

VIETNAM

AI CALLS LAST-MINUTE RELEASE OF 1,387 PRISONERS 'MISLEADING'

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL said April 28 that the last-minute exchange of civilian detainees between the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government barely scratched the surface of the prisoner problem in South Vietnam and was dangerously misleading.

AI expressed disappointment and concern that only a relative handful of civilians were freed before the end of the 90-day period in which, under the January ceasefire agreement, the two South Vietnamese parties were to attempt to resolve the civilian prisoner issue. The period expired at midnight April 27.

An AI statement expressed fears that the releases might lull people into thinking that the fate of all civilian prisoners in South Vietnam had been settled. In fact, Saigon had only agreed to release some 750 civilians from a highly questionable list of only 5,081 "communist civilian detainees" it admits to holding (March *Newsletter*), while the PRG was releasing 637, which is all it claims to have. AI contrasted these figures with its own estimate that 100,000 or more civilians are detained in South Vietnam.

AI also announced that it was planning to publish a detailed background report in May on Vietnam. Meanwhile, several National Sections and Groups, in cooperation with the International Secretariat, will launch An Emergency Action for Prisoners in Vietnam on May 10. Each individual taking part in the special release and relief campaign will work on behalf of one of more than 1,000 prisoners on an IS list, flooding South Vietnamese authorities with letters over the next three months and helping prisoners and their families financially.

On April 17, AI cabled President NGUYEN VAN THIEU to express grave concern about the hunger strike of Madame NGO BA THANH, an eminent lawyer, in Bien Hoa Prison. AI urged President Thieu to grant her an early release on humanitarian grounds.

TORTURE FEARED IN DEATHS OF 25 BRAZILIANS IN POLICE CUSTODY

AI has asked Brazil for an impartial inquiry into the recent deaths of 25 alleged subversives who died while in police custody and who AI fears may have been tortured.

"Political prisoners have been 'run down' or 'shot by friends in exchanges of fire with police' with such surprising frequency that we believe that an impartial inquiry is essential,"

a statement issued on April 26 said. "We are also concerned at reports that a number of those who died were tortured."

Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS wrote to President GARRASTAZU MEDICI to express deep concern at the deaths. He enclosed a memorandum listing 25 deaths and disappearances about which police explanations appeared inadequate. He also denied charges in the government-controlled press that AI, which last September published a major report on allegations of torture in Brazil, had links with any of the dead people or was waging a campaign of defamation against the country.

"We find it very disturbing that allegations of torture have been made and deplorable that making this information public is considered by your Government to be 'contrary to the national security'," Mr Ennals' letter to President Medici said.

SECRETARY GENERAL BEGINS SIX-NATION TOUR OF WEST AFRICA

MARTIN ENNALS arrived in Lagos April 25 at the start of a six-nation tour of West Africa. Before returning to London May 16, he was scheduled to visit Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Liberia and Gambia.

The tour is aimed at introducing AI to West African governments and encouraging National Section development. National AI Sections already exist in Nigeria, Ghana and Gambia. A report on the tour will appear in the June *Newsletter*.

Concern at Soviet sentence

AI cabled Soviet President NIKOLAI PODGORNÝ on April 17 to express concern at the harsh 10-year sentence passed on ISAAK RAFAELOVICH SHKOLNIK by a military tribunal in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, on April 11.

Shkolnik, a 36-year-old Jew who had expressed a desire to emigrate to Israel, was arrested in July 1972 and first charged with making slanderous remarks at the factory where he worked. Later a charge of "spying for Britain" was added. When the allegation was refuted by the British Foreign Office, the charge was changed to one of "spying for Israel".

Shkolnik was accused of having an "exceptional memory" in which he allegedly was retaining information to pass on to the Israelis when he emigrated. He received 10 years on the espionage charge and a further five years, to run concurrently, for allegedly disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda.

Somalia frees former president

Somalia's National Security Court on April 1 announced the release of former President ADEN

ABDULLAH OSMAN and 17 ex-cabinet ministers and members of parliament. All had been detained in a villa just outside the capital of Mogadishu since October 21 1969 when the government of Prime Minister IBRAHIM EGAL was deposed.

News of the releases was confirmed in a letter sent to AI's International Secretariat in London by the secretary to Somalia's current President, SIAD BARRE. The announcement said that Mr Egal and five other officials still in detention will be brought to trial before the National Security Court on charges of corruption. Several of the released prisoners, including MICHAEL MARIANA, were adopted by AI Groups.

