

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



MISSIONS

Portugal: Amnesty International was represented at the trial of Daniel Cabrita by Maitre A. Berenboom, who also attended the trial on behalf of the Ligue Belge pour la defense des droits de l'homme. A translation of Mr. Berenboom's preliminary report on the trial (completed before the conclusion of the trial but very useful in its discussion of court-room procedures and Portuguese law) has been sent to groups with Portuguese prisoners. The report will be particularly relevant to those groups working for prisoners arrested in the same wave of arrests in which Cabrita was detained. Cabrita, head of the Bank Employee's Trade Union, and one of the best-known of the trade unionists to appear before the Portuguese Courts on charges of crimes against the security of the State, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment with 15 years loss of political rights.

Ceylon: The report by Lord Avebury, who visited Ceylon in September for Amnesty, was sent to the Ceylonese government with specific recommendations in November. As there has been no response we have decided to make the report public, and it has now been released.

ORGANISATION

Treasurers' Meeting: Twelve National Sections were represented at the Treasurers' Meeting held in London on 11 March. The financial situation was examined in detail and budget proposals for 1972-1973 were agreed. After taking into account the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust contribution of £15,000 and other income, the amount to be raised from National Sections comes to approximately £112,000. Assessed on the number of groups per National Section this becomes about £112 per group. The treasurers present guaranteed the total budget apart from some £2,000 which has still to be found. A full report will be sent to National Sections.

National Sections: Two National Sections held their annual meetings during the weekend 17-19 March. Tracy Ulltveit-Moe and John Humphreys from the International Secretariat attended the Dutch meeting; and Becky Babcock represented the Secretariat at the Swedish meeting.

International Red Cross: May we once again remind groups that they are not to write directly to the Red Cross requesting information about specific prisoners, or pressing the Red Cross to take particular action. All contact with the ICRC is conducted through the International Secretariat.

International Executive Committee: The next meeting of the International Executive Committee will be held in London from 7-9 April.

Interrogation Techniques: In a growing number of countries throughout the world various forms of ill-treatment, sometimes amounting to torture, have become a routine part of interrogation, and Amnesty International has noted this development with concern. In view of the general trend we welcome the decision of the United Kingdom Government, following the report of the Parker Committee, to ban the use of certain techniques during interrogation. This decision is a step towards implementation of the existing international conventions, to which the British government has adhered. The Parker Committee was appointed by the Home Secretary "to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism". H.M. Government in fact accepted the recommendations of the minority report from the Parker Committee, made by Lord Gardiner. The minority report in turn accepted many of the recommendations made to the Committee by Amnesty International. Lord Gardiner described the interrogation procedures used in Northern Ireland as "illegal, not morally justifiable". He pointed out that "For many years men and women and a number of international organisations have been engaged in trying to raise international moral standards, particularly in the field of human rights. The results are to be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the four Geneva Conventions -- which 129 countries have signed and ratified -- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and

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the European Convention on Human Rights." Lord Gardiner then went on to say that the World Conference on Religion and Peace, representative of all the world's religions, held in October 1970, had declared: "The torture and ill-treatment of prisoners which is carried out with the authority of some Governments constitute not only a crime against humanity, but also a crime against the moral law." The Amnesty memorandum to the Parker Committee is printed in the Report of an Enquiry into Allegations of Ill-treatment in Northern Ireland, (price 50p), which has just been published by Amnesty International.

Czechoslovakia: About a hundred men and women in Czechoslovakia are at present awaiting trial on political charges, such as "hampering the process of consolidation" in the country. Prominent writers, scholars and journalists, known for their work in the interest of the reform movement in the year 1968, have either been arrested or are being seen frequently by the police. They have all been charged with political offences. It seems that the purpose of the Czechoslovak authorities is to intimidate people who insist on the rights guaranteed by the Czechoslovak Constitution. An international committee has been formed to draw public attention to these events and to appeal to the Czech authorities for the release of those detained. If the authorities go ahead with criminal proceedings the Committee will call for a fair and open trial and will request the presence of international observers. Members of the Committee are: Dame Peggy Ashcroft, David Carver, Countess Marion Dönhof, Pierre Emmanuel, Günter Grass, Graham Greene, Rudolf Hagelstange, Friedrich Heer, Christopher Hill, Thilo Koch, Siegfried Lenz, Angelo Maria Ripellino, Denis de Rougemont, Hilde Spiel, Vercors Giancarlo Vigorelli, Per Wästberg, Angus Wilson.

