

monthly newsletter from amnesty international



postcards for prisoners campaign

JUNE 1970

First some news about prisoners who have been on this Campaign:-

Vladimir Bukovsky - U.S.S.R (August 1967). He has been released and is back in Moscow. He has made statements to the press concerning the detention of political prisoners in psychiatric institutions and has declared his intention of continuing his political work. It is reported that he is under close watch by the Soviet Security Police.

Ilias Iliou - Greece, (May 1967). It has been reported in the press that he was released yesterday.

Yury Galanskov - U.S.S.R. (August 1967) . A letter signed by Galanskov's wife and mother has appeared in the West which claims that Galanskov is seriously ill with a stomach ulcer in a camp hospital in the Mordovian camp complex. The letter goes on to say that he cannot get the drugs necessary to treat his condition. Please renew your appeals on his behalf by sending letters to: Mr. Alexai Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, U.S.S.R. His address is - S.S.S.R., g.Moskva, Kreml, Predsedatelyu Sovieta Ministrov, S.S.R., Kosyginu, Alekseyu.

Georgi P. Vins - U.S.S.R. (July 1968). Pastor Vins, who was released in 1969, in serious ill-health, recovered only to be re-arrested. He has now been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for alleged "parasiticism". Anybody who does not have a recognised job in the U.S.S.R. can be dealt with under the "Parasite" Law. Further appeals can be sent to Mr. Kosygin at the address given above.

Telo de Mascarenas - Portugal (December 1966). Included in the amnesty and released on 30th May. Reported to be in bad health.

Dr. Fransisco Salgado Zenha - Portugal (April 1970). Was released from prison on 29th April but may be awaiting trial.

This month's prisoners:-

Dr. Zhores Alexandrovich MEDVEDEV - U.S.S.R.

Dr. Medvedev is an eminent biologist and geneticist, aged 45. Prior to his arrest on May 29th this year he lived in Obninsk in Kaluga province, about 150 kilometres south west of Moscow. Dr. Medvedev is perhaps best known in the USSR and abroad for his book "The Rise and Fall of T.D. Lysenko", regarding the Soviet biologist who, thanks to Stalin's protection, dominated Soviet science for over a decade. Medvedev is also the author of over 100 scientific papers and his studies of the biosynthesis of albumen and of genetic mechanisms of ageing and development have aroused interest

among scientists abroad as well as in the USSR. This brought him into correspondence with individuals abroad and presumably it was this contact and certain difficulties that he experienced that caused him to protest publicly at the barriers he claims are placed by the Soviet authorities between Soviet scientists and their colleagues abroad.

It was in early 1970 that Amnesty first heard of Dr. Medvedev. An open letter by him attacking the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn from the Union of Writers appeared in issue No. 11 of the "Chronicle of Current Events", the famous "underground" journal. Dr. Medvedev is also the twin brother of Dr. Roy Medvedev who, together with the academician Sakharov has written memoranda to the Soviet government, maintaining that economic progress in the USSR can only be achieved if the restrictions on the free flow of information are lifted. The Medvedev brothers are now prominent personalities within the civil rights movement in the USSR.

The principal factor in Dr. Zhores Medvedev's arrest is believed to be his criticism of postal censorship. He is known to have complained to the postal authorities about the loss of several registered letters between Obninsk and places abroad; in place of the routine enquiry, he encountered only threats of action against him if he persisted. In 1969 he was dismissed from his job at the Scientific and Research Institute of Medical Radiology in Obninsk on the orders of the local Communist Party, apparently because of the repeated complaints he had made. He is also believed to have written a paper on postal censorship.

Following Dr. Medvedev's arrest and confinement to a local psychiatric hospital, members of his family and prominent Soviet scientists protested to the Soviet authorities at this action. The first psychiatric commission, sent in haste from Moscow, pronounced him sane, but ordered that he be placed under observation for a week. A second commission sent out from Moscow prolonged this period for a month. This commission was headed by a Professor Lunts of the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow, who has been instrumental in passing verdicts of insanity against numerous people believed by Amnesty to be prisoners of conscience, notably Major-General Grigorenko.

Although Amnesty cannot conclusively prove that Dr. Medvedev has not been detained for bona fide reasons, the evidence available points directly to his having been arrested on the orders of the Soviet Security Police because of his criticism of aspects of government policy. If found insane he can be held for an indefinite period and possibly subjected to forcible sedation and confinement together with truly insane people.

Send your cards to: Mr. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR,
at the

Send your cards to:

EITHER

OR

Mr. Kosygin,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers,
SSSR,
Moskva,
Kreml,
Predsedatelyu Šovieta Ministrov SSSR,
A. Kosyginu.
U.S.S.R.

