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Amnesty Notebook **South Viet Nam:** There have been widespread reports on the treatment of political prisoners on Con Son island, South Viet Nam, particularly those being kept under top security measures in appalling conditions in the "tiger cages". The International Secretariat of Amnesty International has submitted a special recommendation to U-Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, regarding implementation machinery which would make it impossible for governments to ignore the U.N. Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The issue will be raised as a matter of urgency during the discussions in Kyoto, Japan, where the Standard Minimum Rules come up for review (see AIR Supplement).

Uruguay: In contrast to most other Latin American countries Uruguay has long had an image of calm and prosperity. During the past year however it has had a great deal of political unrest with large-scale arrests during the State of Emergency. There have also been allegations of torture of political prisoners. In order to investigate these allegations the Uruguayan authorities established a Commission of Inquiry which was answerable to Parliament. This is the procedure that Amnesty on several occasions has recommended to governments of countries where similar allegations have occurred.

The Uruguayan Commission came to the conclusion that torture was "normal, frequent and habitual". It is Amnesty's hope that the Uruguayan Government will now take the appropriate steps to punish those guilty in order to prevent further torture.

A.I.U.S.A.: The American Section of Amnesty International, has announced that Mr. Ivan Morris is to become its Secretary General and Mr. Millard Pryor the Treasurer. The headquarters of A.I.U.S.A. will be moved from Washington to New York where their address for the time being is the address of the Chairman, Mr. Mark Benenson, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Evidence to the U.N.: Amnesty International gave evidence to the U.N. *ad hoc* working group of experts of the Human Rights Commission studying apartheid, prison conditions and other allied subjects in Southern Africa. The group visited London in July and heard an oral statement from the Secretary General covering current Amnesty activities in Angola, Rhodesia, and South Africa. Amnesty's representative who visited Namibia in December 1969 also gave evidence.

Rhodesia: We have recently received a letter from a completely reliable source describing the conditions of many African families, including those of prisoners, in rural areas in Rhodesia. Because of the drought, wells have dried up and water has to be bought. Livestock is dead, people are hungry and some children have had to leave school because they cannot go "on empty stomachs". The writer of the letter expresses appreciation for the money and clothing sent by many groups, but asks for more, since the need is so great. If any group is not sure how to send money or parcels, we will be glad to advise them. About 40 restrictees have been released during the last few weeks; but it is difficult to find employment. Some are confined to their home villages, and there is still a need for help for a few months after release.

Greece and the Council of Europe: In December 1967 Amnesty International sent three observers to Greece. They wrote a report which included facts on torture. As a result the Council of Europe extended the charge against Greece and in a recent radio programme broadcast in Norway, Jens Evensen, Department Head in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, said :

"We had of course received other rumours and anonymous secret letters about what was going on inside Greek prisons, but this report appeared as a half-official document. It was people with a high personal standing who had been in Athens, and they guaranteed the contents of the report."

Amnesty issued a further report following a second visit to Greece and of the two reports Jens Evensen said: "What Amnesty had written . . . we found to be one hundred per cent correct".

He remarked : "Amnesty is an organisation which I admire immensely for the work it does for prisoners in dictatorial states in western as well as in eastern countries. The significance it had in this case was primarily that it gave us witnesses who were willing to appear in court, that is those who had written the report. We also sent Amnesty's two reports to the Commission, and the persons, the prisoners, who were mentioned by name in the report, we assigned as witnesses."

Jens Evenson was the legal adviser to the governments bringing the Greek case before the Council of Europe.

A Correction: In the second line of the section on Israel in "The Face of Persecution 1970", published by the British Section of Amnesty International, read for "alleging torture", "concerning allegations of torture". We regret that the sentence was incorrectly worded.

International Council Meeting

The International Council Meeting opens with a public meeting in Universitets Aula, Oslo, at 8.0 p.m., on Friday, September 25th. It is being organised by the Norwegian Section.