Greece: Amnesty group Sweden 169 have collected signatures of 580 Swedish doctors for an appeal to release their adopted Greek prisoner, Dr. Ioannis Papadopoulos. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in 1970 and is at present in Trikala prison in Thessaly. Dr. Papadopoulos is an outstanding plastic surgeon and the appeal asks for him to be accorded an amnesty so that he may be able to continue his work for the benefit of the Greek people.

Brazil: The Brazilian Ambassador to Britain recently replied to an Amnesty appeal regarding the death sentences passed on Gilberto Faria Lima, Ariston de Oliveira Lucena and Diogenes Sobrosa de Souza. The Ambassador stated: "I am conveying your appeal to the proper authorities. However, in the light of previous instances, I feel confident that the Brazilian courts will exercise clemency in the cases mentioned in your letter." This is good news but there is still some fear that the sentence will not be commuted. The case was scheduled to come up for review before the Supreme Military Court at the end of March or the beginning of April, but the exact date is not known. Please continue appeals against the death sentence by writing or telegraphing the Brazilian authorities in your own country. Also address your appeals to the President of Brazil -- Garrastazu Medici, Brasilia, Brasil; to the Minister of Justice, Dr. Alfredo Buzaid, Ministerio da Justica, Espl. dos Ministerios, bloco 10, Brasilia, Brasil; and to the Superior Military Tribunal -- General Alvaro Braga, Superior Tribunal Militar, Praca da Republica 123, Rio de Janeiro (Gb), Brasil. Institutional Act No. 14, passed in September 1969 established the death penalty -- which had not been imposed throughout Brazil's history -- for persons convicted of the crime of "psychological warfare and revolutionary and subversive warfare." Up to now, only one other death sentence has been passed and in that case the sentence was commuted. Groups should appeal to Brazil's pride in her humanitarian traditions in pleading for similar clemency now.

Rhodesia: In response to the appeal in the February Newsletter for contributions to rehabilitation schemes for ex-detainees we have received £866.50. Of this, £566.50 came from Britain and £300 was given by Germany Group 49. These rehabilitation schemes are for most ex-detainees the only solution to their employment problem and the money is therefore very welcome.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

HAWLEY, DONALD: "The Trucial States". George Allen and Unwin. London. 1970. £4.25.
 SUNDAY TIMES INSIGHT TEAM: "Ulster." Penguin Special (paperback) 40p. Andre Deutsch (hard-back) £1.95. London 1972. Particularly recommended to groups with prisoners in Northern Ireland. VIGOR P.H. (Ed): "Books on Communism and the Communist Countries: a selected bibliography." Allen and Unwin. London. 1972. £3.50. WITTNER, LAWRENCE S: "Rebels against War: the American Peace Movement." Columbia University Press. London and New York. 1969. \$2.95.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGNNews of Prisoners who have been on the Campaign:-

Natalya Gorbanevskaya -- USSR (February 1971). Natalya Gorbanevskaya has been released. She had spent two years in various mental hospitals and was found guilty by a court, in her absence, of "spreading lying fabrications discrediting the Soviet regime" while allegedly of unsound mind. It is believed that she has rejoined her mother and two sons in Moscow. No further information is available.

Councillor Abu KANU -- Sierra Leone (October 1971). The Dutch group adopting this prisoner have received a letter from the President's Office in Freetown to the effect that Councillor Kanu is in good health and that his case is being constantly reviewed.

This month's Prisoners:-Truong Van Bai - SOUTH VIETNAM

Truong Van Bai must have been about 18 years old when he was arrested in 1964 on charges of "activities for the communists". He was a high-school student at that time and like many others had simply participated in the movement for peace in Vietnam. The government claims that he is an unbending communist because he will not salute the flag. Sentenced to five years' imprisonment he was apparently put on the notorious Con Son penal island straight away.

His parents and a younger sister were killed, and one brother was wounded in the fighting at the TET of 1968. There are two other brothers and a sister. The sister, a Buddhist Bonzess, saw Truong Van Bai in 1969 in Tan Hiep prison where he was transferred for about three months. She discovered that he was paralysed and had developed TB and liver problems. (Many of the prisoners on Con Son are paralysed - either as a result of being shackled, or because of the poor diet; or a combination of both). Although he completed his sentence on 17 September 1969 Truong Van Bai is still in prison, back on Con Son island. His sister has been refused permission to visit him on the island. She has hardly any financial means to send the necessary medicine and foodstuffs.

