

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



## MISSIONS

Turkey: Mr. Muir Hunter Q.C. has gone to Ankara on behalf of Amnesty International. He hopes to hold discussions with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and other government officials on a number of issues.

Egypt and Sudan: Mr. John Platts-Mills, Q.C., travelled to Cairo in January to discuss the setting up of an Egyptian Section of Amnesty International, and the case of Mr. Sayyid Loutfi, a journalist and long-term detainee. Subject to obtaining a visa Mr. Platts-Mills planned to continue to the Sudan to discuss at government level various aspects of political imprisonment, particularly with regard to developments since the abortive communist coup.

Northern Ireland: The Amnesty commission of inquiry into allegations of ill-treatment in Northern Ireland arrived in Belfast on 16 December, 1971. During the following five days it heard evidence given by, and on behalf of, detainees, internees, ex-detainees and ex-internees. The commission is now preparing a report for the International Executive Committee, which will decide on further action. Following the official Compton Committee report of its inquiry into allegations of physical brutality the British Government has set up another Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Parker. The Parker Committee is considering whether the current procedures for interrogation and for custody during interrogation require amendment. On 16 December Amnesty International submitted a written memorandum to the Parker Committee, and on 18 January oral evidence was given by the Secretary General and the Director of Research.

## ORGANISATION

Research Department: Surveys carried out in the International Secretariat research department have helped to show the development of Amnesty's work in recent years. We now have cases in 65 countries out of the 123 represented in the United Nations. The number of case sheets prepared in 1971 was 1,271. This compares with 1,050 in 1970 and 883 in 1969. The figure for releases has also gone up: 520 Amnesty-adopted or investigated prisoners were released in 1969, 700 in 1970 and 727 in 1971. Five new researchers have been appointed to work on East Europe; south-west Africa; south Asia; U.S., U.K. and the Caribbean; and Greece. The appointment of research assistants on an experimental basis -- at present there are two of them -- has taken some of the pressure off the researchers, especially in regard to correspondence with groups. At the same time much more work has been carried out by outside experts. This has been reflected in the increased number of background papers and other supporting material sent out to National Sections. The International Council meeting in Luxembourg approved a substantial increase in the budget for 1971-1972 in order to strengthen the work of the International Secretariat and in particular for the Research Department. It agreed a higher overall budget figure of £129,000 for 72-73, and the budget for 72-73 will be considered by the Treasurers' meeting to be held in London on 11-12 March. While some of the new staff were appointed immediately after the Luxembourg meeting the appointments relating to south-west Africa and south Asia have only recently been taken up and the effectiveness of the new posts will not be felt for a few weeks. In all, six new appointments have been made since the International Council meeting.

## COUNTRIES

Czechoslovakia: Elections of the Federal Assembly deputies were held in Czechoslovakia on 26 and 27 November 1971: there was no choice of political party for the voters. Prior to the elections, leaflets were distributed in Prague and elsewhere, urging citizens to abstain from voting, and those believed to be responsible for this -- among them members of the Protestant Church, the historian Jan Tesar and the sociologist Rudolf Battek -- were arrested between 8 and 9 November. In January 1972 about 200 further arrests were made in Prague and Brno, and although there are no formal charges, it seems that all prisoners are either those associated with the leaflets, or those who have actively opposed the Husak regime. At the time of writing, Amnesty has only the names of eight people, and as they are all prominent figures, it is likely that they will be kept to await trial. They have all been made full adoption cases, as there are no reports of violence.

Tanzania: Early in January it was announced by the Zanzibari government that all prisons on the island would be closed on 12 January, and all prisoners released on that date after taking an oath not to break the law. Press reports differed as to whether political detainees were also to be released. The International Secretariat is at present making enquiries to determine whether any Amnesty adoptees and investigation cases have been freed, and will report to groups immediately anything definite is known.

Angela Davis -- United States: Angela Davis was arrested in October 1970, in connection with the kidnapping attempt at Marin County Court House which resulted in the death of four people. Since that time her case has received world-wide publicity and has aroused much sympathy. There have been many requests, both from within and outside the organisation for Amnesty to adopt Angela Davis. In particular, hundreds of petitions have been submitted by German and other groups to the International Secretariat. In March 1971 there were discussions within the International Secretariat and because of the inconclusive nature of the evidence the case was referred to the Borderline Committee for a ruling as to whether or not Angela Davis was a prisoner of conscience. They decided by a majority of two to one that her case should not be taken up by Amnesty. The main reason given for this decision was that in a case involving so much violence and in which the defendant's attitude to the use of violence was by no means clear we should wait until after the trial before making a final decision. The delays which have resulted in the trial being postponed have been largely due to the attempts of Miss Davis and her lawyers to ensure that the conditions of the trial would not be prejudicial to her interests. Our research department has been in constant touch with the Angela Davis Defence Committee in London and has followed the case closely at all times, with a view to reviewing Amnesty's position should the circumstances change.

