



Amnesty International newsletter

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Severe Prison Sentence for Kovalyov; USSR Refuses AI Observer

SERGEI KOVALYOV, a member of Amnesty International's Moscow group was found guilty of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" on 12 December in Vilnius, Lithuania. He was sentenced to 7 years in a strict regime corrective labour colony, to be followed by 3 years' internal exile.

Dr Kovalyov, a 43-year-old biologist, was arrested in Moscow last December (February 1975 *Newsletter*) and had been detained awaiting trial for almost a year, three months beyond the USSR's own legal limit for pretrial detention.

According to unofficial sources Dr Kovalyov was accused of involvement in the distribution of *samizdat* material, including *A Chronicle of Current Events* and *A Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, and of having written open letters and signed appeals.

The Soviet official news agency TASS stated that it was proved in court that the literature circulated by Dr Kovalyov was "false" and "slandorous"—for example the assertion that Soviet psychiatry has been abused for political reasons.

Dr Kovalyov's sentence is virtually the maximum sentence for a first conviction on this charge and its severity came as a surprise to most observers. In a news release on 12 December, *AI* described the sentence as "a travesty of justice and a mockery of all the international undertakings on human rights given by the Soviet Union".

On the opening day of the trial, *AI* criticized the Soviet authorities for failing to respond to several *AI* requests to be allowed

to send an observer to Dr Kovalyov's trial and the trial of the 35-year-old secretary of the Moscow group, physicist ANDREI TVERDOKHLEBOV. Mr Tverdokhlebov, who was arrested last April (May *Newsletter*) was due to stand trial later in December, charged with "dissemination of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system". If convicted, he faces a sentence of up to 3 years.

AI had supported its requests for observers by referring to the Soviet legal requirement that trials be open to the public. However, not only *AI* but a number of Dr Kovalyov's friends, including Academician ANDREI SAKHAROV, were not allowed to attend the proceedings. Nonetheless the trial was the subject of intense worldwide publicity. Dr Kovalyov has no legal right of appeal against the verdict or the sentence. However, the case may be reviewed in the USSR Supreme Court.●

British Pacifists Acquitted

Fourteen persons charged with contravening or conspiring to contravene Britain's Incitement to Disaffection Act of 1934 (July *Newsletter*) were acquitted on 6 December after a trial in London lasting 51 days.

The defendants, supporters of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign, are pacifists who had distributed, or been in possession of, a leaflet giving information on legal and illegal means of leaving the armed forces. *AI* had announced that it would adopt any of the 14 who were convicted. It has called for the repeal of the act which it considers to be incompatible with the principle of freedom of speech.

AI had previously adopted PAT ARROWSMITH as a prisoner of conscience when she was convicted, under the same act, of distributing similar material. *AI* is acting as agent for Miss Arrowsmith in her current application before the European Commission of Human Rights, arguing that her conviction violated her rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

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AI Deputy Secretary General HANS EHRENSTRALE addressed a letter to all members of the British House of Commons on 1 December urging them to vote against a resolution demanding the introduction of capital punishment for terrorist offences which cause death. The motion to introduce the penalty was defeated on 11 December by 361 votes to 232.●

INDIAN LEADER RELEASED

JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN, the Gandhian leader, was released on parole on 12 November from hospital in India's Chandigarh State, where he had been kept in solitary confinement while receiving medical treatment. Mr Narayan, an *AI*-adopted prisoner, was the best known of the political prisoners arrested in India immediately after the declaration of the emergency on 26 June (August *Newsletter*).

On 13 November *AI* Deputy Secretary General HANS EHRENSTRALE wrote to Home Minister BRAHMANANDA REDDY requesting details of the restrictions which had reportedly been imposed on Mr Narayan's release despite the fact that he has never been charged or tried. On 4 December the Indian government revoked the detention order against him.

Mr Narayan has reportedly suffered a mild heart attack, and is presently in the intensive care unit at the Jaslok Hospital in

continued on page 2

AI GROUPS ASKED TO TAKE ACTION

Brazilian Prisoners Go on Third Hunger Strike

AI learned in December that the prisoners in the Professor Barreto Campelo Prison in Itamaraca, Recife, in Brazil's northeast state of Pernambuco have staged their third hunger strike this year. *AI* groups have been asked to take immediate action on their behalf.

In April the 23 prisoners supported a call for a general amnesty and asked for a review of their cases and an investigation into allegations of torture and deaths in prison and disappearances from prisons in Brazil.

They also asked for the possibility of appeals and parole because they were the first to be tried under the 1969 security law and their sentences are unusually long ones—703 years among 23 prisoners. A dossier sent to Minister of Justice Dr ARMANDO FALCAO pointed out that many had not been represented by a lawyer at their trial and that much of the incriminating evidence was obtained under

torture.