Please send your appeals for immediate release to:- The President, Nguyen van Thieu, Saigon, Republic of Vietnam; or Col. Huynh Ngoc Diep, Ministry of the Interior, Political Security Department, Saigon, Republic of Vietnam.

Dr. Mohamed FORNA - SIERRA LEONE

After a disputed election in 1967 a military coup overthrew the post-independence civilian regime in Sierra Leone. Military rule lasted just over twelve months and ended when another coup resulted in the return to power of Mr. Siaka Stevens, whose All People's Congress (APC) had in fact won the 1967 election. In 1968 and 1969 tension grew between the APC and the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) which had ruled the country from 1961 to 1967. During 1970 a number of APC members became dissatisfied with the government, and a new party, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed, stirring up opposition to the APC with news-sheets and meetings. A crisis came in September when two cabinet ministers resigned from the government. Another new party was formed, called the United Democratic Party (UDP) and including most former NDP members as well as the new dissidents within the government ranks. There were violent clashes between APC and UDP supporters in various parts of the country. This crisis culminated in the banning of the UDP by the government, the Declaration of a State of Emergency, and the arrest of most of the UDP leaders. Writs of habeas corpus were denied, and those detained were held without trial.

Dr. Mohamed Forna was one of the two cabinet ministers whose resignation from the APC government in September 1970 precipitated the crisis between the APC and the newly-formed UDP. A brilliant politician in his late 30's, Dr. Forna had occupied the important post of Minister of Finance in the APC cabinet. After his resignation he became one of the leaders of the UDP. He was arrested on the night of 8 October, 1970, and has remained under detention

without trial in Pademba Road Prison, Freetown, since that time. Following Dr. Forna's arrest his wife and three children aged between 7 and 10 were so harassed by members of the armed forces and supporters of the APC that they were forced to leave Sierra Leone and take refuge in London, where they now live. Other UDP members and leaders have been released during the past months, but Dr. Forna and about forty others remain in detention.

Please send your cards to:- President S.P. Stevens, State House, Freetown, Sierra Leone; or, Hon. S.I. Koroma, Vice-President and Prime Minister, Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Reizya PALATNIK - USSR (Ukraine)

Reizya Palatnik, a Jewish librarian from Odessa, was arrested on 1 December 1970. She had apparently been trying to locate her relatives in Israel - possibly with a view to emigration. It was this that first attracted the attention of the K.G.B. (the Soviet Security Police). Her flat was searched in October and various books were confiscated. On several occasions she was summoned to the KGB offices for interrogation, mainly about her Jewish acquaintances. A further flat-search was conducted on the day of her arrest. The trial opened on 22 June, 1971, and she was accused of "Distribution of clearly false fabrications discrediting the Soviet State and public order" under Article 187, Section 1 of the RSFSR Penal Code). According to the Chronicle of Current Events, Jewish articles and poetry, taken from her flat, formed the basis of the charge against her.

Reizya Palatnik was sentenced to two years in ordinary regime labour camps. During her imprisonment she has complained of heart trouble and rapidly deteriorating eyesight. She claims that she is being denied adequate medical care. At present she is in a labour camp in Dneprodzerzhinsk (SSSR, Ukrainskaya SSR, Dnepropetrovskaya obl., g. Dneprodzerzhinsk PTA 308/34, Opriad 3 Brigada 31. There is a possibility for obtaining an early release for Miss Palatnik: a sub-section of Article 187 allows for release after two thirds of a sentence has been served, in cases where the prisoner is considered to have been of good behaviour. It is now 16 months since Miss Palatnik was jailed, so it is on this basis that pressure should be put on the authorities during the next month.

Please send cards to:

EITHER

SSSR
g. Moskva,
Kreml,
Predsedatelyu Prezidium Verkhovnogo
Sovieta SSSR,
N. Podgornomu
(Mr. N. Podgorny
Chairman of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the USSR)

OR

SSSR,
Ukrainskaya SSR
g. Kiev
ul. Ordzhonikidze, No.11,
Pervomu sekretaryu Tsk KPU i
chlenu Prezidiuma Tsk KPSS
P. Yu. Shelestu
(Mr. P. Yu. Shelest, 1st Secretary of the
Central Committee of the Communist Party of
the Ukraine)