Wave of arrests in Cambodia

Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS wrote to President LON NOL in April expressing alarm at the current mass arrests of professional men, journalists and academics in Cambodia. He also asked the President for an immediate inquiry into the whereabouts of five student leaders who vanished after a clash between students and alleged government agents at Phnom Penh University on March 17, the date of the attempted bombing of the presidential palace. A number of people were injured in the clash, one fatally.

Mr Ennals also requested information about 55 astrologers arrested in April after predicting the overthrow of the government; nine members of the Cambodian royal family who are to face a military tribunal in connection with the bombing; and HEMM VANNARITH, director of *Samleang Phnom Penh* (The Voice of Phnom Penh), who was imprisoned after the newspaper accused the President's brother, General LON NON, of having deposited 92 million dollars in a Swiss bank.

TRIAL OF AI KOREAN OFFICIAL POSTPONED

The trial of the Reverend UN MYUNG-KI, a member of the AI Korean Section Committee (April *Newsletter*), has been postponed indefinitely and he is still free, according to information which reached the Secretariat in April.

No reason was given for the postponement. Earlier information indicated that the Reverend Un was released from detention to receive medical treatment. He was arrested in December 1972 and charged with "spreading a groundless rumour".

Re-arrest threat to Colombians

Forty-five Colombians conditionally released from detention at the end of March were threatened with re-arrest on April 9 after they failed to appear at a court martial in Socorro. The 45, who had been held since July 1972 on charges of having links with the ELN guerrilla movement, were freed following a wave of international protests, including an AI communique to the major Colombian newspapers.

One of the central figures who inspired the protests, internationally-known film maker CARLOS ALVAREZ (March *Newsletter*), was not among those released, however. But his wife and co-film maker, JULIA ALVAREZ, was released earlier because she was expecting a baby, although she, too, is now liable to re-arrest.

The court martial was convened to hear testi-

mony involving more than 180 people on charges relating to the ELN. The 45 were classified as *reos ausentes* (accused in their absence). The first day of the trial was held in camera and defence lawyers were excluded while witnesses presented secret evidence to the military judges. The trial is expected to last for several months.

Letter to Indonesia aid group

AI has drawn the attention of the member governments of the international aid consortium for Indonesia to the continuing detention without trial of 55,000 political prisoners in the country (April *Newsletter*). MARTIN ENNALS wrote to all the Heads of State of the Inter-Government Group on Indonesia (IGGI), asking them "to raise the humanitarian issues involved during the IGGI meetings in Amsterdam in May".

Meanwhile, the Jakarta daily newspaper *Indonesia Raya* printed, prominently and without comment, press statements issued by AI urging the commutation of death sentences in Indonesia and the release of the 55,000 detainees.

Hopes rise for Indo-Pak accord

Hopes rose in April for the thousands of civilians detained in India and Pakistan since the December 1971 war over Bangladesh.

After weeks of intensive negotiations, the Indian and Bangladeshi governments on April 18 proposed a package deal to Pakistan which could lead to the release of most of the civilian and military prisoners held in India, in exchange for all 160,000 Bengalis in Pakistan being allowed to leave the country. The latter include 1,000 Bengalis, 50 of them AI cases, detained for attempting to cross the border en route to Bangladesh.

At the same time, 260,000 persons from Bangladesh would be allowed to return to Pakistan as they wish.

An AI spokesman warmly welcome the new proposals. "Although Pakistan's first reaction indicates that there are still some tough negotiations ahead, the possibility is now open for the release of large numbers of prisoners we have been concerned about," the spokesman said.

The spokesman said AI had also been informed that international lawyers and observers will be allowed to attend the trial of the 195 Pakistanis against whom the Bangladeshi government wants to bring war criminal charges.

MARTIN ENNALS wrote last January to Prime Minister INDIRA GANDHI of India and President BHUTTO of Pakistan urging the immediate release of all the prisoners (February *Newsletter*). Since then the International Secretariat has maintained close contacts with the London representatives of all three governments over the prisoner question.

AI moves on capital punishment

AI cabled the president of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on April 27 asking that members of the UN be urged to abolish capital punishment. ECOSOC is considering the question at its current session in New York. The cable, signed by MARTIN ENNALS, said:

"Believing that capital punishment is irrevocable, capable of being inflicted

on the innocent, no deterrent to crime and brutalising on those who execute it, Amnesty International requests ECOSOC to urge all UN members to abolish its use."

AI is also co-operating in moves for action by the Council of Europe on capital punishment. The issue is expected to be raised at the May meeting of the Council's Consultative Assembly.

