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The facts on human rights are vital. The regular *Amnesty International Newsletter* is thoroughly researched and written without any political bias. It covers the latest political arrests and trials. It presents reliable reports of torture and executions. It speaks for the victims, *everywhere*.

HUMAN RIGHTS HEADLINES

CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE

Hundreds of school children have been arrested and subjected to merciless treatment. Between 50 and 100 have been killed in prison. Some were bayoneted or beaten to death with sticks and whips. One witness counted the bodies of 62 dead children. (June 1979)

AFGHANISTAN

An AI mission met officials and prisoners in Kabul and confirmed abuses previously reported. It asked the government for details on hundreds of prisoners said to be in custody. (April 1980)

EL SALVADOR

In the wake of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, lives of other human rights activists in the country were at risk as the government imposed a state of siege, news censorship and sent troops into action in rural areas. (May 1980)

SOVIET UNION

More than 150 people peacefully exercising their rights have been arrested or tried, sent to prison or exile or forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals in the past nine months. (August 1980)

IRAQ

Reports point to political suspects being poisoned in custody. Medical examinations have revealed victims suffering from doses of thallium—a rat poison that can lead to a slow and painful death. (October 1980)

PAKISTAN

Hundreds of members of political parties and their sympathizers are reported to have been arrested in Pakistan since a Pakistan International Airlines jet was

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Survivors tell of terror in Argentinian camps

Two survivors who escaped from secret detention camps in Argentina have described a pattern of systematic torture and brutality culminating, they believe, in death for most of the people they met in the camps.

Their unique eyewitness report was published by AI on 4 February and presented to a news conference in London the same day by the two men, Oscar Alfredo GONZALEZ and Horacio CID DE LA PAZ. They spent 15 months in the camps after being abducted within two weeks of each other in November 1977 in Buenos Aires. They were in five camps between them and their account provides details on hundreds of prisoners—most of them now believed to be dead.



Oscar Alfredo Gonzalez (left) and Horacio CID de la Paz who survived torture at the hands of Argentinian security forces.

The report throws a new light on the systematic nature of the Argentine system who have "disappeared" over the past three years. Local human rights groups say the disappearances total more than 15,000. AI decided to publish the testimony of the two men after months of checking their account against its own records of people who have "disappeared" and the statements of former prisoners. The organization also consulted well-informed sources in Argentina and was able to corroborate many of the details given by the two men.

They came to AI with their testimony after the organization issued a list in 1979 of 2,605 people known to have "disappeared" since the coup that brought General Jorge VIDELA to power in March 1976.

They testify to a consistent pattern supervised in meticulous detail by military and police officers. Torture and interrogation were followed by a period of what they call "concentration camps" full with regular punishments and beatings, and finally, for most prisoners, "transfers" to the euphemism for death. Most of the victims had been taken from their homes or places of work without any semblance of legality by armed agents of the security forces.

Gonzalez, a 27-year-old factory worker when he was kidnaped, had been active politically at a union. His wife, who he says had not taken part in politics, was abducted a month later. He has heard nothing of her since January 1978. De la Paz, who was 20 when he was kidnaped, was a student leader and a member of the

Sakharov exiled in crackdown

Soviet scientist and human rights activist Andrei SAKHAROV is among more than 50 Soviet dissidents who are known to have been arrested or sentenced to imprisonment during the four months after AI issued its open letter to Soviet President Leonid BREZHNEV.

Dr Sakharov was taken into custody in Moscow and sent to live in the city of Gorky on 23 January. On the same day, AI issued a letter delivered to the Soviet Embassy in London that was shocked by the news. The letter said all the known facts indicated that the action was taken because of Dr Sakharov's public activities in defence of human rights and that a concerted international human rights movement had been set up by the USSR.

Dr Sakharov was also stripped of decorations and medals previously conferred on him by the Soviet Government.

Dr Sakharov was not charged with any criminal offence or brought before a court.

The action against him came during a major crackdown on dissidents in the USSR to which AI had called attention on 11 January (February Newsletter). At the crackdown announced AI compiled a list of 51 people known to have been arrested, sentenced or confined to psychiatric institutions in the period from 1 October 1979 to 24 January 1980 for the most violent exercise of human rights.

Ministers was of the Penitentiary movement.

They estimate that 900 people passed through the camps they were in during their 15 months in captivity, and they provide details on more than 300 of them.

Both men were taken first to Chelabinsk, a building in Soviet Ales which served as an initial depot for prisoners, where they saw their first glimpse of the world.

OCTOBER 1981

Special International
campaign for the abolition of torture

Ugandan political prisoners smuggle out plea for help

Political prisoners detained in the military-controlled Uganda prison near Kampala have smuggled out a letter asking world human rights activists to call on the international community to "track us down from anywhere".

The letter says that three prisoners had recently after being denied medical treatment and that others are severely ill because of harsh conditions in the prison, where about 260 political prisoners have been held in recent months.

A fourth prisoner, Philip LI ANDI, a Kampala leader, who was one of those who had signed the letter, is reported to have died of disease and malnutrition on 16 August 1981, the day the letter was published on the international press. He had been held in the prison since 1976.

