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VIETNAM

AI SEEKS UN PROTECTION FOR PRISONERS

AI submitted a memorandum to the International Conference on Vietnam and Indo-China, which opened in Paris February 26, urging that all civilian prisoners in South Vietnam be placed under UN protection until they are released.

The South Vietnamese Embassy in London promptly called a news conference at which it rejected UN involvement and claimed that the number of political prisoners at issue on the Saigon side was only 5,081.

The AI memorandum asked for "the widest possible construction" to be put on the definition of civilian prisoners entitled to be released under the January ceasefire agreement. It suggested that any question of determining who falls within the definition should be referred to the kind of independent Judicial Review Board provided for in the draft protocol on civilian prisoners which AI published last year (December *Newsletter*).

An AI statement issued along with the memorandum said:

"The (ceasefire) agreement has done little to allay our fears for the safety of the tens of thousands of political prisoners and other non-criminal civilians held in Vietnam. The danger of them being massacred or forgotten remains as strong as ever."

The South Vietnamese Embassy replied in a two page statement, which began by saying that it "does not question the good faith of Amnesty International". But it went on to allege that:

1. the only political prisoners held by the Saigon regime were communists and other subversives.
2. their government "has compiled a complete list of Communist civilian detainees, totalling 5,081, together with their place of detention, which is ready to be exchanged for a list of South Vietnamese held by the Communists."

Amnesty said in rebuttal that 5,081 was "a gross under-estimate" of the number of civilians detained by Saigon. It said that President NGUYEN VAN THIEU himself recently mentioned a figure of 41,000 to a former British cabinet minister, while independent estimates set the number as high as 250,000.

AI said that not only communists but many thousands of Buddhists, Catholics and non-communist students are in detention.

SEAN MacBRIDE, chairman of AI's Interna-

tional Executive Committee, went to Paris to meet officials of the governments represented at the conference. On February 23 in Paris, the Secretary General, MARTIN ENNALS, represented AI at a joint news conference with other leading international human rights organisations. They called for an all-out effort "to assure the effective return of all captured and detained personnel" in Vietnam.

COUNTRIES

HAITI

An AI statement issued March 1 deplored the "cynicism and deception" of Haiti in announcing the release of 132 political prisoners, many of whom had actually been freed more than three years ago and were now living abroad. The statement also expressed serious concern about the continued repression of dissent and denial of human rights in the country.

In a letter to President JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER, AI Secretary General MARTIN ENNALS called on the government to allow an international team to inspect conditions inside Haiti's prisons, in view of the grave state of health of some recently released prisoners.

SOUTH YEMEN

AI asked the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen for an immediate inquiry into the deaths of some 60 political prisoners who were shot while allegedly trying to escape from custody last October (February *Newsletter*). AI said it had been receiving reports of prisoners being killed in South Yemen for some time. There were indications that such incidents were still occurring.

SOUTH KOREA FREES AI OFFICIAL AFTER 'RUMOUR' TRIAL

The Reverend ON MYUNG-KI, a committee member of the Korean Section of AI, was released by South Korean authorities after being found guilty at a trial February 6 of allegedly "spreading a groundless rumour" (February *Newsletter*). The unusual step of freeing him immediately after the trial was taken "for health reasons".

AI had cabled President PARK CHUNG-HEE expressing grave concern about Reverend On's detention and trial, which followed the temporary house arrest of four other members of the Korean Section Committee. The German Section made special representations in Bonn on Reverend On's behalf.

PHILIPPINES

Eight adopted prisoners were released during

January and February, among them several journalists detained after the imposition of martial law last September (November *Newsletter*). The International Secretariat has received messages of thanks from several of the released prisoners. Six journalists are still being held in detention.

JORDAN

AI cabled KING HUSSEIN on February 22 expressing concern at death sentences passed on ABU DAUD and 16 other prisoners. The cable urged the king to intervene and commute the sentences.

COLOMBIA

Two leading film-makers, CARLOS and JULIA ALVAREZ, and other intellectuals and professionals held without trial since July 1972, were suddenly moved in mid-February to Bucaramanga where the Court Martial is to be convened. The move provoked strong criticism in the Colombian press. The criticism followed protests about the detention of the prisoners from a number of overseas organisations including AI, Pax Christi and several national film clubs.