Appeal for prisoners in Spain

AI was asked in April to support a campaign inside Spain to obtain an amnesty for political prisoners. Wives and families of the prisoners are collecting signatures for petitions appealing for amnesty. AI groups with Spanish prisoners are supporting them with a special effort that involves sending letters to the Spanish Vice-President, Admiral LUIS CARRERO BLANCO, and the Minister of Justice, ANTONIO ORIOL y URQUIJO. The action is aimed at strengthening pressure for the amnesty, which was proposed by the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the last Episcopal Conference in December 1972

ORGANISATION

IEC REGRETS SAIGON'S FAILURE TO GRANT VISA TO AI FRENCH MISSION

The International Executive Committee meeting April 6-8 expressed regret at the fact that the Government of the Republic of Vietnam had not yet granted a visa to a French mission sponsored by AI. The mission has been seeking a visa since November in order to investigate the problem of South Vietnamese political prisoners at first hand (see page one).

The IEC also considered reports relating to other AI research areas. Particular attention was paid to the need to develop new AI techniques for assisting prisoners, especially in Latin America.

The IEC accepted the £170,000 budget figure recommended by the recent Finance Meeting (April Newsletter). It agreed that a detailed budget, however, would wait until the end of the financial year on April 30, when it will be possible to assess commitments for 1973/74.

The IEC agreed to the appointment of KATRINA MORTIMER as Researcher for the Middle East from May 1. A full report of the meeting will be sent to National Sections.

Conference Secretary appointed

AI has appointed ERIC ABRAHAM as Conference Secretary for the Conference for the Abolition of Torture which is being held in Paris in December. At the same time, the French Section has set up a Conference Steering Committee to lay the organisational groundwork in Paris and to liaise with Mr Abraham, who is working at the International Secretariat in London.

Firm commitments to participate in the conference have already been received from more than 30 international non-governmental organisations and further acceptances are being received daily.

With the help of recommendations from National Sections, lists of prominent individuals and experts to be invited to the conference are being prepared. Approaches are also being made to world figures to speak and present papers.

Sections which have not yet submitted their recommendations are urged to do so immediately.

The Swiss Regional Campaign for the Abolition of Torture will be launched by a public meeting at Geneva University May 15 under the chairmanship of State Counsellor ANDRE CHAVANNE. Speakers will include SEAN MacBRIDE, Chairman of the International Executive Committee, and JAMES BECKET, co-author of the forthcoming world survey of torture.

Owing to printing delays, the International Appeal to Outlaw Torture (April Newsletter) will now be circulated to National Sections in mid-May. The text of the Appeal has been translated into 25 languages. These will be sent to National Sections by early June.

First to sign the Appeal was American folk singer JOAN BAEZ, who also publicised the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture at her concert in London April 4. All IEC members signed the Appeal when they met in London April 6-8.

Distribution of 'Chronicle'

Distribution of the long-delayed issue Number 27 of *A Chronicle of Current Events* began at the end of April. Subscribers are again reminded that this constitutes the sixth and last issue of 1972.

With the Soviet crackdown on dissidents still continuing (January Newsletter), the future of the publication remains doubtful. Rumours in April that issue Number 28 had appeared in Moscow seem unfounded.

New Handbook for Groups ready

Copies of the newly-revised *Handbook for Groups* (March Newsletter) are now available from the International Secretariat. Sections and Groups are urged to incorporate the new material into their existing Handbooks, rather than place a bulk order with the IS.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS FROM PAST CAMPAIGNS

Muhammed Isaak Gerar released

The Somalian Government has confirmed that Muhammed Isaak GERAR, who was on the *Postcards for Prisoners Campaign* in December 1972, was released in February of this year. Gerar, a former headmaster, had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment on charges of "holding the nation in contempt".

THIS MONTH'S CAMPAIGN

NOTE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS: YOU ARE REMINDED THAT POSTCARDS MUST ONLY BE SENT TO THE OFFICIALS NAMED AT THE END OF EACH CASE. THESE MUST ALWAYS BE COURTEOUSLY-WORDED. IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD POSTCARDS BE SENT TO THE PRISONER HIMSELF.

Behice BORAN, Turkey

Behice Boran, former chairwoman of the now banned Turkish Labour Party, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and 5 years exile in October 1972. She was accused of "working to change the social and economic structure of Turkey and set up a communist regime". Twenty other executive members of the Labour Party were sentenced at the same time to terms of imprisonment of between six and 15 years.

Behice Boran was the first woman to head a political party in Turkey. She studied at the University of Michigan in the United States and later became a Professor of Sociology. She was previously imprisoned in the early 1950s for her opposition to the Korean War. She is now in her 60s, and her health has been described as "fragile" by someone who knows her and who expressed the view that "more years in prison will certainly kill her".