Rhodesia: The immediate effect of the present confusion in Rhodesia is that the number of detainees is increasing, and it is not possible to say at this stage what will be the results of the sounding of public opinion in Rhodesia with regard to the proposed "settlement". In its representations to the British Government Amnesty International has taken the position that a settlement could not be considered to be in accordance with the Five Principles if it did not end the State of Emergency which permits opponents of the Smith regime to be imprisoned without trial or charge. Developments in Rhodesia since the arrival of the Pearce Commission increase the doubts which Amnesty International has expressed with regard to the viability of the present machinery for assessing public opinion without allowing freedom of speech and assembly. The conditions of detainees in Gwelo Prison have recently been exposed through an appeal to the Courts, by one of them, for a declaration of rights in respect of detainees. Lighting in the cells where the men spend most of their time is poor; African detainees are classed in Grade 3 -- the lowest scale -- according to which beds and pillows are not provided, diet is that issued to hard labour convicted prisoners and visitors may only see the detainee through a glass panel 36" x 18", and speak to him through a hand telephone. When released, most detainees are restricted to rural villages, tribal trust land or urban 'locations' and very few are able to obtain employment. They face long periods of inactivity, poverty and domestic strain. Christian Care has appealed for funds to provide loans for these men to set them up in small businesses, to purchase livestock and to create other means of earning a livelihood, but the response has been inadequate. Money is also needed for the training in building construction provided for 12 ex-detainees at a time: estimates of costs are £150 per head. Sections, groups and other readers, irrespective of whether they have a particular adoptee in mind, are invited to contribute to this constructive way of helping Rhodesian Africans suffering for having expressed their political views. Donations can be sent to Amnesty International and they will be forwarded to Christian Care.

Sierra Leone: Following the release of a number of long-term prisoners in Sierra Leone during December, the Secretary General of Amnesty International has received a letter from President Stevens. In it Mr. Stevens expresses his appreciation of Amnesty's work and assures the Secretary General that "as a Government we shall always do our best to uphold the rights of our citizens".

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE: "Struggle for Justice". A report on crime and punishment in America. Hill and Wang. New York. 1971. \$1.95. INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE AND AID FUND: "Rhodesia: the ousting of the Tangwena." Published for the International Defence and Aid Fund by Christian Action Publishers, London. 1972. 30P. KIM IL SUNG: "Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea". Selected writings of Kim Il Sung. International Publishers. New York. \$2.95. QUARTIM, JOAO: "Dictatorship and armed struggle in Brazil". New Left Books, London. 1971. £2.90. TICKELL, TOM: "Prisons - Time and Punishment". Economist Brief No. 18. London 25P. WILLIAMS, ROGER NEVILLE: "The New Exiles". American war resisters in Canada. Liveright Publishers. New York. 1971. \$7.95.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGNSome News of Prisoners who have been on this Campaign:-

Natalya Gorbanevskaya -- USSR (February 1971). The latest news on Natalya Gorbanevskaya is that she has been transferred to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow, possibly with a view to a new diagnosis being made on her.

Vladimir Bukovsky -- USSR (August 1967). Vladimir Bukovsky was re-arrested in March 1971 on charges of "anti-Soviet propaganda, carried on for the purpose of subverting or weakening Soviet authority". The trial took place on 5 January, 1972. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, five years' confinement in a labour camp, and five years' exile -- a total of 12 years.

Ludek Pachman -- Czechoslovakia (October 1969). Ludek Pachman was re-arrested in January 1972. No charges have been formally announced.

This month's prisoners:-Lidia VINS - Ukrainian SSR

Until her arrest in December, 1970, Lidia Vins was the president of the Council of Baptist Prisoners' Relatives, formed in 1964 to defend the rights of dissident Baptists, imprisoned in the USSR for their religious activities. This Council not only prepares lists of prisoners, but sends appeals to Soviet leaders and the United Nations, and has thus met with considerable opposition from the Soviet Government.