The prisoners, held on ambiguous charges of forming links with guerrilla organisations, had been expected to be freed because they had already served the minimum sentence for their alleged offences. Both civil and military judges had been calling for the release of the prisoners on constitutional grounds. Each of the leading liberal newspapers has now criticised the abuse of justice in the case, although, until the international protests, they had made no mention of it for several months.

RHODESIA

The Review Tribunal which reviews detention cases sat three times during 1972, according to a statement issued by the Rhodesian authorities in January. The Tribunal, whose report was said to be confidential, reviewed 99 cases of detention and 47 of restriction. It recommended two releases. The released detainees were not named but, according to the statement, they were freed subject to certain conditions relating to their movement and behaviour.

The Tribunal's next sitting begins on April 16. Groups with Rhodesian detainees may wish to establish if their adopted prisoners would like to be represented at the sittings. A circular will be sent to these groups shortly with advice on what assistance may be given to detainees.

There have been further detentions since the recent increase in guerrilla activities. One of those held is PETER NIESEWAND, Rhodesian correspondent of a number of international news agencies, newspapers and broadcasting services, who was arrested on February 20.

INDONESIA

AI will issue a major statement on Indonesia March 14 to coincide with a special English-Dutch edition of the Dutch Section's

journal *Wordt Vervolgd*. The edition, called "Indonesia Special", is devoted entirely to the plight of the 55,000 Indonesians detained without trial for the past seven years (January *Newsletter*). Advance copies of the publication have already been sent to National Sections.

SEAN MacBRIDE, Chairman of the IEC, will attend a special news conference in The Hague March 14 to discuss the AI initiative.

GREECE

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) called a news conference in Geneva February 22 to support allegations of torture made during the trial in Athens earlier in the month of Wing Commander ANASTASIOS MINIS and Dr STEFANOS PANDELAKIS. The two, who were sentenced to 10 and 8 years' imprisonment respectively on charges of planting bombs, alleged they were tortured while being interrogated. Minis is a much-decorated Greek hero of World War II while Pandelakis is a leading paediatrician.

Professor E. MARTIN-ARCHARD, a Geneva lawyer who observed the trial on behalf of the ICJ, told the news conference: "The judges in this case were in effect accomplices in torture." An ICJ statement said the trial had produced "the most clear and decisive case there has been on the issue of torture."

The trial was one of a series of political trials in Greece during February. Some of the defendants will be adopted by AI. Others, who may not be adopted because they have used or advocated violence, are still of concern to AI because they also alleged they were tortured.

BRAZIL

The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, in a resolution published February 16, condemned "the government's policy of repression" and deplored "the lack of respect in the country for human rights." The resolution stated that Brazil's present economic policy "made the inequalities even more flagrant".

ORGANISATION

FINANCE MEETING

The Finance Meeting will be held at the International Secretariat on March 17. It will recommend the final budget for 1973-74. All National Sections should make a determined effort to send a representative to the meeting because of the importance of each section having someone there to speak on its behalf. The meeting is the one at which National Sections commit themselves to their percentage contributions to the budget.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The next IEC meeting will be held April 6-8 in London. The draft agenda will soon be circulated to National Sections. It includes the progress of the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (see below), arrangements for the Paris conference December 10-11, and the new Report on Torture due to be published late this spring. The IEC also will discuss the effects of AI's Indo-China initiative and future missions and reports.

STAFF

GEORGE GOMEZ, who was appointed Administrative Manager in July 1972, has left the Secretariat to return to work in the London civil service. During his short stay at *Amnesty*, he was responsible for organising the removal of the IS from Turnagain Lane to the new headquarters, had a considerable influence on the efficiency of over-all IS operations, and was instrumental in establishing long-term administrative procedures.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

A full-time organiser has begun work at the IS laying the groundwork for the International Conference on Torture at UNESCO in Paris December 10-11 this year.

National Sections have been asked to nominate persons they wish to see invited, and invitations are already being sent to international non-governmental organisations. Accommodation is limited to 300 and lists will have to be restricted. Each person attending will have to pay a registration fee of £5 which will also cover documentation and interpretation.

A number of prominent international figures are being approached to address or otherwise take part in the conference.