In reprisal, the authorities transferred the two prisoners they considered responsible for this document, LUCIANO ALMEIDA and MARCELO MARIA DE MELO, to a military barracks. On 3 July the two wrote a letter of protest to the military judge of Pernambuco and announced that they were going on a hunger strike.

In August the remaining prisoners went on a sympathy hunger strike for 13 days until the authorities promised to rectify the situation. But demands for the return of the two prisoners and improved prison conditions were not met.

They began a second hunger strike in October lasting 25 days, during which time seven prisoners were hospitalized. After interventions by the families and by President of the Brazilian Bar Association, MOACIR BARACHO of Pernambuco, the second strike ended without any change in the situation.●

INDIAN LEADER RELEASED

Bombay where he is also receiving treatment for a kidney ailment which was aggravated during his detention. It is widely believed that the reason for Mr Narayan's release was the weak state of his health.

His release does not indicate a basic change in the detention policy of the Indian government. Although many political prisoners have been released since June 1975, arrests on a more selective basis continue, and reliable sources estimate that the present number of political prisoners detained under the emergency legislation are between 20,000 and 100,000. ●

AI QUESTIONS DETENTIONS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN IRAQ

AI Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS wrote to Foreign Minister SAADOUN HAMMADI of Iraq on 5 December about the arrests of students and of members of the Kurdish Democratic Party.

Several students from Najaf University, including the son of a Shi'ite religious leader AYATOLLAH KHUMEINI, were arrested allegedly for protesting against the proposed nationalization of educational institutions in the area. About 200 members of the Kurdish Democratic Party were arrested whilst distributing pamphlets (December Newsletter). Mr Ennals asked for details of the legislative grounds for their arrest and for assurances that they were receiving their legal rights.

On 8 December Mr Ennals wrote to President AHMAD HASSAN AL BAKR requesting that the government reveal the whereabouts, or confirm the death, of two members of the Jewish community in Iraq, AKRAM BAHER and SHUA SOFFER. This letter followed a resolution adopted by the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq on 26 November, entitling all Iraqi Jews who left Iraq after 1948 to return and enjoy equal rights with Iraqi citizens.

Mr Baher and Mr Soffer were arrested in 1969 and 1968 respectively and both were adopted by AI. The Iraqi government has never made any official announcement as to their whereabouts and there have been unconfirmed reports that they died in prison. ●

RELEASES IN EAST GERMANY

Four out of seven people imprisoned at the end of the 1974 in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) for demonstrating, independently of each other, in support of human rights, were released during October and November. IRMGARD and HELLMUT GERISCH were released on 15 October and 19 November respectively and EVA and ALOIS WILK on 5 and 26 November.

No news has yet reached AI of HERBERT WILK, Alois' brother and of the third couple SIEGFRIED and RITA MULLER. The two Gerisch children are supposed to be allowed to join their parents in the German Federal Republic (West Germany) within three months.

TRADE UNION LEADERS REARRESTED FOLLOWING SPANISH AMNESTY

MARCELINO CAMACHO and worker-priest Father GARCIA SALVE, two trade union leaders who were released under the amnesty declared by King JUAN CARLOS I in November (December Newsletter) were rearrested one week later. They were arrested for allegedly directing a protest which was to be staged outside Carabanchel Prison on 7 December. The protest, against the limitations of the amnesty which only benefitted a small proportion of political prisoners, did not take place. About one thousand armed police sealed off all roads leading to the prison. It is not yet known whether Señor Camacho and Father Garcia Salve were charged but on 12 December AI learned that Señor Camacho had been released.

There has been widespread criticism in Spain of the terms of the amnesty. One of the articles states that all those accused of membership of any political grouping outlawed under the Anti-Terrorist Decree Law passed four months ago will be excluded from the amnesty. These include

the Communist Party and anarchist groups, as well as separatist movements such as the Catalan Liberation Front and the Basque nationalists. Another complaint against the amnesty is that reductions in long sentences are minimal, so that only those serving comparatively short sentences, or those due for release soon, will benefit. So far the amnesty has been applied ambiguously, since some well known leaders of the Communist Party of Spain, including Señor Camacho and Father Salve, were released immediately.

One thing which appears certain is that the amnesty will not apply to any of those charged with membership of the pro-Peking *Frente Revolucionaria Antifascista y Patriótica* (FRAP) or the Basque Separatist Movement *Euzkadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA), even if the charge is simply illicit association or illegal propaganda (in many cases mere possession of literature). To date it is estimated that only 235 of the more than 3,000 releases under the amnesty are political prisoners. ●

AI ASKS BANGLADESH FOR DETAILS OF REVIEW BODY

AI Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS wrote to President MOHAMMAD SAYEM of Bangladesh on 5 December congratulating him on the announcement of a general amnesty for political prisoners and requesting details of the review committee set up to examine the cases of those political prisoners against whom criminal charges have been made.

