

monthly newsletter from amnesty international

postcards for prisoners campaign

November 1968

Here is some news about previous prisoners:

Stefan Gardonyi, Rumania (August 1968). Given free pardon and released in early October. This is almost certainly the direct result of Amnesty pressure.

Dr Sami el Joundi, Syria (August 1968). Report of his release in Le Monde (5th November 1968). Apparently Dr el Joundi was alleged to have published without authorisation documents concerning Syrian politics.

B.P. Koirala, Nepal (October 1966) was released at the beginning of November and has gone abroad for medical treatment. He is in very poor health, but hopes to return to political life when he has recovered.

Jean Coulardeau, France (June 1968). We have received one report that Jean Coulardeau is free and are trying to get confirmation of this. Would anyone who has any information about him please pass it on to us.

Mohamed Panahi, Iran (August 1968) was tried by court martial in mid-October and sentenced to one year. The main evidence for the Prosecution seems to be that he received two student leaders in his house during the March strike at Shiraz University. His prison conditions are known to be good.

Wole Soyinka, Nigeria (November 1967) Reporting (on October 19th) the visit Laide Soyinka was allowed to pay his son, the Nigerian press stated that the Federal Military government had made an exception to the normal 'no visit rule for detainees for detainees in order to correct false reports about Mr Soyinka's welfare. Early in September Mr Soyinka was also seen in Kaduna Prison by a prison medical officer who found him in good health, (information from the British Embassy in Washington).

Ben Jennet Mohamed, Tunisia (October 1968). Several members who wrote to the Tunisian Embassy in London have sent in replies they received which end with the sentence: "The authorities in Tunis have been informed of your request for them to reconsider the case."

Pavlos Zannas, Greece (October 1968) was tried by court martial and sentenced on November 13th to 10½ years. The main evidence brought to support charges of 'conspiracy against the Government' was that he had co-operated in the production and distribution of pamphlets hostile to the present Government. This is a most savage sentence and members are encouraged to write to their Greek Embassies asking for a review and clemency.

Victor Rico Galan (September 1968) and Demetrio Vallejo Martinez (December 1966), Mexico. Many members have received letters from the Mexican authorities in reply to cards they sent concerning these two prisoners. The wording

varies slightly, but in essence the replies state that Galan and Vallejo were sentenced for offences against the Penal Code, that the accused enjoyed all the guarantees which are clearly defined in the Constitution and the penal system of Mexico and that Mexico does not tolerate interference by foreigners in the internal affairs of the country. The Mexican government has always respected the right of a government to deal with its internal problems in its own way.

Mexico is a signatory of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and thus committed to the observance of the minimum standards of justice internationally agreed. In their replies the Mexican authorities have evaded the real issues involved which are:

1. that the Law of Social Dissolution is so vaguely worded (presumably deliberately) that it is open to abuse. In effect it allows the government to imprison anyone it likes. The law is very similar to the notorious Law 509 currently being used by the Greek government against those considered hostile to the military junta.
2. that concern for human rights is not limited by national boundaries.

Joaquim Augusto dos Santos, Portugal (September 1968). A member who wrote to the Portuguese authorities expressing concern at the continued detention of this prisoner, received through the post a bundle of tourist pamphlets on Portugal - among them a book called 'Portugal - the Country and its People' costing 10/6. These he intended to return, but was interested to know whether others had received similar attentions.

Here are this month's prisoners:

Ghaus Baksh Bizengo, Pakistan.

Ghaus Baksh Bizengo was arrested in May 1968 and sentenced by a special tribunal to 14 years rigorous imprisonment for 'sedition'.

Baksh Bizengo, a landowner and poet, was General Secretary of the West Pakistan branch of the left-wing National Awami Party, whose main policy is opposition to the government's policy that all of West Pakistan should form a single province controlled from the centre. The N.A.P. wants West Pakistan to be broken up into a number of separate provinces, of which one would be Baluchistan, Baksh Bizengo's home region.

The Prosecution allege that Bizengo wrote slogans critical of the government on a bank note. The evidence against him was the testimony of a shop-keeper to whom it was alleged he had passed the note. In court Bizengo pointed out that he was not afraid to say publically what he thought about Baluchistan and that it was absurd to think he would resort to writing his views in this way. In this region it is not unknown for prosecution witnesses to be bribed or suborned to give false evidence against an accused. We have also received a report that the magistrate admitted in conversation with some of Bizengo's fellow tribesmen that he had received 500 rupees from the government for having dealt with the case satisfactorily. While we cannot be sure of the truth of this, it does cast doubts on the impartiality of the verdict.