The Information Office, meanwhile, has begun producing special material for the Campaign as a whole. Some of it has already been sent to Sections and Groups.

Detailed reports on some recent torture victims are also in the preparation stage.

NEW AMNESTY LEAFLET

The International Secretariat has just published a new eight-sided leaflet describing AI's growth and activities. Printed in blue and red on a cream background, the attractive leaflet also illustrates *Amnesty*'s work by printing details and photographs of six prisoners--three now released--adopted by AI Groups.

It provides an ideal introduction to anyone wishing to know something about AI and how it functions.

The leaflets cost 5 pence each, plus postage, and may be obtained by writing to the IS.

Please note that only bulk orders of 20 leaflets or more will be accepted.

HANDBOOK FOR GROUPS

The basic Handbook for Groups has now been revised and printing of the new edition should be completed some time in March.

Details will appear in a later *Newsletter*.

CHRONICLE OF CURRENT EVENTS

Publication of Issue Number 27 of the *Chronicle of Current Events* has again been unavoidably delayed. It is hoped that it will appear during March.

Subscribers are reminded that Number 27 will constitute the sixth and final issue of 1972.

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS

NEWS OF EARLIER PRISONERS

Ahmed BEN SALAH, *Tunisia* (November 1972): On February 4 he escaped from prison where he was serving a 10-year sentence for alleged treason. After a brief stay in Algiers, he is now thought to be in a European country. His brother, Doctor MOHAMED BEN SALAH, has been arrested and is reported to be in prison in Tunis.

Nikos KALOUDIS, *Greece* (December 1972): He has had his sentence of life imprisonment suspended for eight months because of extremely ill health. This means that he is out of prison temporarily. But unless the suspension is renewed at the end of the eight months, he will have to return to prison to serve the rest of his sentence.

THIS MONTH'S PRISONERS

Boris Pavlovich AZERNIKOV - Soviet Union

Boris Azernikov, a dentist, was arrested in August 1971 and tried in October of the same year on a charge of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, which he has always strenuously denied. He is now serving a 3½-year sentence in camp 17 of the Mordovian ASSR.

Apparently he had been acquainted with some of the Leningrad Jews allegedly involved in the June 1970 hijack plot and had appeared as a witness at one of the subsequent trials, where he refused to give evidence against his friends. At no time during his own trial was he accused of any participation in the so-called hijacking. It seems more likely that it was his application for permission to emigrate to Israel in June 1971 which led to his arrest.

After a period in Saransk KGB prison, Azernikov was sent to a labour camp. Here he was first allotted work transporting cement in wheelbarrows and then manufacturing clocks. Later, perhaps because of his continued militancy in camp (he signed several protest letters written by political prisoners), he was transferred to a strict regime and given work repairing broken furniture, a deliberately demoralizing job.

Then the already high work norms were raised still further until, according to reliable reports, it was impossible for anyone to fulfil them. Failure to fulfil work norms is punished by periods of isolation in the punishment block of the camp. Conditions in these isolation blocks are known to be extremely bad: the meagre camp diet is even more restricted and exercise is forbidden.

Azernikov was further punished by being made to share a cell with a psychopathic criminal prisoner. When he protested, he was given another period in the isolation block.

He is reported to be suffering from constant and severe headaches, bronchitis and deteriorating sight and hearing. When his aunt recently visited him, she found him thin and ill and poorly clothed: his warm clothing had apparently been confiscated for some "misdemeanour".

Following her widely publicised description of Azernikov's condition and her own protests,

the aunt was herself arrested for 15 days in Leningrad.

Boris Azernikov's parents have emigrated to Israel since his arrest and are now campaigning to help their son. On a recent visit to the Soviet Embassy in London, Dr Azernikov senior, a former Director of the Soviet Army Dental Corps, was abused and threatened by a member of the embassy staff, who insinuated that further reprisals would be taken against Boris. In view of Boris' already failing health, this could have a very serious effect indeed.

Please send your cards appealing for his release on humanitarian grounds to: The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Nikolai Podgorny, and the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev. *Their addresses are:* SSSR, g. Moskva, Kreml, Predsedatelyu Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Sovieta SSSR, N. Podgornomu; and SSSR, g. Moskva, Kreml, Generalnomu Sekretaryu TsK KPSS, L. Brezhnevu.

