



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

MISSIONS

Cairo: Mr. John Platts-Mills Q.C. has now reported on his visit to Cairo in connection with the trial of former Vice-President Ali Sabry and 90 others on charges of conspiracy. He was able to meet lawyers, government representatives and officials of the court. The court was not open to the public and Mr. Platts-Mills was one of the only two independent observers allowed to attend. After observing a court session he commented that there was no reason to think that the actual conduct of the trial was not following normal criminal procedure. However, there were a number of points regarding the pre-trial procedure which he thought should be raised, and while in Cairo Mr. Platts-Mills held a press conference at which he talked of the reasons for Amnesty's interest in the trial. In addition he held discussions regarding the founding of an Egyptian Amnesty Section.

Spain: On 4 November Mr. Sean MacBride, Chairman of the International Executive Committee, visited Madrid for discussions with the Spanish Government about a number of issues of particular concern to Amnesty. He was accompanied by Becky Babcock, from the International Secretariat, and spoke with the Minister of Justice, the Technical General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and the Sub-Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

ORGANISATION

Relations of Amnesty groups and Sections with other organisations: The International Executive Committee has decided that the special attention of groups and Sections should be drawn to Resolution 9E of the International Council Meeting. The Resolution reads: "The International Council stresses the importance of Amnesty International being a truly independent and impartial organisation. In this context no public action, e.g. press conferences, demonstrations, public meetings etc. should be undertaken by groups, regions or national sections jointly with exile, refugee or other political organisations committed to opposition of the government of the country concerned, without the prior agreement of the Board of the National Section. Further it is recommended that no press statements on policy matters of more than local importance should be issued by any group or region, without prior consultation with the National Section and/or International Secretariat. It should be emphasised to exile, refugee or other political organisations that the refusal of Amnesty International to co-operate publicly with them is in order to protect the objective nature of Amnesty International and does not reflect approval or disapproval of the aims and judgement of any such organisation."

Christmas Cards: The Dutch Section has Amnesty Christmas cards for sale. The cards are f 0.50 each. For orders of 20 and over the price is f 0.40 each; and for 100 and over, f 0.25. Lists of prisoners to whom the cards can be sent may also be obtained from the Dutch Section. Cards should be ordered by sending the appropriate amount to giro Holland 454000, Amnesty International, Amsterdam. (Cheques 20% extra). The address of the Dutch Section is Postbus 6262, Amsterdam.

Chronicle of Current Events: The first year of the Chronicle of Current Events will end with No. 21. The notices of the renewal of subscriptions will be sent out with that number. Will you please fill in the forms as soon as possible: you will receive No.22 only if you return the completed form with your payment. We have recently opened a Giro Account (exclusively for the Chronicle): Amnesty Publications, No. 53 730 4002, and we hope that this will facilitate payments from abroad. So far the response from Amnesty groups who have Russian prisoners has been disappointing - they have taken out few subscriptions to this valuable background material.

COUNTRIES

Northern Ireland: A week after the first arrests on 9 August, carried out under the Special Powers Act, Dr. Zbynek Zeman, Director of Research, visited Belfast. He met there

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(Secretary General: Martin Ennals - Director of Research: Zbynek Zeman - Executive Secretary: Martin Enthoven)

representatives of the Catholic minority, of the government and of the armed forces. Apart from establishing channels of communication, he was given the undertaking that the legal rights of the prisoners would be respected and that Amnesty would receive a list of the men imprisoned under the Act. A few days after 9 August, allegations started being made against the security forces of ill-treatment and brutality. Sir Edmund Compton's commission of enquiry was then established by the Government to consider the allegations arising out of the operation on 9 August. The requests to the Home Office in London that Amnesty should be represented on the commission, and that it should review complaints arising out of the period at least up to 31 August, were both turned down. A report on the allegations was subsequently drafted at the Secretariat in London and put before the International Executive Committee meeting on 30 October. The Committee decided to publish the report. In the subsequent controversy in the mass media Mr. Anthony Marreco's resignation was usually described as a direct result of the publication of the report. In fact Mr. Marreco had resigned as the Treasurer of Amnesty on 24 September, a month before the publication of the report. The Compton report, which appeared on 16 November, confirmed most of the allegations which had been summarised in the Amnesty statement. A special International Executive Committee meeting was convened for Sunday, 28 November, to consider Amnesty's further action in regard to Northern Ireland.

U.S.S.R.: The International Secretariat has twice telephoned Mr. Valery Chalidze, a Moscow physicist and member of the Soviet Human Rights Committee. He confirmed that letters written to the Committee by Amnesty International had not arrived. We also discussed the imprisonment of Vladimir Bukovsky and the confinement of dissenters in mental hospitals.