Mr Ennals recalled that many political prisoners were detained in Bangladesh under the regime of President MUJIBUR RAHMAN, particularly under the Emergency Power Regulations. The regulations allowed the authorities to detain a person on the grounds that detention was necessary to prevent persons from committing acts deemed prejudicial to the security of the state.

In his letter Mr Ennals asked that those against whom substantive evidence of criminal offences exists be brought to trial without further delay and that the others be released.

Major M.A. JALIL and ABDUR RAB, two leaders of the Bangladesh opposition party *Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal* (JSD), were rearrested on 26 November, after their release on 8 November, and were accused of "subversive activities". AI is investigating both cases.

* * *
On 18 November the Fourth Martial Law Amendment was passed, providing punishment—including the death penalty—for "any activity prejudicial to the defence, security of the state . . . or any other anti-state activity". ●

In July AI launched a campaign in aid of the three families, who, in secret trials, were sentenced for incitement hostile to the state to terms of imprisonment ranging from 3 years 3 months to 6 years. ●

FIVE STUDENTS TO STAND TRIAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Five members of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) who were arrested on 1 December were granted bail when they appeared in the Johannesburg Regional Court on 5 December. They were all charged under the Suppression of Communism Act and the trial is due to start early in 1976.

The students include CHARLES NUPEN and KAREL TIP, both former presidents of NUSAS, and GLEN MOSS. Both Mr Tip and Mr Moss had previously spent more than three months in detention without charge and had been released on 26 November at the end of the trial of the Afrikaans poet BREYTEN BREYTENBACH (December Newsletter). ●

AMNESTY FOR YUGOSLAV PRISONERS

President JOSIP BROZ TITO of Yugoslavia pardoned 535 prisoners on 29 November, Republic Day, according to the official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug. Eighty-seven prisoners were released and a further 448 had their sentences reduced. However, Tanjug did not mention whether the amnesty included political prisoners. ●

PLEA FOR CLEMENCY IN USA

Soviet scientist ANDREI SAKHAROV, winner of the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize, called on Governor HUGH CAREY of New York State on 8 December to grant executive clemency to MARTIN SOSTRE, an AI-adopted prisoner in the United States.

Mr Sostre was sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment in 1968 for the alleged sale of heroin, but the only witness to this alleged sale has since recanted his testimony. AI believes that Mr Sostre was falsely implicated by the police because of his political activities. ●

Prisoners of the Month Campaign

Participants in the Campaign are reminded that appeals must only be sent to the officials named at the end of each case. In *no* circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

Vladimir OSIPOV, USSR

VLADIMIR OSIPOV, a prominent Soviet dissident, was arrested on 28 November 1974 and charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". Reports in March 1975 said he had been taken to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow for a psychiatric examination but was apparently declared mentally fit to stand trial.

The trial took place on 25 September 1975. Mr Osipov was accused of having published the *samizdat* journal *Veche* and of having received money from Russian emigré groups. He was sentenced to 8 years in a corrective labour colony. On 9 December the Supreme Court upheld this sentence.

Mr Osipov was previously imprisoned from 1961 to 1968 when he served a 7-year sentence for his involvement with a *samizdat* journal, *Boomerang*. From 1971 to 1974 he edited *Veche* but announced in March 1974 that *Veche* was ceasing publication because of pressure from the KGB. In the ensuing months he began publishing a new *samizdat* journal, *Zemlya*. Mr Osipov always acted openly and in strict accordance with Soviet law and he invariably printed his name and address in a prominent place in *Veche*.

Mr Osipov's wife, Valentina Mashkova, has herself spent six years in a Soviet corrective labour colony after she and her first husband, Jury Mashkov, were sentenced to 10 and 11 years' imprisonment respectively for trying to cross the frontier. Mrs Mashkova's sentence was later reduced to 6 years. Both were adopted by *AI* during this time, and Jury Mashkov is still an *AI* adoption case.

Please send courteously worded appeals for the release of Vladimir Osipov to: USSR, Moscow, Kremlin, Mr L.I. Brezhnev, General Secretary, Central Committee, CPSU.

Alberto ALTESOR, Uruguay
ALBERTO ALTESOR, former parliamentarian (before the Uruguayan Congress was dissolved on 27 June 1973) and Communist Party leader, was detained on 21 October 1975 in Montevideo.

He is over 60 and, having recently undergone a heart operation, he is in extremely poor health. Since his arrest, he has been held incommunicado.

