

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

OCTOBER, 1969

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

Jusu Sheriff, Sierra Leone (December 1968). A Bench Warrant was issued on September 27 for Jusu Sheriff and 10 others for non-appearance at court. The case had been transferred to the capital from Bonthe where the offences (incitement to riot) was allegedly committed in November 1968. The case comes up again on October 6.

Gregorio Bezerra, Brazil (April 1968) was one of the 15 prisoners released by the Brazilian government in exchange for the kidnapped US Ambassador Elbrick.

Werner Ross, East Germany (February 1969). We have recently heard that Werner Ross has been freed from prison and that he is now living in West Germany.

Professor Darcy Ribeiro, Brazil (June 1969). We are glad to let you know that Darcy Ribeiro was released after 8 months' imprisonment on August 19, 1969. A military court unanimously absolved him from the charges against him. This made it possible for him to leave Brazil and he is now working temporarily at the University of Venezuela. It is, however, his intention to return to Brazil in due course.

Achkar Marof, Guinea, (April 1969). Mr Marof has been put on the Christmas card list.

Dr Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz, Iraq (August 1969). The secret trial of Dr Bazzaz before the Revolutionary Court started in the first week of September and was concluded a few days later. The final decision is now in the hands of the President of Iraq. Please renew your appeals to the Iraqi Government.

Pramudya Ananta Tur, Indonesia (February 1969). In August 1969 Pramudya was transported to the Moluccan island of Buru for "resettlement". Members should renew their appeals, being careful to write courteous letters without any reference to the Indonesian political situation.

Narciso Julian Sanz, Spain (May 1969). Senor Julian is held in a geriatric ward, which is part of the provincial prison of Almeria. It was designed for 140 patients but now holds 200 elderly prisoners from all over Spain. Ten of these are political prisoners who have to live amongst the criminal prisoners. Please write again to the Minister of Information and Tourism and the Minister of Justice (see addresses in Father Gabicagogeascoa's text) asking for the release of Senor Narciso Julian Sanz on humanitarian grounds.

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THIS MONTH'S PRISONERS

Father Alberto Gabicagogeascoa, Spain

A parish priest in Ajurias in the Province of Biscaye. Aged 32. Is serving a 12 year

sentence in Zamora Prison.

Together with 4 other priests he prepared a document drawing attention to the suffering of the Basque people, which they signed, sending copies to the Human Rights Commission and the Commission of the International Red Cross. On May 13, 1969 they went on hunger strike in the residence of the Bishop of Bilbao. Three days later on June 2, 1969, they were arrested and in a secret trial before a military tribunal in Burgos Father Gabicagogeascoa was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.

Father Gabicagogeascoa had a previous conviction against him. In January 1965 he was accused of illegal propaganda and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment; he had denounced in a sermon the methods used by the local police when questioning political suspects. As most sentences of a year or under in Spain are served as a suspended sentence, Father Gabicagogeascoa did not in fact, go to prison.

Cards appealing for his release should be sent to:

EITHER

The Minister of Information & Tourism;
Fraga Iribarne,
S. Ex. Don Manuel Fraga y Iribarne,
Ministerio de Informacion y Turismo,
Avenida de Generalisimo 39,
Madrid

OR

The Minister of Justice,
S. Ex. Don Antonio Maria Oriol y Urquijo,
Ministerio de Justicia,
Madrid.

Thich Thien Minh, South Vietnam

Thich Thien Minh, aged 46, a Buddhist monk was the head of the Quang Duc Buddhist Youth Centre. He was responsible for the direction and co-ordination of Buddhist activities in Saigon. Thich Thien Minh was arrested on February 23, 1969 and charged with attempting to influence people against the present government and National Assembly, insulting and slandering the government and giving aid and support to deserters and comforting disobedient people. He was brought to trial in March 1969 and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. This sentence was first reduced to 5 then to 3 years.

Cards appealing for his release should be sent to:

EITHER

President of the Republic of South Vietnam,
Major General Nguyen Van Thieu,
Saigon,
South Vietnam

OR

The American Embassy,
Saigon,
South Vietnam

You should also write to Thich Thien Minh himself c/o The Ministry of the Interior, Saigon, South Vietnam.

contd....

Ludek Pachman, Czechoslovakia

A Czech chess player who distinguished himself both in his own country and abroad. He has the title of Grand Master of chess and has written books on the subject as well as having been editor of the official magazine of the International Chess Federation.

Evidently also a champion of the liberal cause in Czechoslovakia, Pachman appears to have attracted the authorities' attention to himself by writing an article on the situation in post-invasion Czechoslovakia, which was published in the Dutch newspaper Het Parool in January 1969. He was also attacked by the Moscow newspaper Izvestiya on account of speeches he made in a park in Prague where, it is alleged, he tried to incite young people against the government.

The previous October he had gone to Switzerland to play in an international chess tournament. While other Czech players draped their flags with black, Pachman refused to play at all out of protest at the invasion.

In 1969 criminal proceedings were instituted against Pachman; he was expelled from membership of the Communist Party and on August 21, the anniversary of the invasion, he is reported to have been arrested for distributing allegedly counter-revolutionary leaflets. Under the emergency laws introduced just before the anniversary he could be held for 3 weeks before being brought before a judge and access to a defence lawyer would have been denied until the day of the trial. Although the maximum sentence provided for at present is three months imprisonment there are fears that the laws will be altered to provide harsher penalties for political dissidents.

Pachman is reported to be on hunger strike in the prison hospital of Pankrac prison, Prague.

Send your cards to:

EITHER

OR

Mr Oldrich Cernik,
Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia,
Praha-Mala Strana,
Nabrezi kpt. Jarose 4,
Czechoslovakia

c Mr Jan Nemec,
Minister of Justice of the Czech Republic,
Praha-Nove Mesto,
Vysehradská 16,
Czechoslovakia.

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Several members have asked us not to acknowledge every reply they send in to the Secretariat. While we appreciate their wish to reduce the work of the staff here, it is in fact very difficult to keep a record of which people (out of a membership approaching 1,000) don't want an acknowledgement. It would help us if you could write NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT NEEDED on each reply sent in should you not want its receipt acknowledged.

AMNESTY International
London EC4