Courteously-worded cards appealing for her release should be sent to: His Excellency Naim Talu, Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey; *and to:* His Excellency Fehmi Alpaslan, Minister of Justice, Ankara, Turkey; *and to:* the Turkish Ambassador in your country.

Otto MERUELO, Cuba

Otto Meruelo is one of the many Cubans who gave enthusiastic support to the revolutionary movement before 1959, but who became disillusioned with the communist tendencies of its leadership and finally opposed the revolution when it came.

Otto Meruelo was born in 1918 and was a member of the communist-socialist movement in his youth. In the late 1950s, when the Castroite movement was beginning to have a strong influence throughout the country, Otto Meruelo began to speak against the revolution. He felt that Cuba was not ripe for communism at this stage. He wrote several anti-communist articles and also spoke on television against Fidel Castro.

After Castro came to power in 1959, most of his opponents left Cuba for the United States. Otto Meruelo, convinced that his only fault had been verbal opposition, decided to stay. He was imprisoned shortly after the revolution and tried some months later. He was found guilty of calumny and given the extremely harsh sentence of 30 years' imprisonment.

Since then he has served in at least eight different prisons and is currently believed to be in the Centro de Seguridad No. 4 in Manacas in the province of Matanzas. When last heard of, he was ill with a chronic ulcer in his stomach and also suffered from anaemia. His overall condition was extremely poor as a result of the long years of imprisonment.

Although many other long-term political prisoners have been amnestied, no mercy has been shown to Otto Meruelo. Presumably, this is because, as one of the strongest opponents of the revolution in 1959, he is considered an archetypal "counter-revolutionary".

Very courteously-worded cards appealing for his release should be sent to: Dr. Fidel Castro, Primer Ministro, Havana, Cuba; *and to:* Sr. Armando Torres Santrayl, Ministro de Justicia, Havana, Cuba.

Soad Ibrahim AHMED, Sudan

Soad Ibrahim Ahmed was arrested shortly before the attempted coup in July 1971, when a faction of the army, supported by members of the Sudanese Communist Party, succeeded temporarily in overthrowing General Numeiry's regime. A successful counter-coup brought Numeiry back into power two days later. Numerous

communists were subsequently arrested. A large number of detainees have since been released. Soad Ibrahim Ahmed, who had been an assistant director at the University of Khartoum's Institute of Extra-Mural Studies, a member of the Sudanese Women's Association and a member of the Central Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party, was released from detention in Omdurman prison in December 1972. She was put under house arrest at her father's home on condition that the telephone was cut off.

On March 17 this year, Soad Ibrahim Ahmed started a hunger strike in protest against the continuing restrictions imposed on her. She pledged that she would not eat until her requests for complete liberty are granted. She was taken to hospital and, according to reports received at the end of March, she was very weak due to lack of food.

Although Soad Ibrahim has now been held in prison and under house arrest for 22 months, no charges have been brought against her, nor has she ever been brought to trial.

Please send courteously-worded cards to: General Gaafar El Numeiry, President of the Sudanese Republic, Khartoum, Sudan; *and to:* General Mohamed Bakr Ahmed, Minister of the Interior, Khartoum, Sudan.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

KLARE, Michael. *War Without End: American planning for the next Vietnams. 1972. 464 pages. Alfred A. Knopf, 201 East 50th Street, New York. paperback: \$1.50.*

The author analyses historical reasons for American involvement in "limited wars". Particularly relevant to AI members is a chapter which documents training of overseas police officials at the International Police Academy in Washington.

POTHOLM, Christian P. and DALE, Richard. *Southern Africa in Perspective. 1972. Collier-MacMillan, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG. £6.50*

Collection of essays on political problems facing Southern Africa. Includes detailed studies of such subjects as the African nationalist response to the Portuguese presence in Angola and Mozambique, the future of "separate development" in South Africa and Zambia's foreign policy in dealing with minority-ruled states.

REDDAWAY, Peter. *The Forced Labour Camps in the USSR Today. An Unrecognised Example of Modern Inhumanity. 1973. 40 pages. International Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in the USSR, 28 place Flagey, B1050 Brussels. Available in English, French and Dutch editions.*

Conceived in light of AI's Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, this is a short, preliminary report on conditions in Soviet labour camps, with useful appendices containing maps, photographs and a selective bibliography. The author is planning to produce a larger, more detailed report on the subject by the end of the year.

EUDES, Dominique. *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949. 1972. 381 pages. NLB, 7 Carlisle Street, London W1. £3.75.*

Recommended for groups with Greek prisoners.