Senegal: President Leopold Sedor Senghor has issued a Presidential Decree releasing the five remaining trade union leaders in prison following a trial in July by the Special Tribunal of Dakar. Originally, ten men were arrested in January. All were officials of the Sengalese Trade Union (Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Senegal) and they were accused of producing anti-government literature and inciting a political uprising. They were held in prison until their trial, when four were fined and released and the other six sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from eight months to three years. One completed his sentence in September.

Taiwan: On 10 October it was reported that the Taiwanese Government had released 641 prisoners by a decree passed to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Republic of China. It was said that another 1,185 prisoners would be released in the near future. No details have been given of the categories of prisoners involved, nor has any confirmation of release been received. However, this is the first decree for a mass release of prisoners since Chiang-Kai-shek took over the island in 1949. On 24 October -- U.N. Day -- Chiang-Kai-shek personally ordered the release of 35 political prisoners. The Information Office said the presidential order would also commute the sentences of another six political prisoners. Among those freed on 25 October -- the day that China was recognised by the U.N.-- was Chen Yu-hsi, one of Amnesty's adopted prisoners. A former political science student at the East-West Centre in Hawaii, he has served three years and two months of a seven-year sentence for allegedly spreading communist propaganda. It is too early to predict the long-term effects of the Republic of China's exclusion from the United Nations or the future treatment of Taiwanese political dissidents inside and outside the country. What is notable about the present releases is that the journalists Quintin and Rizal Yuyitung have not been included. The Yuyitung brothers, who were deported from Manila to stand trial in Taiwan, are adopted by Amnesty groups and have been the subject of an intensive campaign by the International Press Institute. The I.P.I. has now suspended its National Committee in Taipei, because of the Government's failure to free the Yuyitungs.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

BERGER, JOSEPH: "Shipwreck of a Generation". The memoirs of a one-time prisoner in the Soviet Union. Harvill Press. London. 1971. £2.50. HAZARD, JOHN N.: "Communists and their Law. A search for the Common Core to the Legal Systems of the Marxian Socialist States." University of Chicago Press. 1969. £3.95. KOSYK, W.: "Violation des Droits de L'Homme en Ukraine et en U.R.S.S." Editions de L'Est Europeen. 1969. 15 French Francs. MEDVEDEV, ZHORES A. and ROY A.: "A Question of Madness". The internment of a Russian Scientist in a Soviet mental hospital. Macmillan 1971. £2.75. MICHENER, JAMES A.: "Kent State: What happened and Why." Secker and Warburg. 1971. £4.90. PRASAD, DEVI: "They Love it but Leave it; American Deserters." War Resisters International Publication. 1971. 30p. WALSH, PETER: "The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. The ANC 1912-1952." C. Hurst. 1970. £5.25.

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

Thomas Gebhardt - East Germany (March 1971) - has been released from prison .

Hornisdas Mbanda - Rwanda (July 1970). Mr. Mbanda was moved this summer from the prison at Ruhengeri near the Uganda border to Gitarama in central Rwanda.

Henry Fahnbulleh - Liberia (November 1969). A plea for the release of this prisoner has been made by the Liberian Age, a newspaper published in Liberia's capital, Monrovia. This is in line with the relaxation of political tension which has occurred since President Tolbert became head of state following the death of former President Tubman last July.

This month's prisoners:-Huber MATOS Benites - CUBA

In January 1959 Fidel Castro and his followers overthrew the notoriously corrupt and dictatorial regime of Fulgencia Batista. The Revolution was supported by several clandestine urban and rural resistance groups which united students, workers, professionals and politicians in opposition to Batista. One of the main objectives was the restoration of the 1940 Constitution. Little more than a month after Castro assumed power, however, the Constitution as such was replaced by the Fundamental Law, incorporating - with certain modifications - the provisions of the 1940 Constitution as well as laws issued by the rebel nucleus throughout 1958 as they planned and prepared for the Revolution from the Sierra Maestra mountains. These laws of the Sierra Maestra provided, among other things, for the punishment of all Cubans guilty of collaborating with the Batista regime.

Revolutionary tribunals were set up at the beginning of January 1959, and a vast number of former military and civil officials were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment or to execution. The defendants also included persons who had had no direct part in the dictatorship but were accused of "counter-revolutionary activities"--- which ranged from suspected disapproval of the government and the increasing influence of the Communist Party to acts of armed rebellion.

