

# monthly newsletter from amnesty international

## postcards for prisoners campaign

June 1968

Here is some news about previous prisoners:

Geoffrey Boon, St Kitts (June 1967). Dr Billy Herbert, the Opposition leader in St Kitts, who was detained at the same time as Geoffrey Boon, came in to see us this week and to thank us for our efforts on behalf of the former detainees. He felt that it was due to Amnesty's intervention that the detainees were given a fair trial and released. He also believed that the publicity given to the situation in St Kitts has, as we hoped, had an effect on attitudes towards the protection of Human Rights throughout the Carribean. In particular, he believed that it had prevented the arrest of Opposition leaders on the neighbouring island of Antigua.

Satya Sen and Ranesh Das Gupta, Pakistan (April 1967) have just been released from detention, although they are still restricted to the city limits of Dacca.

Abbe Gubegna, Ethiopia (May 1967). We have recently heard that although a number of the cards sent to Abbe Gubegna were returned by the Ethiopian postal authorities, he has received some and was most glad to get them. It is encouraging to know that they reached him. While he is still restricted to a remote area of the country, we understand that there has been an improvement in conditions and we are not without hope that he will be allowed full freedom fairly soon.

Denis James O'Donnell, Australia (May 1968) has been transferred to Canungra Jungle Training Camp in Queensland where he is reported to be continuing to refuse to obey orders or wear army uniform. Shortly after his transfer he went absent without leave. On his return he was fined 8 dollars (about £3. 5s) - a very light fine: previously he had received 3 weeks detention for a similar offence. O'Donnell's present status is 'suspended from duty' for refusing to obey an order. It seems that his Commanding Officer is awaiting advice from 'higher up'. If O'Donnell is charged before his C.O. the maximum penalty under military law is 7 days detention with stoppages of pay for any one offence. If he is tried by a Court Martial (and he has the right to elect for such a hearing) he can be sentenced to a maximum of 89 days detention with stoppages of pay for any one offence. Thus it would be possible for a Court Martial to sentence O'Donnell, who has repeatedly refused to obey orders and has been A.W.L. on several occasions, to several years imprisonment. However this seems most improbable. O'Donnell has said that he feels sure that Amnesty is embarrassing the Australian Government and sends thanks to Amnesty members who have protested on his behalf. He thinks the authorities are now trying to 'quieten the case down'. A lawyer has said that the only solution for cases like O'Donnell's would be to amend the National Service Act.

Agha Shorish Kashmiri, Pakistan (April 1967) has been arrested again after a few months of freedom. His case is being investigated by the German Group 52.

Professor Tran Hue Khue, South Vietnam (July 1966). We reported last month that Professor Khue had been released. However we have since received a letter from Saigon from which it appears that he is not at liberty after all. We have been in touch with the South Vietnamese Embassy in London about the case.

Here are this month's prisoners:

Jean Coulardeau, France.

Jean Coulardeau, a student of psycho-sociology at the University of Bordeaux, was arrested on 27th November 1967. He had refused military service and was not prepared to apply for exemption as a Conscientious Objector. Whether he had returned or merely ignored his draft papers we do not know. He is an anarchist opposed to all war, but did not wish to benefit from his government's provision for Conscientious Objectors. We have no record of his own statements, but his attitude no doubt co-incides with that of the many other French students who have taken up this same position of total non-cooperation in respect of military service. They are opposed to and wish to protest against the entire military policy of the French Government, and its nuclear policy in particular. To apply for exemption from military service on the grounds of Conscientious Objection would be, in their view, to co-operate with the Government and tacitly support those policies to which they are opposed.

After his arrest in November, Jean Coulardeau was detained in Libourne military barracks, where his presence caused unrest among the conscripts, apparently leading some of them to doubt their own position. Consequently he was forbidden visitors. He asked to see the officer in charge of the barracks but his request was ignored. His student friends who knew of his situation planned a demonstration outside the barracks to take place one morning in December. The authorities learned of their intentions and a few hours before the demonstration was due to take place, he was hastily transferred to the greater security of Gradignan Prison.