His three sons have also previously suffered imprisonment: IVAN ALTESOR was detained with other Communist Party leaders in May 1974 and was tortured before being released; HUGO ALTESOR was also brutally tortured in detention; HECTOR ALTESOR, a railway worker, was detained with other trade unionists in *El Cilindro* stadium earlier this year.

Mr Altesor's arrest typifies the widening extent of repression in Uruguay. Since the armed resistance movement (*Movimiento de Liberación Nacional - Tupamaros*) was crushed, the authorities have sought to repress all non-violent dissent as well. In recent months, hundreds of members of the Communist Party (banned with most other left-of-center groups in December 1973) have been systematically rounded up. As it is an offence merely to be a member of this or any other illegal party - and as the law is applied retroactively—it is feared that there will be further waves of arrests, in an

attempt to break down completely the cadres of all left-of-center groups.
Please write courteously worded appeals for the release of Alberto Altesor to: Dr Romulo Vago, Presidente de la Suprema Corte de Justicia, J. Scoseria 2766, Montevideo; and to: Dr Juan Carlos Blanco, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, 18 de Julio 1025, Montevideo.

Hsu Hsi-Tu, Taiwan
HSU HSI-TU, born in 1943 in Taiwan, was a promising assistant editor in a Taipei publishing company. He was arrested in March 1969 with at least four other people on charges of belonging to a unification society and was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment by a military court in early 1970 in Taipei.

Mr Hsu has allegedly been severely tortured, probably during pre-trial interrogation in 1969-1970. According to recent reports Mr Hsu is now suffering severe mental illness, perhaps as a result of torture.

He is reportedly confined in a private room of the Detention House of Taiwan Garrison Command in Taipei. The room has a small window close to the ceiling, so small that no sunshine or air can enter the room. It is not furnished and the ground is very wet. Mr Hsu's father died some time ago and his mother and younger sister are now living in very precarious circumstances.

Please send courteously worded appeals, pressing for Mr Hsu's release and requesting that he receive appropriate medical treatment to: President Yen Chia-kan, President of the Republic, Chieh Shou Hall, Chung-king S. Road, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China; and to: Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, Executive Yuan, 1 Chung Hsiao E. Road, Section 1, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

SIX SWAPO MEMBERS TO STAND TRIAL IN NAMIBIA

Six members of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) appeared in court at Windhoek on 1 December to face charges connected with the assassination on 16 August of Chief FILEMON ELIFAS the pro-South African leader of the Ovamboland homeland. All of the accused, three men and three women, are alleged to have provided financial and material support to Chief Elifas' assassins who are as yet unidentified. The six were remanded in custody until 16 February 1976 when they will be tried publicly at Swakopmund.

Among other Namibians known to have been detained after the death of Chief Elifas is AXEL JOHANNES the secretary general of SWAPO in Namibia. Mr Johannes, a former *AI*-adoptee, was detained

for several months during 1974 and is alleged to have been tortured while in detention.●

AI VOICES DISTRESS AT EXECUTIONS IN INDIA

AI cabled President FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED of India on 5 December expressing its "deep distress" at the hanging of two "Naxalite" prisoners in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh on 1 December.

The prisoners, KISTA GOWD, aged 45, and JANGAM BHOMIAH, aged 48, were both peasants and members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), commonly known as "Naxalites". They were convicted on 5 January 1972 of participation in politically-motivated killings in the state, and thus had awaited execution of the death sentence for nearly four years.

Both had been excluded from a commutation of all death sentences passed prior to 15 August 1972, announced on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of India's independence.

AI's cable noted that the President's

decision not to extend the pardon to the two prisoners was contrary to India's humanitarian tradition which has prevented executions of political prisoners since 1948.●

DEATH OF FORMER AI-ADOPTEE IN RHODESIA

A former *AI*-adoptee, LAZARUS NKALA, was killed in a car crash in Rhodesia on 3 December. Mr Nkala, who was detained in 1965 shortly before Rhodesian Prime Minister IAN SMITH's Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Great Britain, was released in December 1974 following an agreement signed between Mr Smith and the African National Council (ANC) in Lusaka, Zambia. After his release, Mr Nkala was appointed national organizing secretary for JOSHUA NKOMO's wing of the ANC.●

PRISONER RELEASES AND CASES

The International Secretariat learned in November of the release of 163 *AI*-adopted prisoners and took up 145 new cases.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mail for the South Australian Section should now be addressed to the secretary, Margaret Illman, 16 Tester Drive, Blackwood, South Australia 5051.●



amnesty international

campaign for the abolition of torture

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MONTHLY BULLETIN

UN General Assembly Adopts Declaration on Torture

The United Nations General Assembly adopted by acclamation on 9 December the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from being Subjected to Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (October *CAT Bulletin*). In an accompanying resolution, the General Assembly requested the UN Commission on Human Rights to elaborate measures to ensure effective observance of the declaration and to formulate a set of principles for the protection of all detained persons.

