly valuable and that they would like to make some contribution towards the costs, we would be most grateful.

(Mrs. Elizabeth Gordon)

SOUTH AFRICA

In the beginning of June Amnesty received a letter from a most valuable contact in South Africa who expresses her great appreciation of the regular assistance Amnesty members send to their adopted families. However, she also points out that some Groups use phrases in their letters to the wives or dependents of political prisoners which could cause difficulties for them with the police. Remarks which seem innocuous to most people, can have a highly political connotation in a country like South Africa, phrases like "liberation struggle" or "fight for freedom" could put the very people Amnesty tries to help in a dangerous position if the letters were read by the authorities. Please make doubly sure that you do not word your letters in any way which could be misinterpreted by the authorities.

Amnesty has up to this date received about 40 replies to our questionnaire of the 27th February. We have found the report most encouraging and we are very impressed by the extensive and efficient work done by Groups on behalf of their adopted South Africans. But although these 40 replies provide a useful sample of Amnesty work on South Africa they represent only a fifth of the Groups with prisoners there and it would be a great help to us if the other 160 Groups who have still not sent in their reports would do so in the near future.

(Karen Hamberg)

MALAYSIA

All Groups with Malaysian prisoners will be disturbed to hear of the arrest of Karam Sing, a well-known lawyer who has defended several detainees, including Amnesty adoptees. He was himself detained under the Internal Security Act on 20th April 1967, in Malacca, charged with pro-Communist activities.

Will Groups please note that the new Minister for Home Affairs, on the retirement of Tun Dr. Ismail is: Tun Haji Abdul RAZAK bin Dato' Hussein SNN. He is also Deputy Prime Minister. They may also find it useful to note the dates of holiday celebrated in Malaysia on which release are sometimes made:

21st March	Hari Raya Haji	Muslim
23rd May	Vesak Day	Buddhist
7th June	King's Birthday and Honors day	All denominations
19th June	Mohammed's Birthday	Muslim
31st August	Malaysia Day	All denominations
1st November	Deepavali	Hindu
Christmas		Christian, Muslim
date variable	Chinese New Year	Chinese

(Mary McNeill)

SPAIN

The Referendum on the political future of Spain took place on the 14th December 1966, Since then, the influence of the "hawks" appears to have grown in Madrid. On the one hand, repression has been more severe; on the other, students and workers have demonstrated and staged strikes almost continually from the end of January onwards.

Madrid University has set up a Free Students Union and this, as at Barcelona, appears now to have become established even though it is not recognised by the authorities. The authorities have threatened to bring back trial by military court for students who have demonstrated in the streets or attacked the police. This would be a serious retrogressive step as provision was made at the end of 1963 (after much international protest) to try all political offences before a Public Order Court - i.e. a Civil Court where, unlike a military court, the accused is given a free choice of defence counsel. Although no one has yet been tried by a military court, the threat stands.

Labour strikes in the Basque areas have led to the temporary suspension in one province of the clauses of the Spanish Bill of Rights - The result is that detentions without trials, police searches, and forcible removal away from the area are all possible.

A further retrogressive move has been the amendment of the Penal Code. This amendment makes possible once again legal action against journalists and editors who write and publish articles criticising the regime. Sentences of up to six years imprisonment can be imposed: all this after the much more liberal censorship law of early 1966.

Spain cont...

Lastly, it must be remembered that the much-heralded law for minority rights has been considerably whittled down. It had been hoped that all non-Catholic religions would be recognised in the same way as the Catholic religion. This has not happened. There is still no parity between the official state religion and others.

So Spain once more takes one step forward and one step back. This faltering advance and retreat is typical of events in Spain over a long period. It raises yet again the perpetual question: is it possible to liberalise at all under a dictatorship?

(Mrs. Eva Blumenau)

POLAND

On May 12th the Paris newspaper "Le Monde" first carried the news that Jacek Kuron, the Warsaw university lecturer, had been released from prison. His friend Karol Modzelewski is reported to be due for release in October.

In July 1965 the two men were sentenced: to three and three and a half years imprisonment respectively for writing and distributing an "Open Letter" to the Party", a political dissertation which criticized the Gomulka government. It appears now that both men are having 14 months of their sentences remitted. For the Groups in Italy and England who worked on these cases for two years, for the Card Scheme subscribers and for the Socialist circles in Warsaw, London and California who campaigned on Kuron and Modzelewski's behalf this news will be most welcome.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Acting on further information received from Rome we have had nine more Roman Catholic priests and lay people adopted for purposes of investigations. In March 1960 a trial was held involving about 20 such people, who were charged with high treason and subversion and given prison sentences of up to 16 years. Although some of these people have been adopted for years no details of their arrest or trial had been available; this news is therefore a big breakthrough. The Groups concerned are now being asked to investigate the charges with a view to ensuring that their prisoners are "Prisoners of Conscience".

HUNGARY

Groups with Hungarian prisoners are no doubt wondering what they can possibly do next in their attempts to find out more. We have sought advice on this question from experts on Hungarian affairs in London, but they have not been able to suggest anything positive. I would suggest that, where it is known in which town the prisoner was resident before his arrest, Groups should write to local authorities such as the Lord Mayor, the Communist Party Local Committee or to any authority they can think of, asking for information. One should also write to branches of international organisations in Budapest like the United Nations Association, the "Federation of Democratic Youth", the opposite number of womens organisations in your country and so on. The corresponding organisations in your own country may be able to advise on the precise addresses.

