

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



MISSION

Middle East: From May 26 till June 12, the Secretary General visited Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Israel and Italy. The worst news is from IRAN, where, early this year, many were executed without a fair trial. The Secretary General met the Prime Minister and government officials - a report of his discussions has gone to the International Executive Committee. In SYRIA, he got confirmation that all but two of the Jewish prisoners were recently released. Two are definitely still detained; two others may be. He also had high level talks about prominent members of the former regime and about the imprisoned Kurdish national poet, Osman Sabri, whose family he met. In EGYPT, he discussed the setting up of a new Section, and met the proposed chairman and possible executive members. He also had useful discussion about Amnesty's sole Egyptian adoptee, journalist Sayyid Loutfi, imprisoned for life for anti-Nasser propaganda. In ISRAEL, he concentrated on Section matters, but was also interviewed by the press. There is one adopted conscientious objector and some 20 investigation cases of Arabs held without trial in administrative detention. The press made one error in their report of the interview: Amnesty has received no detailed allegations of maltreatment of Arab prisoners since November 1971 - the leading Hebrew newspaper misstated the date as 1970. In fact there was a 14-month period when no detailed complaints were received from Israel or the Arab states.

ORGANISATION

International Executive Committee: The Committee, which met in London from June 16-18, received reports from the Long Range Planning Committee and from the business consultants, McKinsey's. The latter recommended no basic changes in the running of the International Secretariat; however, new systems of filing and handling information will be introduced when we move. The International Council will consider the Long Range Planning Committee's proposals; and, this month, the International Executive's sub-committee will make decisions on the basis of McKinsey's proposals. George Gomez, an Indian who has lived in Singapore, was appointed Administrative Manager (the post advertised as "Chef de Cabinet"). He is a trained barrister who previously held an administrative post with the Greater London Council. He will start work at the end of the month and will be responsible to the Secretary General. The Information Officer will be appointed this month.

International Council: The Executive proposed that there be working groups on: torture; administration, organisation and fund raising; relations between the International Secretariat, National Sections and groups; international action and programmes; refugees, exiles and political asylum. There will be no simultaneous translators at the Council meeting; however, Dutch members will be available to interpret individually. The money thus saved will be used to help non-European Sections to send delegates. The International Executive will meet again on September 6. The Treasurers' meeting will be on September 7, and the Council itself will meet from September 8th a.m. till September 10th p.m. Resolutions from National Sections must be in by August 3. It is now too late to submit Statute amendments.

Changes of Address: From August 10 the Swedish Secretariat's address will be: Barnhusgatan 4, 111 23 Stockholm. It will keep the old telephone number. From September 1, the British Section will be at: 55 Theobald's Rd., London W.C.1.

COUNTRIES

Spain: Formerly adopted prisoner, Marcelino Camacho, released in March 1972, was re-arrested on June 24 while taking part in an alleged illegal meeting.

Portugal: On July 25, the Electoral College will select President Admiral Americo Thomaz' successor - 77-year-old Thomaz himself will probably be re-elected. Groups should use the occasion to make special appeals to him on behalf of their prisoners.

Brazil: September 7 is the 150th anniversary of Brazil's independence. Several Sections (France, Germany, Sweden and Holland) have made extensive plans to mark the occasion. Others are urged to follow their example; and any groups wishing to co-ordinate efforts in their country should contact the International Secretariat at once.

An extract from a letter to a Swedish group from their recently released prisoner ran thus: "I am happy. Above all because I know that people as far away as Sweden are interested in us, in me. In prison we listened every night to the Portuguese language broadcasts to Brazil from Radio Sweden. Thank you for your solidarity."