In a news release issued on Human Rights Day, 10 December, *AI* welcomed the declaration as a major step towards an effective international program to combat the worldwide practice of systematic torture by government agencies. *AI* also called for concrete and positive efforts by UN member states to implement its provisions.

The declaration establishes guidelines regarding the national legislation required to prevent torture, protect and compensate victims of torture, and punish torturers. "It is the responsibility of the state to incorporate the essential safeguards in their national legislation and ensure their observance", the *AI* statement read. 'Unless the determination shown by the UN General

Assembly is matched by concrete and positive efforts by individual member states to implement the declaration in their own countries, there is little hope of real progress.'

In a resolution accompanying the declaration the General Assembly, "believing that further international effort is needed to ensure adequate protection for all against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment", made specific requests to other UN bodies. The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control and the World Health Organization were requested to work further toward the implementation of ethical codes relevant to

torture for law-enforcement and medical personnel.

In its statement to the news media, *AI* announced that it will make every effort to ensure that the General Assembly's latest moves on torture are followed up to the fullest possible extent.

Such efforts would include a request to UN Secretary General KURT WALDHEIM to pursue the possibility of convening a joint meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control in order to plan an overall strategy for the total abolition of torture.

AI would also approach individual governments and regional organizations to sponsor programs of research and education, and to organize seminars not only on the subject of ethical standards for law-enforcement and medical personnel, but also on the subject of effective implementation of the principles contained in the declaration.●

Document details torture of Brazilian prisoners

Thirty-five political prisoners in Brazil have smuggled out of prison a highly impressive account of prison conditions and the use of torture in Brazil since 1969. This follows shortly after the massive public protest at the death under torture of journalist VLADIMIR HERZOG on 25 October (December *CAT Bulletin*).

The prisoners are serving sentences ranging from 4 to 82 years at the Military Prison in São Paulo on charges of belonging to an urban guerrilla group. The report records:

"Without one exception we all went through . . . their torture chambers . . . We were in this way the witnesses of the murder of many political prisoners, victims, like ourselves, of military and police violence . . . We can give an irrefutable testimony about the treatment given by the repressive agencies to thousands of people who, all over Brazil, have already passed and continue to pass through the hands of their torturers."

The prisoners accuse the authorities of using the cover-up of "car accidents", "suicides", "attempted escape" and, more recently, "disappearances" to disguise the long list of political assassinations in the torture chambers.

The 28-page document is in three sections. The first contains a description of 20 methods of torture commonly used in Brazil,

and the names of 233 alleged torturers, including high-ranking officers of the army and police whose activities they claim to know personally.

The second is an analysis of gross violations of legal procedures, followed by an account of sub-human prison conditions. Finally, there is a detailed list of 55 deaths under torture, 16 of which they claim to have witnessed.

According to the report, almost 300 prisoners have died in the torture chambers since the military coup in 1964, and there are "countless cases of prisoners mutilated as a result of torture".

The methods of torture described, 15 of which the prisoners report to have suffered themselves, include the famous *pau de arara*

("parrot's perch"), setting fire to parts of the body which have been dampened with alcohol, injection of ether under the skin, strong electric shocks combined with near-drowning, forcing objects up the rectum and the vagina of women, and the "Christ's crown" (a steel ring, applied on the head, which is gradually tightened).

The impressive compilation of factual data, much of which confirms earlier *AI* reports, leaves little room for doubt about the systematic use of torture in Brazil, and forms a denunciation that the authorities will find difficult to refute. Countless allegations made in past years have always met with evasive answers from the authorities, who refuse to admit that torture is practised at all or, at the most, claim that there are only isolated cases of excesses by lower-ranking officers out of their control.

According to the report, "from the simple prison guard to the high-ranking officers in charge of the repressive agencies, they are all invested with the power to arrest, torture and kill without being held responsible by anyone else for their acts".

The report is addressed to the President of the Brazilian Lawyers Association (*Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil*) CAIO MARIO DA SILVA PEREIRA, with the request to circulate it to all human rights organizations. According to press reports it has also been submitted to President ERNESTO GEISEL and other governmental authorities.●

PSYCHIATRIC ILL-TREATMENT ALLEGED IN YUGOSLAVIA

AI has just received information—the first of its kind—on imprisonment in psychiatric wards for political reasons in Yugoslavia. A 35-year-old Yugoslav lawyer, RADOVAN BLAGOJEVIC is reported to have been imprisoned six months ago in a "psychiatric hospital" in Belgrade following a letter he wrote to President JOSIP BROZ TITO in which he made a plea for Yugoslavia to respect its constitution and guarantee freedom of opinion.

appeals

Ayatollah H. MONTAZERI, Iran
AYATOLLAH HOSEINALI MONTAZERI, a 65-year-old Iranian religious leader, has been moved back and forth between the Evine and Comite prisons in Teheran several times since his arrest in late 1974. These two prisons, which are the main centers for the pretrial detention of political suspects, are notorious for the torture allegedly practised there. According to reports received by *AI*, Mr Montazeri has lost his hearing because both his eardrums were perforated as a result of severe torture.