Professor Lunts,
SSSR,
g. Moskva,
Kropotkinsky Passazh 23,
Institut Sudebnoi Psikhiiatrii imeni Serbskogo,
Professoru Luntsu,
U.S.S.R.

Quintin and Rizal YUYITUNG - TAIWAN (FORMOSA)

Respectively 53 years old and 47 years old, two brothers - the publisher/editor and managing editor of the Philippine paper Chinese Commercial News were arrested in Manila on March 23rd 1970 on the order of President Marcos. It was alleged that they had expressed anti-Philippine and pro-communist sentiments in their paper. On May 5th 1970 they were suddenly deported to Taiwan while the judicial investigation proceedings were still in progress in the Philippines.

The Yuyitungs are of Chinese origin from Formosa but were born in the Philippines. Rizal has a Philippine wife and six children. They are both officially stateless but have repeatedly stated that they feel they belong to the Philippines, and renounced their Formosan citizenship.

The Philippine press has long had a deserved reputation for freedom of expression. Since President Marcos' recent re-election dissatisfaction with his policies has led to criticism in the press and there have been several student demonstrations. It is believed that he may wish to curb freedom of the press by making an example of one newspaper. There is also a certain amount of anti-Chinese feeling in the Philippines and it may be that the government felt it safer to choose non-Philippines. In 1964 the two brothers were arrested and then released almost immediately. Their arrest followed the publication of an article on mainland China which it is believed annoyed the Formosan Embassy in the Philippines who themselves publish the only two other papers dealing with China - very small-circulation papers which in no way rival the success of Chinese Commercial News. Most of the Chinese in the Philippines are of Formosan origin and the Formosan Government has always been nervous about the possibility that these ex patriots might form a focus for anti-Formosan sympathies. It is possible that the Yuyitung brothers were in touch with opposition Formosan movements or with mainland Chinese.

According to the latest information the two brothers are now being held by the Military Garrison Command in Taipeh, the capital of Formosa, and have not yet been charged or brought to trial. At the time of their deportation their plight was widely publicised internationally and many appeals made to the Philippine government to prevent their deportation - notably by the International Press Institute. They appear to be receiving privileged treatment in prison and this is believed to be a result of this pressure.

Martial law is in force in Formosa and it is possible that the Yuyitungs may be subject to severe penalties: life imprisonment or even, conceivably, the death sentence.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

President Chiang Kai Shek,
President of the Republic of China,
Taipeh,
Republic of China (Taiwan)

OR

The Head of the Military Garrison Command,
Taipeh,
Republic of China (Taiwan)

Ahmed BEN SALAH - TUNISIA

Ahmed Ben Salah was sentenced to 10 years hard labour in May 1970 after being tried for high treason. He had originally been placed under house arrest in December 1970 and was formally charged and imprisoned in March.

In May 1970 he was tried in a High Court, provision for which is made in Article 56 of the Constitution. This states that a High Court may be formed in the event of high treason by a government member but it gives no rulings on the composition, prerogative or procedure of such a body. Furthermore, it gives no definition of what is meant by high treason or of the sanctions to be taken against those found guilty of the crime. These points were all settled by a law of April 1st 1970, i.e. after Ben Salah's arrest. This procedure conflicts with Article 13 of the Constitution which establishes the principle of non-retro-activity of the penal code. Since the High Court was formed after Ben Salah's imprisonment its members could be chosen from among his known opponents. Since the crime of high treason was not defined until after the actions in question were committed, its definition could be made to correspond with his acts. In fact, the definition was so imprecise as to depend more on an interpretation of events than on events themselves.

It was claimed that the President gave Ben Salah his support because he was misled and deceived by the false information given. Ben Salah had committed these acts, it is alleged, in order to put the country into confusion and discredit the Head of State and government with the ultimate intention of taking over the country himself. In defence Ben Salah maintained that he was simply implementing a policy which had the full support of the President, the Government, the National Assembly and the Party. His policy-making was never conducted in secret. Since no criticisms were ever voiced, he had no reason to suppose that any existed. If the government said it had been deceived and misled, then he too had been misled. He had no knowledge of the hardships and injustices which witnesses maintained had been involved in implementing the co-operative system. All reports from his subordinates had invariably shown the system to be running successfully. While some criticism had been expressed by international organisations these were not so extreme as to warrant any basic re-orientation.

Mr. Ben Salah was prepared to admit that he had made mistakes and errors of judgment. But whatever mistakes he may have made they cannot be regarded as amounting to high treason. The charge against him can only be seen as a political move.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

President Bourguiba,
La Presidence,
Tunis,
Tunisia.

OR

Monsieur Bahi Ladgham,
Prime Minister,
Tunis.