Resolutions for consideration by the Council have been circulated to National Sections and the provisional agenda has been circulated. It is anticipated that there will be working parties on the structure of Amnesty International including consideration of amendments to the Statute; conscientious objection; Prisoner of Conscience Week 1970 and 1971; Finance and Fund Raising; and the Research Programme. Members of the research staff will be in Oslo and delegates will be able, in the working parties and outside, to discuss specific problems with them.

Prisoner of Conscience Week

Prisoner of Conscience week, from November 14th to 22nd, will have as its central theme trade unionist prisoners of conscience. National Sections are organising their own activities, but Mr. Bengt Liljenroth will be preparing information material at headquarters and will be trying to encourage other non-governmental organisations to take part in the campaign in countries where no national Amnesty Section exists.

Head of Research

Dr. Zbynek Zeman has been appointed new Head of Research at the International Secretariat. Born in Prague, Dr. Zeman was educated in Czechoslovakia and Britain. He was a Senior Scholar and then Research Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and has taught history and international relations at London, Oxford and St. Andrew's Universities. He was an assistant editor of "Documents of German Foreign Policy" and a member of the editorial staff of *The Economist*. Honorary President of St. Andrew's University European Society, Dr. Zeman has written—besides articles and book reviews—the following books: "Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-18, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry" (1958); "The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire, 1914-18" (1961); "Nazi Propaganda" (1964); "The Merchant of Revolution, the Life of Alexander Helphand" (with W. B. Scharlau) (1965); "Prague Spring: A Report on Czechoslovakia" (1968).

Dr. Zeman came to Britain in 1946.

Greece A Personal Account

The following description was sent to us by an author at present living in Greece. For obvious reasons we cannot give a name.

The question that is often asked is how the dictatorship affects one's personal life. Has it really made all that difference? Is there real hardship and real oppression?

In the first years of the dictatorship, quite a few people may have answered this question with: "As long as you mind your own business, you can live quite happily and peacefully."

Apart from the fact that there do exist, after all, quite a large number of people who are not content, who are not *able* to reduce their lives to "minding their own business", it seems to me that not even this contention is true. It is not enough to mind one's own business.

It may be something apparently trivial, like being ordered to put out the flag on the anniversary of the coup; or something not so trivial, like being ordered to send one's child to a propaganda rally; like having to make a "voluntary" subscription to a Public Loan, or a contribution to the various Funds.

There are other more pressing tests: summons to sign some official statement needed for propaganda or security reasons, to co-operate in some State project, to sit on some State committee. Finally, there are the crucial tests, like whether to shelter a friend from the Security men, help someone to escape, take part in subversive activity.

And so the moment of choice comes, sooner or later, for each and everyone. If the demand is a trivial one, it may seem easy enough to decide, either way. One accepts, saying: "After all, it is only a formality." Or one refuses, knowing the risk of punishment is not very great. In both cases, however, an entire, irreversible process of personality-change begins. The first "yes" brings a twinge of—can one call it shame? not yet, perhaps; uneasiness; soon gone, however, buried away. The first "no" also brings a twinge, an uneasiness, but of a different kind. Not fear, only a slight anxiety: has my action been noticed? will it be held against me? written down in a file? . . .

If one cares at all . . . it is difficult to remain indifferent. It requires a singular lack of imagination not to see the kind of life that is being shaped here. Education, literature, and to a lesser degree the fine arts, are the most obvious victims. Teaching in Greek schools was conventional and retrograde enough before the coup, with a very few exceptions. Now dogmatism, rigid uniformity, narrow paternalism are more than ever dominant in the attitude of the school to the child. Experimental and progressive methods are distinctly discouraged. . . .

In literature, pressure is not so blatant because writers do not lay themselves open to pressure, by the simple process of not publishing. Books are printed privately for the most part, with the inscription: "not intended for commerce" and circulated by hand or by mail among friends. In other words, writing has become a strictly private, ingrown affair, no longer a means of wider communication or a civilising factor.