Baksh Bizengo has been in prison several times on various political

charges since President Ayub came to power in 1958. In each case the charge has been in some way connected with his opposition to the government's policy.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

His Excellency,
President Ayub Khan,
Government Buildings,
Rawalpindi,
Indonesia.

OR **PAKISTANI**
The Indonesian Ambassador in
your own country.

Father Laszlo Emödi, Hungary.

Father Emödi, a Roman Catholic priest, is serving a nine-year prison sentence in Budapest Central Prison. He was arrested together with several other priests in December 1964 and brought to trial in July 1965. As the court proceedings were closed to the public, there is no precise information as to what the charges were, but according to the information given to the international press they consisted of activities hostile to the regime and 'illegal' contacts with Western countries.

In June 1961 Father Emödi was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment on charges of organising a counter-revolutionary organisation. He was amnestied in 1963 but banned from working as a priest. It seems likely that he was re-arrested for breaking this ban. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the existing Hungarian Constitution.

Catholicism and nationalism have in the past been associated in Hungary and the Roman Church under Cardinal Mindszenty formed a focus for opposition to communism after the Second World War and during the 1950's. It is therefore impossible from the facts available to judge whether or not this is simply a case of religious persecution or whether there are political undertones.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

Mr Jenő Fock,
Prime Minister of the Hungarian
People's Republic,
Ministerlnokseg,
Budapest,
Hungary.

OR

Mr Mihaly Korm,
Minister of Justice,
Igazsagügy Miniszterium,
Budapest V,
Szalay utca 16,
Hungary.

Abubakar Mayanja, Uganda.

Abu Mayanja, who is an M.P. and a successful barrister in private practice, was arrested at his home in Kampala at 5 a.m. on October 18th 1968. On the same day Rajat Neogy, editor of TRANSITION (a bi-monthly English language magazine dealing with cultural and political issues) was also detained. Both men are being held under the Uganda Emergency Regulations. It is reported that Mr Mayanja was roughly handled by the police and had to receive hospital treatment after his arrest; however his condition appears less serious than was at first feared.

Mr Mayanja, who is 39, was educated at Makerere and Cambridge where he read History and Law. He qualified as a barrister in 1959 and returned to Uganda the following year. When the Uganda National Congress, of which he was a founder member, broke up and the Uganda People's Congress (the present ruling party) was formed, Mayanja and others invited Dr Obote to become leader of the new party. Mr Mayanja has been an M.P. since 1964 and was formerly Minister of Education in the Kabaka's government. He also served as Minister of Economic Planning and until 1964 was Chairman of the Buganda Planning Commission.

In recent years Mr Mayanja has been an outspoken critic of many government policies. He has published articles critical of the new Constitution and the latest issue of TRANSITION carried a letter from him in which he questioned the legality of certain judgements given in the Uganda courts. He has frequently raised the questions of detention, the treatment of political prisoners and the continuation of the State of Emergency in Parliament, in the press and on public platforms, and is said to be disliked and feared by the majority of the Uganda People's Congress from which he was expelled earlier this year.

As a lawyer who acted for many of those detained under the Emergency Regulations under which he himself is now held, he criticised and clashed with the police. This may explain the rough treatment he received from them when arrested. Mr Mayanja is a Muganda and a Moslem. He is one of the leaders of the Uganda Muslim Congress, the traditional Muslim organisation in Uganda which is led by a relative of the Kabaka's. A new group, the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims (reputedly backed by Dr Obote) was started in an attempt to counteract the influence of the U.M.C. At the beginning of October a clash occurred between these two groups as a result of an attempt by the N.A.A.M. to hold a meeting in a mosque which was the traditional preserve of the U.M.C. During the clash four people were killed. Forty people were detained in connection with the killings. Mayanja defended the detainees, took the cases to the High Court and successfully argues that no case existed against them.

Appeals should express concern that the Uganda government has arrested a man apparently only because he has had the courage to criticise government policy and to speak out publicly on issues of national interest and human concern

Send your cards to:

EITHER

His Excellency, Dr Milton Obote,
President of Uganda,
State House,
Entebbe,
Uganda.

OR

Mr Sam Odaka,
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
P.O. Box 122,
Entebbe,
Uganda.

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