The case of Huber Matos Benites was a cause celebre. The prisoner was born in 1919 in the town of Yara, Oriente Province, the son of peasant parents. After graduating as a Doctor of Pedagogy in Havana he returned to Oriente Province to teach in the rural and farm communities. He then became Professor in the Normal School of Manzanillo, capital of the Province, for five years. At the same time he was also proprietor of a small rice plantation which he cultivated himself. He sympathised with the Revolution and helped the Castro forces when they were beginning to form guerilla bands in 1956. In consequence he was pursued by Batista troops and police and fled to Costa Rica after taking refuge in the Costa Rica Embassy in Cuba. After Castro's victory Matos returned to Cuba and was appointed Military Head of the Province of Camaguey and also the Director of the Agrarian Reform National Institute (INRA) in that Province. He soon found himself in disagreement with the Castro regime because of its Communist emphasis and on 19 October 1959 he resigned from the Army. The next morning he was arrested together with 17 of his officers who had followed him in resigning their posts. All were sentenced to imprisonment. Major Huber Matos received a 20-year prison term.

First held in the Isla de Pinos Prison he was transferred to la Cabana Fortress Prison, Havana, in 1967, where he now is. There have been allegations of ill-treatment, of his being kept naked in solitary confinement and being refused medical treatment. When the Bolivian Government asked for his release Castro offered to free him in exchange for the ashes of Che Guevara. This request was not met and there is no sign of an

early release for Major Matos. His family --wife, two sons, and two daughters -- are in the United States. In view of the long term he has now served, renewed appeals for release would be appropriate. Please send your cards to: Fidel Castro, Primer Ministro, Havana, Cuba; or Alfredo Yabur Maluf, Ministro de Justicia, Havana, Cuba.

Fernando GRANADOS Cortes - MEXICO

A clerk and member of the Communist Party (which is nonviolent and legal in Mexico), Fernando Granados Cortes was arrested on 26 July, 1968, early in the days of the Student Movement in Mexico City. The Movement was catalysed by the intervention of special riot police (granaderos) in an apolitical fight between two rival secondary schools. It quickly expanded, however, to represent the grievances and democratic demands of Mexican students and workers alike, and gathered momentum as all manifestations of those demands were met by increasing repression on the part of the Government.

After the first detention of students and professors who participated in public demonstrations, Fernando GRANADOS joined several lawyers and professionals sympathetic to the students in trying to form a committee to meet with the Attorney General and the Minister of the Interior to appeal for the release of those already in gaol and to discuss a solution to the conflict. This provided the motive for his own arrest, but he was later charged with a series of violent crimes which have never been proved -- as were all the others arrested in connection with the Movement. Not tried until August 1970, Sr. Granados was then sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

He is still being held in Lecumberri Prison, Mexico City, although most of the students, professors and workers tried at the same time as he -- some sentenced to much longer terms of imprisonment -- were gradually released following the election of a new President who took office in December 1970. Furthermore, his request for an appeal remains unanswered by the authorities in spite of nearly a year having passed since it was first made. There seems to be no reason for his continued detention other than the fact that he is a member of the Communist Party.

Please send your cards to: Licenciado Luis Echeverria, Presidente de la Republica, Palacio Nacional, Mexico D.F., Mexico; or The Minister of Justice: Sr. Pedro Oleia Pallada, Procuradoria General de Justicia, Mexico D.F., Mexico.

Theodorus ILIADIS - GREECE

Mr. Iliadis, who is 57 years old, is serving a five-year sentence in Aegina Prison, on Aegina Island. Arrested soon after the military coup of April 1967, he was detained without charge for over a year. He was eventually brought to trial in October 1968 and charged under Law 509 (sedition). In a letter smuggled out of prison Mr. Iliadis says that he is imprisoned because of his present opposition to the Junta regime and because of his refusal to renounce his political convictions.

Other prisoners have mentioned Mr. Iliadis because of his ill-health. He suffers from Spondylo arthritis, colitis and heart disease. Also, his family are in desperate need of help: not only are his three children ill but his wife has suffered for the past two years with a serious heart disease. She is now bedridden and is, according to her doctor, in a critical condition. The Athens representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross was trying to arrange for her to be admitted to hospital when the Greek government cancelled its agreement with the I.C.R.C.

Letters to the authorities should plead for the prisoner's release on compassionate grounds, appealing for urgent consideration of his health. Please send your cards to H.E. George Papadopoulos, Prime Minister of Greece, Palaia Anaktoria, Queen Sofia Avenue, Athens, Greece; or Archbishop Hieronymous Patriarchion, Athens, Greece.