Our minds, whether we are intellectuals or not, are under constant attacks by two great enemies of truth: propaganda on the one hand, wishful thinking on the other. There is no chance of exercising responsible and objective judgment. There is no access to truth, so people either doubt everything they read and hear; or nourish themselves with rumours, hearsay, false hopes. This is poor meat for an active mind. As a result (a compensation?) people have become event addicted; something has to be happening or about to happen all the time, because one cannot bear the void. The moment there is a lull, unmarked by any "development", despondency pounces, life becomes intolerable; it is like walking on burning sand; one has to keep moving. So life is continually being lived at a false, forced pace.

The private and the public course are not parallel, they inevitably touch and mingle. When they are not allowed to touch, there is total civic alienation. There are no means of expressing dissent, or of taking action towards changing what is wrong. . . .

This dissociation, then, from everything public, from everything that has to do with the state, becomes in the end a terrible malady. It causes debilitation and suffocation: we need windows to our house, no matter how comfortable it may be; we need to look out, and here there is nothing to look out upon. There is the feeling that we can invest nothing of ourselves—neither our work, nor our intelligence, nor our imagination, nor our enthusiasm, nor our children—in the world that surrounds us. We hate the present; we fear the future; we stand still, locked in a perpetual rejection. Many people, unable to bear the mutilation, leave the country; many more will leave if the situation remains unchanged. Those who remain, I suppose, have still not reached the ultimate point of dissociation. But it needs a tremendous act of faith to hold on through all those solid layers of hate, shame, fear. I often think of the waste—the enormous vital energy, the talent, the courage, the virtue that is being expended every day in this harsh and thankless struggle, when it could have been put to such better use to make this country a place where the colonels would be an impossibility.

Prisoners of Conscience in Poland

In July 1969 an amnesty was declared on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Polish People's Republic. Under this amnesty almost all the prisoners of conscience known to Amnesty were released—it included the Jewish prisoners sentenced for allegedly inspiring the student revolt of March 1968.

There remained, however, the two former Warsaw University lecturers, Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, serving sentences of three and a half years each on the same charges. Both were refused an amnesty on the grounds that they were "recidivists": they were imprisoned from 1965-1967 because of their co-authorship of "An Open Letter to the Party", a political manifesto which called for economic reform and true workers' control over the means of production. The use of the term "recidivist" is perhaps very apt because it seems obvious that their authorship of the "Open Letter" and the leading position they thereby occupied in the unofficial political opposition movement are the reasons for their continued imprisonment. Today Kuron and Modzelewski are still in prison, Kuron near Poznan and Modzelewski in Wroclaw province. Kuron has been denied the books he requires for the studies he hoped to continue in prison.

The July 1969 amnesty had no sooner been announced than news came of a new wave of arrests. This came to be known as the "Taterniks" or "mountaineers" affair. Certainly some of those arrested had belonged to climbing clubs in the Tatra Mountains, but whether their climbing pursuits played a significant role in the activities for which they were arrested is rather obscure.

Of the numerous people arrested, only five were brought to trial, the rest being released afterwards. The accused were: Maciej Kozłowski, assistant lecturer at an agricultural college in Krakow; Maria Tworkowska-Papée, teacher of French; Jakub Karpinski and Krzysztof Szymborski, assistant lecturers at Warsaw University; and Dr. Maria Szpakowska, doctor of philosophy and assistant lecturer at Warsaw University.

The charges against the five were: smuggling material detrimental to the Polish State out of Poland, arranging for it to be published abroad and then smuggling the publications into Poland for distribution. In doing this they had "harmed the good name of Poland and the interests of socialism". The accused did not deny the substance of the charges against them. Two expressed regret for their actions, but

Maciej Kozlowski and Dr. Szpakowska maintained that there was nothing wrong in what they had done.

The aims of the trial have been variously interpreted. Some observers feel that it was just another attempt to deal with dissenters and political opposition on the same lines as the trials in the winter of 1968. An interesting difference is that the people tried in February 1970 are not Jews; however, the Polish Press maintained that their connections extended as far as Tel Aviv, so the link with the anti-semitism of previous years is not quite broken.