Uruguay: Dr Julio C. Ripa, Vice-President of the Uruguayan Medical Association, and a number of doctors, e.g. the well-known Dr Nebel Bonilla, have been arrested and, apparently, tortured for allegedly treating wounded terrorists. The Association has therefore delivered a memorandum to the Minister of Defence requesting investigation of such cases and appealing for an end to torture and for the proper treatment of prisoners. The Association has also asked Amnesty to support this appeal. We plan to start work on Uruguay soon. Meanwhile, groups and Sections are urged to telegraph or write to the Minister of Defence on behalf of these doctors and in support of the Association's memorandum. Please try to get doctors and medical associations in your own country to do so too. Write to: Sr. Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Gral. Dn. Enrique Olegario Magnani, Montevideo, Republica Oriental del Uruguay. Letters or telegrams of support to the Medical Association should go to: Dr Orlando Pereira, Presidente, Sindicato Medico del Uruguay, Palacio Sindical, Colonia 1938 -Piso 2, Casilla Correo no. 2001, Distrito 1, Montevideo, Republica Oriental del Uruguay.

Sierra Leone: Response to the appeal on behalf of George Panda (May Newsletter) was so generous that no more donations are needed. Mr Panda is delighted with the help he has received from Amnesty members.

Rhodesia: The Pearce Commission to sound out Rhodesians on the proposals for a settlement between the British and Rhodesian governments was in Rhodesia from January till April. Africans, Coloureds, Asians and Whites all expressed their views. The Commission found that the majority (95% of the population are African) opposed the proposals. Members of the Commission interviewed detainees, and those at Gwelo submitted a lengthy memorandum rejecting the proposals, so did Joshua Nkomo. The African National Council has called for a new constitution acceptable to all, but the Rhodesian government has turned down the proposal. Meanwhile economic sanctions remain in force, and no detainees have been released since January. Groups may make representations on behalf of their adopted detainees (not convicted prisoners) to the Review Tribunal, Ministry of Law and Order, Causeway, Salisbury, Rhodesia, which is currently reviewing all detention cases and will recommend release or continued imprisonment.

Tanzania: Earlier this year, many members received letters of thanks from Otini Kambona, a political detainee who was on last year's Christmas Card list. He and his brother, Mattiya, who had both been detained without trial since 1967, were released in February. The groups who had adopted them were helping them to rejoin their families abroad when news came that they had both been re-arrested in Dar es Salaam on June 12. They are in Ukanga Prison, Dar es Salaam. Both are in poor health, but each is obliged to share an 8½ foot square cell with three others, sleeping on a concrete floor with only one blanket apiece to serve as both bedding and mosquito net. The International Secretariat is raising this matter with the Tanzanian government, but the groups who adopted the brothers should again take up their cases.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

KAY, HUGH: "Salazar and Modern Portugal". Eyre & Spottiswood Publishers Ltd. 1970. £4.25. (Mentions development of Amnesty's work in Portugal). HOLDEN, DAVID: "Greece without Columns; the Making of Modern Greeks". Faber & Faber. 1972. £3.00. MLAMBO, ESHMAEL: "Rhodesia, the Struggle for a Birthright". C. Hurst & Co. 1972. £2.95. MARSHALL, RICHARD H. Jr.: "Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union, 1917-1967". University of Chicago Press. 1971. £8.65. SKIDMORE, THOMAS E.: "Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964 - an Experiment in Democracy". Oxford University Press. 1969. £1.40. POLOMKA, PETER: "Indonesia since Sukarno". Penguin Press. 1972. 40p. PEARCE COMMISSION REPORT, Cmnd. 492. Available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 49 High Holborn, London W.C.1. £1.20. PENG MING-MIN: "A Taste of Freedom". Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1972. \$6.95. (The autobiography of a Taiwanese political leader, describing his imprisonment, subsequent escape and the help he got from Amnesty).

POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

News of Prisoners who have been on the Campaign

Vladimir SKUTINA - Czechoslovakia (April 1971): He is reported to be seriously ill. Please renew your appeals on his behalf by writing to the Minister of Justice (Jan Nemeč), whose address is: Praha - Mala Strana, Nabrezi Kpt. Jarose 4, Czechoslovakia.