A large number of theology students, detained with Mr Montazeri, were allegedly brought into his cell and ordered to beat him. They refused and were tortured themselves. In another form of pressure, the security police SAVAK brought his 85-year-old father to the prison and ordered him to write to the Shah to request mercy for his son. The old man refused, and a few days later SAVAK came to his village to force him to sign a letter they themselves had written. Refusing again, the old man was beaten up and severely injured. The father and son remained adamant that there was nothing for which the son needed forgiveness, and that he would be prepared to ask mercy only from God, not from man. Mr Montazeri has been neither tried nor charged.

Send courteously worded letters, requesting that Mr Montazeri be either charged or released, and expressing concern about the reports of torture and his impaired health, to: His Imperial Majesty Shahanshah of Iran, Niavaran Palace, Teheran; and to: General Nematollah Nassiri, SAVAK Headquarters, Niavaran, Teheran.

TAIWAN PRISONERS' HEALTH IN DANGER

Three political prisoners in Taiwan are allegedly suffering from the effects of torture during pretrial interrogations

that occurred several years ago, and their conditions of health are aggravated by perfunctory medical care, according to information recently received by *AI*.

LIU CH'EN-TAN was arrested in 1971 along with many other Taiwanese who were accused of involvement in the Taiwan Independence Movement. He suffers, according to one report, from having had gasoline poured into his nose during interrogation in 1971. His physical fitness as an athlete helped him survive the symptoms, which included swelling, protruding eyeballs, loss of voice, loss of feeling in the arms, skin rashes, insomnia, high pulse rate, vomiting and excretion of blood. In 1975 his 8½-year sentence was reduced to 5 years 8 months.

In 1971, editor HSIEH TS'UNG-MIN was arrested for the distribution of literature supporting Taiwanese independence. His part in collecting information about political prisoners in Taiwan is thought to have contributed to his arrest and subsequent sentencing by closed military tribunal to a 15-year term.

Later that year he smuggled a letter out of prison describing his torture during interrogation in the underground cells of the Taiwan Garrison (military) Command. His torture included enforced sleeplessness, electric shocks and severe beatings.

His sentence has now been reduced, but he is in solitary confinement, where he suffers from asthma and arthritis so painful that he cannot raise one arm.

TS'AI TS'AI-YÜAN was sentenced to 12 years for his alleged activities in 1962 supporting Taiwanese independence. Three years were added to the sentence in 1970, and he was beaten so brutally at that time that he cannot bend either leg.

Please send courteously worded letters, requesting immediate medical attention for all three of these prisoners, to: Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, Executive Yuan, 1 Chung Hsiao E. Road, Section 1, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

1958 he had been an agent charged with the task of obtaining confessions from prisoners while acting as a fellow inmate. In his 17 years of activity in prison he is credited with "solving" 200 cases, most of which involved prisoners accused of corruption or spying.

Over a number of years investigative officials in this prison appear to have employed convicted criminals regularly to extract confessions from suspects, and the prison administrative staff abetted these procedures. Criminal prisoners thus employed frequently beat and tortured fellow prisoners as a means of extracting confessions.

Among the methods used were vicious beatings with fists, boots and various instruments, burning prisoners with lit cigarettes, homosexual rape and holding prisoners under hot showers. A number of prisoners died as a result of such treatment. Members of the prison medical staff helped

REPORTS OF BRUTALITY IN BULGARIAN PRISON CAMP

Reports have reached *AI* that torture is being practised extensively in the concentration camp of Belene, which is on an island in the river Danube.

Belene was a notorious prison in the 1950s but was reported to have been closed in the 1960s. However, detailed information has recently been received from PETAR STOICHEV, who spent three years on the island until September 1974. According to this information about 1,300 prisoners are being held there, of whom only 10 per cent are common law criminals.

The largest group among the political detainees consists of 500 Pomaks, ethnic Bulgarians of Moslem faith who have persistently refused to convert their Turkish names. One hundred and fifty of them allegedly received life sentences. Three hundred and eighty prisoners are Macedonians from the southwest corner of the country who are not recognized by the present regime as an ethnic minority.

A further 280 prisoners are said to be political, including former social democrats like PETAR PEEV, members of the Peasant Party like KOLIO GROZEV from Sofia and even dissident communists, among them the Greek communist SERGIUS PAPANUSIS.