Perhaps more important was the involvement in the trial of the Polish *émigré* publishing house, *Kultura*. This publishing house, established after the Second World War, supported Gomulka in 1956 and for some years its publications were distributed freely in Poland. However, it served as a focal point for the growing disenchantment of Polish intellectuals with the Gomulka régime and by the time it came to print the "Open Letter to the Party" by Kuron and Modzelewski, it was already the *bête noire* of the Polish Government. The fact that a French journalist was admitted to the February 1970 trial (political trials are usually held in camera) is seen by some as a device to ensure a wide Press coverage in France and attempt to influence the French Government and French public opinion against *Kultura*. Others maintain that the Polish Government took steps to prevent embarrassing the French Government and that the principal propaganda aim was to discredit *Kultura* with the Polish public. The extensive and tendentious Press coverage in Polish newspapers would support this view.

The sentences were lighter than it was at first feared, and they were further reduced under the terms of the July 1969 amnesty. It is hoped that Mrs. Tworowska-Papée and Dr. Szpakowska may be released this summer and the others sometime next year. Nevertheless the trial was a clumsy exercise in suppressing political opposition, opposition at least partially inspired by the liberalisation in Czechoslovakia which, it is believed, those responsible hoped to recreate in Poland. **Note:** An Amnesty delegate had consultations with the Polish Government in February 1970.

Books

"The Anatomy of Captivity", by John Laffin. Abelard-Schuman. 30s.

This book is relevant to the work of Amnesty International and also includes some complimentary remarks on Amnesty's activities. As it has not been possible to arrange for a review in time for this edition of AIR we are printing a quotation from the dust-jacket:—

"*The Anatomy of Captivity* presents a much-needed exploration of the underlying reasons for political imprisonment, and of the various ways it is put into practice. The behaviour of the captors, and of the authority they represent is considered and analysed.

"But perhaps the most important question is that of survival under brutally inhuman treatment. Mr. Laffin through extensive research and the use of illuminating case studies, has created a complete picture of the possibilities of living through political captivity. The role of the prisoner, and the ways in which he manages to make his life bearable, are described with objectivity and understanding."

Helen Vlachos: House Arrest. London, 1970. Andre Deutsch. 30s.

James Beckett: Barbarism in Greece. New York, 1970. Walker & Company. \$5.95.

Pericles Korovessis: The Method. London, 1970. Allison and Bushy. 30s.

These three books give a very good picture of the situation in Greece before, during and after the coup. To so many people Greece was a picturesque holiday country with nice, friendly people who lived in beautiful villages. It was a country where it was a pleasure to go for summer holidays—especially for English people who still lived on the Byron romance from days gone by.

Helen Vlachos' book gives a vivid and true picture of life in Athens as it was before the coup—for some people. It also describes the coup itself and the time that followed—but reading on one is taken, not so much by the happenings and the get-away of Mrs. Vlachos—interesting and well written as they are, but by the change in Mrs. Vlachos herself. "House Arrest" is a good book to read for anyone who would like knowledge and understanding of what happened in Greece during those days and months in 1967—and of why something had to happen.

"Barbarism in Greece" which has as a sub-title "A young lawyer's inquiry into the use of torture in contemporary Greece with case histories and documents", is an unbiased and clear account of what eventually led to Greece's withdrawal from the Council of Europe. It is a disconcerting book to read because it makes the reader feel personally responsible for what has happened and what is happening there. It is to be hoped that many people will read it. The royalties from the sale of the book go to Amnesty International in Great Britain.

Pericles Korovessis' book is a personal account of exactly what James Beckett's book is all about. It is a sad little book written by a man who has suffered a lot and who, one feels, cannot quite understand that there are human beings capable of doing the things that he had done to him. The book is written completely without hysteria and self-pity but not without humour. I think that that is why the impression on the reader is so strong.

All these books leave one with the alarming thought: this is happening today; what are we doing about it?

Bella Marshall.

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