Arthur Banks BURGHARDT - United States

Arthur Burghardt, aged 25, is a black actor and playwright serving five years in prison for refusing to be inducted into the United States armed forces. Like thousands of other conscientious objectors, many of whom have been adopted by AI, he refused to be associated with a war he sees as immoral and illegal.

In other respects he is different. He used to be an activist in the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), a black activist organisation. He believes that the unusually harsh sentence he received in 1967 in Atlanta, Georgia--a state in the Deep South--may have been attributable to his previous activism if not just his colour. He began serving the sentence in November 1971 after a long series of appeals failed.

As an actor, he has played Othello on stage in Canada, and he appeared in the popular film *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. As a playwright he wrote *Frederick Douglass - Through His Own Words*, about a former slave who escaped to the North, about a former slave who escaped to the North to become an abolitionist leader, advisor to Abraham Lincoln, and diplomatic representative of the United States.

Burghardt's last professional act before surrendering to the authorities was his performance in his own one-man show about Frederick Douglass. Although he is a prisoner, the National Endowment for the Arts, a government-sponsored body, has granted him \$7,000 to work on a film about Douglass.

He has spent much of his time in prison in solitary confinement: first in Danbury Federal Prison, where he participated in a work stoppage and organised a legal challenge to prison regulations, then in his present institution where, according to reports reaching AI, he was the object of a brutal attack by prison guards. In a recent letter to his wife, he described himself as being in "the hole" (solitary confinement), naked and in fear of his physical safety.

Courteously-worded cards should be sent to: President Richard M. Nixon, the White House, Washington D.C.; and to: Mr. Richard M. Kleindienst, Attorney General of the United States,

Department of Justice, Washington D.C. These cards should point out that *Amnesty* takes no position regarding the Vietnam war, but seeks to protect all conscientious objectors. The cards should call for Mr Burghardt's release and, pending such release, his transfer to another institution where he will be treated humanely.

Krishna Prasad BHATTARAI - Nepal

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, now at least 65 years old, is a legendary figure in Nepal. He is a former Speaker in Parliament and former Secretary General of the Nepali Congress Party. This party was the main advocate of parliamentary democracy for Nepal and played a vital role when it was first established in 1951. Before then Nepal had lived continuously under a system of autocratic monarchy.

In 1960 the King staged a royal coup by which the Nepali Congress Party was outlawed and all its leaders imprisoned. The "Partyless Panchayat System" was instituted in which most of the power was vested in the King. In 1968 most of the Congress leaders decided to cooperate with the system and so many of them were released.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was also asked to sign a statement supporting the King but refused because of his firm belief in the pre-1960 system of parliamentary democracy.

He was adopted by *Amnesty* in 1968 and released in 1970 after spending 10 years in prison without trial.

New hopes for reform were raised when the young KING BIRENDRA ascended the throne in January 1972, but in the middle of last year, discontent with the present system developed, especially among the intelligentsia and students.

As one of the most fervent advocates of a return to parliamentary democracy in Nepal, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was again imprisoned in August 1972. He is again held without trial under the Security Act.

Send your politely-worded cards to: His Majesty King Birendra of Nepal, The Royal Palace, Kathmandu, Nepal; and to: Mr. Kirti Nidhi Bista, Prime Minister, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

DEELEY, Peter. *Beyond Breaking Point*. 1972. 239 pages. Arthur Barker, 5 Winsley Street, London W1. £1.75.

A well-researched and readable survey of torture techniques. Includes evidence that "humane" methods of interrogation are more effective. Excellent background material.

COMMITTEE FOR THE RELEASE OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. *Study of Terror: Documents on political imprisonment, torture and repression in South Vietnam*. 1973. 44 pages. c/o Hans Goren Franck, Kungsgatan 24, S-111 35 Stockholm, Sweden. \$2.

Comprehensive document of torture evidence in South Vietnam.

Ukrainian Herald ("Visnyk") Number IV. 198 pages. Obtainable from ABN Press Bureau, 8 Munchen 80, Zeppelinstrasse 67, West Germany. \$6.

First English translation of Ukrainian underground journal devoted to human rights. For groups with Ukrainian prisoners.