(Bruce Laird)

BRAZIL

Amnesty's contact Mr. Alina Rudge has written to several Groups in the last two months, and she is catching up on the backlog caused by her absence from Rio at the end of last year. She has been able to inform a number of Groups that their adopted prisoners have been able to avoid imprisonment by going into hiding. Where this has happened we had decided to abandon the case for the time being as efforts on our part could only make the position of these prisoners more difficult.

All Groups adopting Latin American prisoners are recommended to read John Gunther's book "Inside South America" (Hamish Hamilton, London, 42s.), a lively and up to date account of political and social traditions based on considerable research and the personal experiences of the author.

(Mrs. Margot Levy)

SOUTH AFRICA

A member of the St. John's Wood Group, Clare Cotton, writes: "Other Amnesty Groups may be interested, and perhaps encouraged, by my experience in presenting the case of Zeph Mothopeng before the United Nations.

"Earlier this year, the United Nations Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid formed an Ad Hoc Working Group with the purpose of hearing charges of torture and

Cont....

South Africa cont....

ill-treatment in South African prisons. Its members visited London in June. Most of their time was spent listening to first-hand reports of prison and interrogation conditions from South African refugees. I was able to sit-in on some of these, and the little I heard illustrated the appalling conditions and the courage with which the witnesses had resisted.

"As a representative of an outside group with only indirect knowledge, and I was somewhat embarrassed to follow these first-hand witnesses. But it was quickly apparent that Amnesty's different approach was genuinely valuable to the members of the committee. While we have been working on the case, Mothopeng has been, successively, in 90 day detention, sentenced and imprisoned, and banned. I was therefore able to give a complete legal picture of a complicated case, and describe the line my Group was taking on it. This certainly excited the committee's attention, particularly the lawyers on it, and they asked detailed questions on specific points.

"My own amplification of our two-page account of the case must have taken eight or ten minutes; allowing for their questions and the time for French translation, I was "on" for over an hour.

"The committee members had before them a full Amnesty submission, drawn up by the International Secretariat, and presented by Robert Swann; in addition to our paper on Mothopeng, this included a general report on political imprisonment and restriction in South Africa, a note on the need for assistance for prisoners' dependants, mention of specific areas for urgent action, and a recommendation for specific action. The recommendation asked the United Nations to take the lead in calling for an independent commission of inquiry to hear allegations of maltreatment of prisoners; this would be nominated by the South African Government, with representatives of the United Nations and the International Red Cross.

"Apart from the obvious importance of providing information, I felt that my submission was valuable in telling individual members of the committee, from five countries, how Amnesty works at a Group level. Mr. Ermacora, an Austrian professor, seemed genuinely puzzled at my appearance, and wanted to know in considerable detail how our Group came to have so complete a legal file on Mr. Mothopeng. "

The St. John's Wood Group approached the United Nations committee on their own initiative after reading in the newspaper of its projected visit to London. Their presentation of a single case history in depth immensely enhanced the value of Amnesty International's submission, because of its vivid illustration of the general points made in our memorandum. The report on their work for their prisoner and their able presentation of his case is in itself an object lesson showing just how effective an Amnesty Group can be.

(Stephanie Grant)

BOOK REVIEWS

Nasser's Egypt. (By Peter Mansfield, Penguin,

Whether or not Nasser survives the present Middle Eastern crisis his achievement has created a new Egypt. This account, while it does not draw a veil over the harsher repressive aspects of political life in Egypt, is basically a sympathetic one. Lively writing on a fascinating subject.

(Robert Swann)

Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World. (By Hisham B. Sharabi, New Perspectives Series No. 7, Van Nostrand, 16s 176 pages)

As Arab States have emerged from European domination three main governmental systems have evolved: the old-fashioned monarchy (Morocco), the republic with more than one party (Lebanon) and, perhaps most significant for the future, the one-party republic (Iraq, Syria or Egypt). Mr. Sharabi's book deals in most detail with the latter group and makes extensive use of direct quotation from documents. Scholarly, but far from dull.

(Robert Swann)

Book Reviews cont...

"Ulbricht" (By Carola Stern. 1. In English, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, Washington and London, 231 pp. 1965. 2. In German, Ullstein Verlag, 327 pp. 1964. (Both versions available)

As well as providing a detailed biography of the East German leader's life Carola Stern, who is President of Amnesty's West German Section, gives us a fascinating insight into the history of the German Communist Party and of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the German Democratic Republic since 1949. Unlike other studies in this field it is not heavy reading, and can be recommended to all. This certainly excited the committee's attention, particularly the questions on specific points. (Bruce Laird)

Seven Years Solitary (By Edith Bone, Cassirer, 212 pp. 25s.)

Although the squalor of her life in prison in Hungary in the early fifties is described, the most vivid impression is of Edith Bone's formidable intransigence, ingenuity and resilience.

Other Books Received

Recommended Novels:

Darkness at Noon. By Arthur Koestler. Penguin. 3s 6d. 211 pages.

The Trial By Franz Kafka. Penguin, 3s 6d. 256 pages.

Non-fiction:

The Ghana Coup By Colonel Afrifa. Frank Cass.

South Africa's Hostages By Jack Halpern. Penguin. 10s 6d. 496 pages.

Conversations with Stalin By Milovan Djilas. Penguin. 3s 6d. 171 pages.

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