According to Mr Stoichev, the torture consists mainly of frequent beating with sticks, and several prisoners are reported to have died as a result of the treatment they received.

Bulgaria, one of the few European countries apart from the Soviet Union and Albania that practises banishment for political offences, has a special psychiatric institution in the ghost town of Biala.

An ex-political prisoner, IVAN SHIRAKOV, escaped in the autumn of 1974 to Austria after seven years of strict imprisonment. According to him, Biala's population of 8,000 consists almost entirely of banished Bulgarian citizens, and its special "psychiatric institutions" treat not only ordinary patients, but also "several dissident intellectuals without any medical justification".●

to conceal the true causes of these deaths and injuries.

Testimony given by a number of witnesses during the trial of Mr Tsirekidze and Mr Usupyan corroborated these and other allegations. It is also reported that the presiding judge accepted these allegations as well founded and expressed the view that the officials responsible for the situation in the prison should have been brought to trial. So far, to *AI*'s knowledge, no officials have been brought before the law.

In November *AI* Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS wrote to USSR Procurator-General R.A. RUDENKO, requesting that the fullest investigation of these allegations be made and that the officials responsible for the alleged abuses be brought to justice.●

UNOFFICIAL TRIAL TRANSCRIPT REVEALS USSR TORTURE

An unofficial transcript from a murder trial in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, which has recently come out of the USSR, indicates that the torture of common law prisoners in Investigation Prison Number 1 in Tbilisi was a frequent occurrence as late as 1973. The 13,000-word transcript was written from notes (or perhaps a recording) taken during the April 1975 semi-public trial of YURI TSIREKIDZE and VALIKO USUPYAN, who were accused of murdering fellow prisoner N.V. ISMAILOV in October 1973.

Mr Tsirekidze, a criminal convict in the prison, confessed at his trial to beating Mr Ismailov, saying that he was acting on the prison authorities' instructions, but he denied responsibility for the blow that killed Mr Ismailov.

The most remarkable part of his statement concerned the fact that since

PERSECUTION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN MALAWI

The persecution and suffering of Malawi's 30,000 Jehovah's Witnesses has increased recently, according to reports received by *AI*. The root of their conflict with the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) is that their religious beliefs prevent their participation in any political activities.

Although they had suffered harassment before, the Witnesses became a target for government-sanctioned persecution when President HASTINGS BANDA of Malawi made a strong attack on them at the MCP convention in September 1972 and called for a concerted effort to force them into submission.

MCP militants and members of the party's youth wing harassed and attacked Witnesses in their villages, and reports of atrocities and even deaths reached the outside world. Thousands of Witnesses fled to neighbouring Zambia, but were repatriated at the end of 1972.

Almost the entire Jehovah's Witness population then moved to Mozambique, where they were tolerated. But when the country became independent in June 1975 and the FRELIMO government came to power, the pressures started again, and most of the Malawi Witnesses started to move back to Malawi.

During recent months they reportedly suffered indiscriminate persecution and atrocities, regardless of sex or age. Reports of severe beatings, sexual humiliation, assault and other forms of torture, as well as confiscation of property and homes are numerous.

The reports mention not only members of the MCP and its youth and women's wings, but also parliamentarians as the perpetrators. Many Witnesses were reportedly detained under Malawi's preventive detention legislation, which allows for indefinite detention without trial—prison conditions in Malawi are said to be appalling. Thousands of others have again fled to Zambia, but are apparently being repatriated.

There seems to be little prospect that the tragic situation of Malawi's Jehovah's Witnesses will improve in the near future. ●

DEATH SQUADS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN GUATEMALA

Detectives of the Guatemalan National Police informed FELISA DE COLOCH on 5 July of the arrest of her husband GREGORIO COLOCH LAJUI. But in the days that followed the police denied categorically having detained Gregorio Coloch. He is one of the thousands of Guatemalans who have simply "disappeared". His plight was highlighted in a feature article on deaths and disappearances in Guatemala that *AI* published in December.*

The "disappeared" in Guatemala are not comparable to "missing persons" in other countries. Here "disappearance" in most cases refers to extra-legal detentions, often followed by torture and mutilation, and almost always leading to death. It occurs with the compliance or active support of governmental authorities.

The perpetrators are generally organized in well-armed, disciplined groups: what have come to be known throughout Latin America as "death squads". These para-military or para-police groups have been shown repeatedly to incorporate both civilians and active military personnel.

In the past year, a number of the very few survivors of death squad actions have denounced

AI CALLS FOR RELEASE OF DETAINEES IN FRANCE

Amnesty International urged the French government on 18 December to release all persons detained on ill-defined charges of "participation in an enterprise to demoralize the armed forces", who had not used or advocated violence.

