

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

An invitation to the second International Conference of the AMNESTY movement is being sent out with this bulletin. It is being held at Sijsele near Bruges in Belgium over the weekend 28th to 30th September.

It is hoped that every national section or group will endeavour to see that it is represented. The Conference is an important one both because of the quality of the speakers and because it provides the only opportunity this year for a general discussion on the policy of the movement.

Preliminary invitations were issued in June, but up to the present only a minority of sections have replied. It is particularly requested that everyone who receives an invitation should reply as soon as possible.

ANNUAL REPORT

A report covering the first year of the AMNESTY movement's work (June 1961 - May 1962) has been prepared, and will shortly be sent to the printers. This report is necessarily brief but covers the main departments. It also records some of the encouraging results achieved in the way of bringing about the release of prisoners. Copies will only be available in English, and these will be sent out to every national section and group before Sijsele Conference. Additional copies may be ordered for distribution purposes, but a small charge will have to be made to cover printing.

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE ON PERSONAL FREEDOM IN MARXIST COUNTRIES

A sufficient number of orders have been received to make it possible to print the principal papers together with a summary of the proceedings. Two free copies will be sent to each national section or group; additional copies may be ordered for 2/- (1 N.F., 1 DM, 1 gl'dr, 1 fr.s., 25 cents, etc.); the sale price to the public is 5/-.

CONFERENCE ON PERSONAL FREEDOM IN WESTERN EUROPE

The third in the series of these London conferences on Personal Freedom in different areas of the world will be held on Saturday, 17th November. It is hoped that some representatives of national sections in Western Europe will be able to be present. The detailed agenda of the Conference will be sent out with the next issue of this International Bulletin in October.

PREVENTIVE DETENTION

The AMNESTY movement has made a particular point of challenging the principle of administrative detention by governments in time of peace. It is therefore pleasing to be able to report that following representations made by the movement, and pressure by local groups which have adopted individual detainees, there have been large-scale releases in Sudan, Ghana and Greece.

GROUPS OF "THREE"

The number of groups in Great Britain has risen steadily during the last few months, and the total now stands at over 60. There are also nearly 20 groups in the Republic of Ireland. A smaller number of groups exist in Australia, the United States, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Experience shows that adoption by a group of THREE can bring about a prisoner's release, particularly where the government involved is sensitive to foreign opinion. And in the case of other governments the steady pressure by a number of different THREES can produce a change of policy, such as the grant of a general amnesty.

INVESTIGATORS

During the first half of 1962 the movement has sent investigators to Czechoslovakia, Spain, Portugal, East Germany, Ghana and Yugoslavia. During the summer months investigators will be travelling to Rumania, Ceylon, Siam, Portugal and Paraguay. Wherever possible articles by the investigators will be published in the AMNESTY QUARTERLY, but occasionally discretion requires that the report should only have a restricted circulation. Such a case is that of the investigator who recently returned from Yugoslavia, a copy of whose report is sent out together with this bulletin.

AMNESTY,
1 Mitre Court Buildings,
Temple,
London, E.C.4.

June 1962.

1. Djilas. It is thought that Mrs. Djilas still has her job (and so some money), but is not certain what royalties the family has received. We were advised that it was best to leave well alone at the moment especially in view of the appeal. From conversations with diplomats and various Yugoslavs particularly one who seems to know Renkovic quite well) it is clear that Djilas's case is largely a matter of strong bitterness against him on part of former colleagues. We were told that Renkovic's U.D.B. (secret police) is now carrying out an investigation to eliminate the remnants of Djilas's supporters in Party. No one seemed to think that he would get a quick release.
2. Conscientious Objectors. Our main contact with the Nazarenes (the principal sect involved), was and still is in England for a conference. As both Quakers and War Resisters International had reports late last year that Nazarenes did not want attention focused on them too much at the moment we did not go out to areas where they live. However we did have an interview with Col. Goce of army legal dept. who was most helpful. He was quite convincing in assuring us that C.Os no longer get more than one sentence: instead the possible maximum has been raised to 10 years for the offence by an amendment of 1959 (327A of the present Criminal Code). In practice, he says, sentences range from 6 months to 5 years. The information does not tally with that given to War Resisters and Quakers late last year by Yugoslav Embassy in London: they said that the Nazarene C.Os would only get one 6 month sentence in future. I asked Goce about this report and he said it was not true.
3. Religion. The Orthodox Church seems to have reached agreement with the government on a less strained modus vivendi though its constitutional position is unchanged. The more active Catholics were in on the talks, but the Vatican apparently ordered them to withdraw before agreement. The imprisonment of the R.C. bishop of Skopje is hardly a good AMNESTY case: he was clearly involved in a currency offence.
4. General political imprisonment. We had no lead on any particular case except Djilas when we went, but we raised the question with many people. It seems clear that, at the moment, Djilas is an isolated case: that is to say that everyone seemed to be agreed that imprisonment is not widely used at the moment as a means of suppressing criticism and opposition - Of course many of our conversations were not entirely free; there is a general attitude of fear and caution - some people obviously preferred to stick to

harmless generalisations. But the fear appears to be mainly of the lesser forms of discrimination: refusal of passport, loss of promotion prospects, loss of status among artists and journalists. It seems that imprisonment is unlikely unless a group is organised as it was in 1959 by a Belgrade professor of law who was imprisoned for a cooling off period; he's out again now.

This picture needs two qualifications:

- (a) We only visited Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. It is possible that in the smaller towns criticism incurs earlier imprisonment - perhaps especially in Montenegro and Macedonia both of which have unhealthy records of the use of administrative courts in trying political cases.
- (b) The composition of the Criminal Courts of first instance, which try such cases, seems bound to result in the occurrence of political, as opposed to legal, motives in passing sentence. This general question of legality is one which seems to have worried the government a lot in 1950-53 when both Renkovic and Kardelj made important speeches on the subject. We spent some time at the faculty of law reading translated articles on the courts and talking to some of the professors and lecturers. We also had an interview with the deputy public prosecutor who was evasive on the subject. Most official criticism of the present state of the courts takes the line that unfair and incorrect sentences are the result of an incorrect understanding of the socialist role of the courts.

5. Advocates. Recently the press has launched another attack on the profession and it seems likely that some 'socialisation' will soon take place. This criticism has been touched off by the activities of a relatively small number of advocates representing state organisations in the economic courts for high fees. But the annual meeting of Serbian lawyers in Belgrade at the end of May regarded the criticism as a complete attack on the whole profession: the press quickly denied this, but the position is by no means clear.

6. Economics. Tito made a long speech at Split early in May underlining the grave economic situation of the country and particularly the appearance of corruption inside the league of Communists. Since the early part of this year a large number of officials in state organisation have been imprisoned for corruption: in one small town 12 out of 25 state directors are reported to have been imprisoned this year. Imprisonment for economic and currency offences will presumably become more frequent. This tightening up may go further than this: in his speech Tito called on the Communists to be strong and exert a full influence, again. The present position of the economy, the threat of the Common Market, and Tito's holiday in Russia could lead to a general tightening up - including a harsher line on political offences.