

# monthly newsletter from amnesty international

## postcards for prisoners campaign

March 1968

Here is some news about previous prisoners:

Mr. Hardwich Kachaje, Malawi (December 1967 Newsletter). It was reported that Mr. Kachaje had been released under restriction to the town of Nsimje at the extreme southern tip of the country. It is not known whether or not his release was the result of the Postcard Campaign. Mr. Kachaje is reported to be in poor health, due to nervous tension as well as ill-treatment received during his detention.

U Mynt Thein, Burma (September 1967 Newsletter). U mynt Thein has been released in the amnesty announced by General Ne Win at the end of February.

Sao Hkun Hkio, Burma (May 1966 Newsletter). Mr. Hkio has also been released in the amnesty announced by General Ne Win at the end of February. Mr. Thein and Mr. Hkio's releases are reported to be conditional.

Wole Soyinka, Nigeria (November 1967 Newsletter). The Danish Section of Amnesty held a press conference to publicize Wole Soyinka's case. The press conference was widely reported in the international press and we hope may influence the Nigerian Government to release him. He was served with a six month detention order in October 1967 which will expire during April this year and we would urge you to renew your appeals to the Nigerian authorities to release him at the expiry of his detention period.

Czechoslovakia Members will have read in the papers about the liberal revolution which has taken place in Czechoslovakia. It is reported that political prisoners have been released but it is not known yet whom this has affected.

Here are this month's prisoners:

Alexander Yesenin-Volpin, U.S.S.R.

Alexander Yesenin-Volpin is an eminent Soviet mathematician in his early forties, the son of the poet Sergei Yesenin who committed suicide in 1925. He was first arrested in 1949 because of two poems he had written and was confined to a mental institution in Leningrad; later he was exiled to Siberia but returned under an amnesty granted after the death of Stalin. For the next six years he was able to pursue his scientific work and in 1959 was invited to give a paper on the theory of infinity at an international conference in Warsaw. The Soviet authorities would not grant an exit visa and the paper had to be read by a colleague. As well as being a mathematician and scientist Yesenin-Volpin is known as a poet and translator from several languages. In 1961 a collection of his poems was published in New York under the title of 'A Leaf of Spring'. This

resulted in his being detained in a mental institution for a year.

The name of Alexander Yesenin-Volpin is well-known in Moscow intellectual circles due to his constant involvement in movements for greater freedom of conscience. At a short-lived demonstration in December 1965 which called for a fair trial for the imprisoned writers Sinyavsky and Daniel Yesenin-Volpin arrived carrying a banner saying "Respect your own constitution!" On this occasion he was fortunate in only being detained for a few hours. In the recent agitation over the trials of young underground writers in Moscow in January 1968 (see February Newsletter) he was again active in organising a protest movement. On February 14th he was summoned to the KGB (Security Police) headquarters for an "interview". He did not return home. It has since been learned that he is held in a psychiatric hospital called "White Columns" fifty kilometres south of Moscow. A former detainee in one of these hospitals has claimed that the patients are given excessive doses of sedatives, by force if necessary. These can produce unpleasant physical side-effects.

A letter was sent to the recent consultative conference of world communist parties in Budapest by dissident Soviet intellectuals and friends and relatives of imprisoned writers, expressing their concern at the January trial in Moscow. Referring to the failure of Soviet authorities to answer their letters they said "Instead reply to those who have protested most actively has consisted of their being discharged from their jobs, summons to the KGB for threats of arrest and, finally, the most shocking of all, forcible confinement in a mental hospital." This is the first time that the existence of this practice has been confirmed by a Soviet source.

On March 9th of this year 99 Soviet mathematicians including members of the Academy of Sciences and Lenin prize winners protested to the Soviet Government at their detention of Yesenin-Volpin in a mental hospital "forcibly, without preliminary examination and without the consent of his relatives."

Please send your cards to:

SSSR,  
Moskva,  
Kreml,  
Predsedatelyu Sovieta Ministrov SSSR,  
Kosyginu, Alekseyu.

SSSR,  
Moskva,  
Rakhmanovskiy pereulok 3,  
Ministru Zdravookhraneniya SSSR.  
(The above address is the Ministry of Health.)

Sofia Ferreira (de Oliveira), Portugal

Now about 46 years old, Sofia Ferreira is a worker who was first arrested by the PIDE (security police) in 1949, presumably for her membership of the illegal

SSSR,  
Moskovskaya Oblast,  
Stantsiya Stolbovaya,  
Psikhiatricheskaya Bolnitsa no.5,  
Yesenin-Volpinu,  
Aleksandru Sergeychu.

(Send your cards to Mr. Yesenin-Volpin  
at the above address).

communist party. She was sentenced to 3 years and security measures, but was released before her time was up in order to undergo an urgent operation. In 1959 she was again arrested and subjected to intensive interrogation under torture before being tried in May 1960. This time she was sentenced to 5½ years and security measures.

Although she has served her fixed term, the PIDE are still detaining her in Cacias prison under security measures which empower them to hold indefinitely any person considered to be a threat to the internal security of the country. She is extremely poor in health with stomach and nervous complaints and was operated on at the end of last year.

Please send your cards to either:

His Excellency Dr. Salazar,  
Palacio de S,  
Bento,  
Calcada de Estrela,  
Lisbon,  
Portugal.

or: The Minister of Justice,  
G. Arsenal Esq.,  
Lisbon,  
Portugal.

Low Tai Thong, Singapore

At the time of his arrest Mr. Low, who is a communist, was an official of the Factory and Shopworkers Trades Union. Now aged 35, he has been detained ever since 1956, although an independent review board recommended his release in 1962. He was arrested before Independence by the British Colonial Administration, together with a number of prominent left-wingers. Many of these have since been released after renouncing their political beliefs.

He was born in North Borneo, so that the breaking up of the Federation made him technically no longer a citizen of Singapore, and in May 1967 the Government of Singapore tried to deport him to China. The Chinese authorities refused to accept him and he was returned to Singapore, where he is now detained for having re-entered the country without a visa.

He has been adopted by a Swedish Group, who have offered to raise the money to pay for him to study Law in Britain if the Government will allow him to leave. A place at a University is available there for him provided he satisfies the necessary entrance qualifications.

Please appeal to the Prime Minister of Singapore to allow Mr. Low to leave the country and study abroad.

Send your cards to:

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew,  
Prime Minister of Singapore,  
Prime Minister's Office,  
Singapore.

(Mr. Low's address is given below.)  
Mr. Low Tai Thong,  
c/o Queenstown Prison,  
Singapore 3.