AI expressed concern at the continuing arrests of civilians and soldiers—numbering between 30 and 40 as this *Newsletter* went to press—who had been advocating the formation of trade unions, soldiers' committees and other changes within the French military services. Another disturbing fact is that the accused are facing proceedings by the special state security court. Thus they would be denied some of the procedural guarantees available in regular French courts.

In a cable to President VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING, *AI* urged that those who might be accused additionally of violence or other serious crimes receive a fair and public trial before regular courts and that they might be accorded full rights of defence. ●

the participation of police officers and military agents (*comisionados*) in their detention, interrogation, torture and attempted murder.

The institutionalization of mass murder as a political sanction is believed to have begun in 1966 when 28 trade unionists and members of the Guatemalan Communist Party (PTG) were arrested while attending a clandestine meeting. Four months later two ex-policemen reported that they had been tortured and murdered and their bodies dropped from an army transport plane into the sea.

Since 1966 as many as 30,000 Guatemalans have been victims of extra-legal execution. In 1971 Guatemalan newspapers named 1,153 victims of political murder in the previous year. Peasant victims went largely unnamed and uncounted.

In July 1975 the latest public threats from death squad organizations were received by leaders and members of trade unions and cooperatives. A mimeographed sheet signed by MANO Blanca—an organization whose aim is to "purify" Guatemala of "communists" and "communist sympathizers"—warned individuals to abandon their "pro-communist attitudes. . . if you wish to remain alive and well". Stressing that no cost is too high to liberate Guatemala from communism, it continues: "As evidence we speak the truth, thirty thousand peasant graves bear witness."

"Disappearance" as a prelude to murder by death squads also occurs in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Brazil and Argentina both suffer from extensive activity of highly organized death squads. The Brazilian death squads are subsidiary forces closely integrated into a technically highly sophisticated police apparatus. In Guatemala the situation is the reverse—the death squads are a fundamental basis of political sanctions and control and are supported by the conventional forces.

The common factor in death squad operations is the use of terror to control dissent. Death squads murder individuals but threaten entire populations. Murder, torture, mutilation and the concomitant lurid publicity—especially in the Guatemalan press—multiply the effect of individual actions to create a society-wide climate of terror.

The Guatemalan *Comite de familiares de personas desaparecidas* (Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Persons) has recently initiated an international campaign against the terror and violence plaguing Guatemala. The group is circulating a list of 253 Guatemalans who vanished without trace in recent years. They are asking the world to appeal to Guatemala's authorities on their behalf.

*The full text of the article is available from national sections or the International Secretariat. ●

AI Calls for Christmas Amnesty in Bolivia. *AI* Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS cabled President HUGO BANZER SUAREZ of Bolivia on 20 December asking that a general amnesty be granted to political prisoners and exiles at Christmas. Of the more than 200 political prisoners detained without trial in Bolivia, over 50 are currently *AI* adoption or investigation cases. The Catholic Bolivian Bishops' Conference, the Bolivian Bar Association, the Federation of Mining Workers (FSTMB) and other representative bodies appealed for a Christmas amnesty for political prisoners and exiles earlier in the year.

IEC Meeting. The IEC will meet in London on 16 January. Among the topics for discussion are the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, the Pacific Regional Conference, the fundraising campaign and the future location of the International Secretariat.

ADDITIONS TO THE PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE LIBRARY

■Forest, Eva. *From a Spanish Jail*. 1975. 191 pages. 60p. Debray, Regis. *Prison Writings*. 1975. 207 pages. 75p. These two books are published by Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England.

■Langer, Felicia. *With My Own Eyes* (Israel and the occupied territories 1967-73). Ithaca Press, 13 Southward Street, London SE1, England. 1975. 166 pages + photographs. Paperback edition £2.50.

■Valpreda, Pietro. *The Valpreda Papers* (prison diaries of Pietro Valpreda). Translated by Cormac O Cuilleain. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, London WC2, England. 1975. 314 pages. £6.00.

Re Books in April *Newsletter*:

■Valdes, Hernan. *Diary of a Chilean Concentration Camp* now available from Gollancz (see address above) in hardback (£4.00) or paperback (£2.50) editions.

■Kim Chi-Ha. *Cry of the People* may be obtained from Omnibus Books Service, 53 W. Ham Lane, London E15, England. £1.45.

■Medvedev, Zhores. *National Frontiers and International Scientific Cooperation and Secrecy of Correspondence is Guaranteed by Law* (volumes I and II of *The Medvedev Papers*) Bertrand Russell Peace Foundations Ltd., Gamble Street, Nottingham, England. 1975. 278 and 196 pages respectively. £2.25 and £1.95.

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