A Congress of the Council of the Baptist Prisoners' Relatives was held in December 1970 and Mrs. Vins' arrest was directly connected with the large part she played in organising this Congress. She was sentenced in Kiev, in February 1971, to three years' imprisonment, under article 227 of the RSFSR Penal Code -- "Infringement of persons and rights of citizens under appearance of performing religious ceremonies." At her trial she admitted to having written letters with information on the persecution of Baptists, and she repeated this information in court, including the fact that between 1961 and 1970, 524 Baptists had been sent to prison or labour camp.

Mrs. Vins' husband, a Baptist pastor, died of starvation while serving a labour camp sentence in Siberia during the Stalinist period. Her son Georgy, who is also a Baptist pastor, was included in the Postcards for Prisoners Campaign in July 1968. He has already served two labour camp sentences, and is reported to be threatened with a third period of imprisonment for his religious activities. Mrs. Vins herself is 65 years old and is extremely ill.

Please send your cards to:-

SSSR,  
g. Moskva,  
Kreml,  
Predsedatelyu Verkhovnogo  
Sovieta SSSR,  
N. Podgornomu.  
(Chairman of the Supreme  
Soviet of the USSR)

OR

SSSR,  
Ukrainskaya SSR,  
g. Kiev,  
ul. Vorovskogo, No. 16,  
Predsedatelyu Verkhovnogo  
Suda USSR,  
V.G. Zaychuku  
(Chairman of the Supreme  
Court of the Ukrainian SSR)

LIN Chung-Li - TAIWAN

The departure of Taiwan's representatives from the United Nations does not seem to have changed the Government's attitude towards political dissidents. Mr. LIN Chung-li was one on a list received by Amnesty of some 600 political prisoners held at Ching-Mei political prison, Taipeh. They are held for reasons ranging from supporting communism to expressing a criticism of the Taiwan government.

Mr. LIN Chung-Li is about 35 years old. Married, with two children under ten, he was an instructor at the Tamsui Institute of Business Administration, Tamsui. He was arrested in January 1968 and charged with attempting to overthrow the government. At a trial before a military court held in camera he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. In 1970 he appealed against this decision, with the result that his sentence was increased to ten years. He is held under the Statute for Punishment of Rebellion 1949.

According to information given to Amnesty International Mr. LIN was arrested merely for criticising the regime and was not involved in any form of violence. His wife is in a poor financial situation and one of his small sons died after a car accident in November 1970.

Please send cards to: Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, President of the Republic of China, President's office, Taipeh, Republic of China (Taiwan); or Mr. James Wei, Director-General, Government Information Office, Taipeh, Republic of China (Taiwan).

Julio ROJAS - PARAGUAY

Julio Rojas is a 61-year-old schoolteacher who also holds the title of "military dentist" and fought for Paraguay in the Chaco war. Accused of being a communist -- which is not permitted in Paraguay -- he was arrested in January 1958 and has been held without charge or trial ever since. He is the longest serving political prisoner in South America.

For most of the past fourteen years he has been in a cell measuring 4 x 4 metres, together with seven other political prisoners, in the 3rd Police Station, Asuncion. Julio is never allowed to leave the cell and is refused all medical attention, despite severe health complaints. All literature and correspondence is banned. When arrested, Julio Rojas was engaged to be married. His ex-fiancee, with their one child, is now living in Buenos Aires. Prison visiting is limited to three minutes a week and a guard is present to transcribe the content of the conversations, which are allowed to cover only family topics. Julio's sister, a domestic servant, is the only person who visits him. She talks to him through the cell bars and reports that he is in a distressing condition.

The British Section of Amnesty International recently chose Julio Rojas, as one of the longest serving prisoners of conscience, for a special campaign. Anthony Grey, a British journalist released from detention in China, led a delegation to the Paraguayan Embassy to present a petition for Rojas' release. A letter was also presented to the Paraguayan folk-song group, Los Paraguayos (accredited ambassadors of their country). Such efforts may have a cumulative effect on the Paraguayan government. Please add your appeals for his release, pointing out that his health has been destroyed by this inhumanly long imprisonment. Send cards to:- Dr. Raul Sapena Pastor, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Palacio de Gobierno, Asuncion, Paraguay; or -- Sr. Aldo Zuccolillo, Director, Diario 'ABC Color', Asuncion, Paraguay.