News in brief

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

AI has appealed for the urgent release of two GDR prisoners, a promise of co-operation in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) believed to have been on hunger strike since the beginning of August in protest against the conditions of his detention. He is serving a 2 1/2 month sentence for "incitement to hate in the work".

In its appeal, AI stressed that the hunger strike added urgency to the need for his release from a detention that undermined the GDR's international commitments to respect human rights.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The GDR has rather alone or in groups of only two or three of prisoners, suspected or convicted of politically motivated offences, was once more named by AI in a letter to the Federal Republic of Germany's Justice Minister, Dr Jürgen SCHIMMDF, on 6 September 1981. AI believes that such inclusion poses a threat to the prisoners' health (see June 1980 Newsletter).

All 200 prisoners were made public and supporting the immediate release of people detained solely for their political opinions, and are kept and for their call other political prisoners in the 3000 prisoners of the Republic of Uganda (See Human Rights Newsletter).

The defendants had been detained during 1980 (see January 1981 Newsletter). AI believes they are prisoners of conscience arrested for their peaceful political beliefs. On 28 August it called President Jean Claude DUVALIER of Haiti expressing concern at the sentences and urging the prisoners' unconditional release.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the most severe crackdown on dissenters since 1971, some 30 signatories and supporters of the unofficial human rights movement Charter 77 and members of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted have been arrested on suspicion of engaging in subversion. Amnesty International believes that they are being prosecuted for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression and has adopted them as prisoners of conscience. (July 1981)

SYRIA

Security forces are reported to have killed several hundred people in the town of Hama on the night of 23 April 1981. According to reports received by Amnesty International, units of the Syrian Special Forces sealed off parts of Hama and carried out house-to-house searches. People were said to have been dragged from their homes, lined up in the street and shot. (September 1981)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In a new report Amnesty International calls for an independent commission of inquiry into the influence of FBI activities on the criminal justice system. After examining thousands of pages of official transcripts and documents, the organization says the FBI was responsible for false evidence, harassment and failure to disclose information in cases of activists from militant groups. (November 1981)

IRAN

Political prisoners are reported to have died under torture recently. Some of the victims are said to have

been hanged afterwards to make it appear that the cause of death was formal execution. More than 200 detailed allegations of torture have been received, in some cases supported by photographs and medical reports. (January 1982)

CHILE

Secret police have been accused of subjecting a human rights activist and an economist to torture by electric shock. During one torture session, according to one of the victims, the shocks were so powerful that he began to have heart trouble—and one of his torturers had to give external heart massage until he recovered. The torture then resumed. (March 1982)

EXECUTIONS

Most of the 3,000 people known to have been executed throughout the world in 1981 lost their lives for politically motivated offences. Frequently the death penalty was passed after proceedings that did not conform to the minimum standard of a fair trial. (April 1982)

POLAND

At least 11 people have been killed and more than 5000 held in internment camps since martial law was declared, according to official figures. Many are reported to be held in cold, overcrowded conditions and fears have been expressed for their health and safety. (February 1982)

COLOMBIA

One of the principal lawyers defending political prisoners has been shot dead in the capital, Bogotá, after receiving telephoned death threats. His murder is one of the most recent in a series of killings and abductions of political opposition figures and trade unionists which Colombian security officials have attributed to "death squads". (May 1982)

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controversy & criticism

"As for the Amnesty International contention that the Afghanistan Government had jailed 12,000 people since the revolution, Mr Amin said that the London-based group had a 'fertile imagination and is spoon-fed by the propaganda centres of Radio Peking, the BBC, the Voice of America, Islamabad and Teheran' ".
from an Agence France Presse interview with former Afghanistan President Hafizullah Amin, 1979.

"Even during its early years Amnesty International was in the keep of the imperialist secret services, first and foremost by the Americans, whose interests it serves. . . . sabotage against the USSR, including sending agents and hostile literature, is an important part of Amnesty International's activity."
from the Soviet newspaper Izvestiya, 1980.

"With total impudence and insolence, Amnesty International. . . . whose political affiliation is well known, declares cynically that it is the Government of Guatemala that 'directs a program of murders and tortures established by the government'. The ignorance of the members of this organization which is headed by communists is obvious. . . . it does not even try to hide its true Soviet character. . . ."
from the office of the Public Relations Director of the President of Guatemala, 1980.

practical information



Each month the *Amnesty International Newsletter* tells readers how they can give practical help to prisoners of conscience and to those threatened with torture or execution. Every issue includes appeals with careful instructions for people to send letters urging respect for the victims' rights.

One prisoner, Julio de Pena Valdez, a trade union leader, has recalled the effect of the hundreds of letters and cards he received in prison. Seized in mass arrests in the Dominican Republic in 1975, he was being held naked in an underground cell.

"When the first two hundred letters came the guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next two hundred letters came and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming; three thousand of them. The President was informed. The letters still kept arriving and the President called the prison and told them to let me go. After I was released the President called me to his office for a man to man talk. He said: 'How is it that a trade union leader like you has so many friends all over the world?' He showed me an enormous box full of letters he had received and, when we parted, he gave them to me. I still have them."