In April of this year, after having been detained without trial for nearly five months, Coulardeau was invalided out of the service but immediately brought before the Bordeaux Military Tribunal and charged with refusing to obey orders. He was found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison. We do not know in which prison he is detained, but it may well be Gradignan.

Send yourcards to:

EITHER

The Minister of Justice,  
Son Excellence M. Louis Joxe,

Ministere de Justice, 13 Place Vendome, PARIS 1e.

OR

The French Ambassador in your country.

Dr Abiezeri Kyabasinga Kibaya, Uganda.

Dr Kibaya, the first African Medical Superintendent at the New Mengo Hospital in Kampala and former Principal Medical Officer to the Bugandan Government, is one of the most distinguished doctors in Uganda. He was arrested in May 1967 under the Baganda Emergency Regulations and since then has been held at Luzira Prison. He has never been tried and no official reason for his detention has ever been given.

About 2½ years ago there was an alleged attempt on President Obote's life. The President was rushed to hospital where Dr Kibaya attended to him. The following day, in order to dispel suspicion, Dr Kibaya held a Press Conference at which he stated that a fish bone had been removed from the President's throat - as was indeed the case. However this incident roused the President's hostility and marked the beginning of a personal vendetta against Dr Kibaya which led to the doctor being forced to resign. For a few months he was without a position, but shortly afterwards the position of Medical Officer for the Kingdom of Buganda fell vacant and he was offered and accepted this post.

Dr Kibaya has never engaged in political activity. He is first and foremost a doctor and is described as a dedicated and selfless man. While in Luzira Prison, despite being in a state of depression as a result of not understanding the reason for his detention, he spent all his time caring for the health of his fellow prisoners, some of whom might have died without his help and advice.

In February 1968 he was removed from the communal cell where he had been held and placed in solitary confinement. There appears to be no reason for this transfer. According to information received from Uganda, Dr Kibaya was still in solitary confinement on 30th April this year, although he may since have been returned to a communal cell. Like other prisoners in solitary confinement he was being kept in a cell 5' by 8' in which the only furniture was a metal frame bed. Neither mattress nor pillows were provided, only a couple of blankets. It was impossible to look out of the one small high window. The prisoners are allowed only a very limited amount of reading material - novels from the prison library, but no newspapers of any kind. They are not allowed paper or pencils, or to receive or write letters. However the Amnesty Group which has adopted Dr Kibaya recently received permission to write a letter to him. It is hoped to enlist the sympathy of doctors and medical organisations on his behalf.

Send your cards to:

EITHER  
Dr. Basil Bataringaya,  
Minister of Internal Affairs,  
c/o Cabinet Office,  
Kampala,  
Uganda.

OR  
Dr J. W. Lwamafa,  
Minister of Health,  
Box 8,  
Entebbe,  
Uganda.

Mario Greenough Hylton, Cuba.

Mario Greenough Hylton is a Jehovah's Witness who was arrested in 1965 and is currently serving a 10-year prison sentence for refusing to serve in the armed forces. He is being held in the Penitenciaría Mijial, Oriente, Cuba.

Jehovah's Witnesses are a fundamentalist and evangelistic sect whose members base their claim to exemption from conscription on the belief that each Witness is a Minister of Religion. The uncompromising attitudes of their faith have brought them into conflict with governments in many countries of the world and many hundreds are serving prison sentences. Large numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses have been adopted by Amnesty International as Prisoners of Conscience.

We do not know a great deal about Mario Greenough Hylton, but his sentence does seem of excessive severity.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

Dr Fidel Castro,  
Office of the Prime Minister,  
Havana,  
Cuba.

OR

Dr Hart,  
Minister of Justice,  
Havana,  
Cuba.

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STOP PRESS

Father František Kučera, Czechoslovakia (January 1968). We have just heard that Father Kučera was released towards the end of January this year.

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EITHER

Dr J. W. Bannister,  
Minister of Health,  
Box 8,  
Entebbe,  
Uganda.

EITHER

Dr. Basili Baturanga,  
Minister of Internal Affairs,  
c/o Cabinet Office,  
Kampala,  
Uganda.