Oto FILIP - Czechoslovakia (October 1970): He is reported to have been re-arrested, but no further details are known.

Ludek PACHMAN - Czechoslovakia (October 1969): He was tried in Prague on May 4 and 5 on charges of subversion, slandering the Republic, incitement and preparing a felony. He got a two-year sentence, but was allowed to go free because of his poor health and the 18 months he had already spent on remand.

Domingos Antonio Mascarenhas AROUCA - Portugal (July 1971): Dr Arouca conducted a hunger strike from June 19 - 21 as a protest against his continued detention. Please send postcards expressing support and again requesting his release to: Dr Marcelo Caetano, Presidente do Conselho, Lg. Cortes, Lisboa 2, Portugal.

Carlos Alberto Libanio CHRISTO O.P. - Brazil (May 1972): He took part in a seven-day hunger strike (starting May 11) in Presidio Tiradentes, a Sao Paulo prison. It was organised because five political prisoners were transferred to another gaol used for ordinary offenders. Their companions feared they might be killed - prisoners are known to have disappeared in this way. Archbishop Arns was not allowed to mediate for the prisoners, but an assurance was given that all the political prisoners would be housed together and could be visited by their families. Although this hunger strike ended, news has just come of another one that started on June 10 in both Presidio Tiradentes and Casa de Detencao (also in Sao Paulo) because the authorities did not keep their word. Again, Carlos Christo is a participant.

His letters from prison have just been published in Italian in Rome, consequently the Brazilian authorities have initiated fresh proceedings against him. The book may be translated into other languages. Information about it can be obtained from: IDO-C, Via S. Maria dell/Anima, 30 (Piano III), 00186 Roma, Italy.

This Month's Prisoners:-

Gareeb alla El ANSARI - Sudan

Gareeb alla El Ansari was arrested shortly after last year's attempted coup. On July 19, 1971, an army-led coup, supported by a section of the Sudanese Communist Party, managed temporarily to overthrow General Numeiry's regime. Two days later, a successful counter-coup was staged by pro-Numeiry troops. After Numeiry had regained power, numerous Communists and their associates were arrested, and, by August, several thousand were in detention. Since then, there have been regular releases, but several hundred are said still to be detained without charge or trial.

Gareeb alla El Ansari had been Permanent Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Planning until March 1971, when he resigned in order to become a lecturer at Khartoum University. He belonged to the Sudanese Union of University Lecturers, but was not a Communist Party member, and there is no evidence that he had prior knowledge of the Anti-Numeiry coup. When it occurred, he was in Europe, and he did not return until after the counter-coup. He was arrested on arrival in Khartoum, and has been held without trial ever since. Two of his brothers have got 10 and 20-year sentences, and his wife is also in detention. Please send your cards to: General Gaafar El Numeiry, President of the Sudanese Republic, Khartoum, Sudan; and to: General Mohamed Bakr Ahmed, Minister of the Interior, Khartoum, Sudan.

Manuel Martins PEDRO - Portugal

Manuel Martins Pedro, an insurance worker and Communist Party official, has been in prison three times. The first two sentences totalled five years seven months. After his latest arrest in May 1969, he got six years four months, plus "Security Measures" (preventative detention which can be imposed at the authorities' discretion for from six months to two years).

Portugal is a one-party state in which membership of the Communist Party is illegal. The Moscow-orientated Portuguese Communist Party is generally conservative, working within the system rather than aiming at violent revolution. There was no evidence that Pedro had advocated or engaged in violence, so he was adopted by Amnesty in July 1969.

Amnesty groups have helped Pedro's epileptic wife and three children, two of whom are in poor health. Pedro's own health has gravely deteriorated over the years, and many of his ailments appear to be due to his treatment in prison and during interrogation. On February 2 this year, he was admitted to the prison hospital of Sao Joao de Deus in Caxias as an emergency case, suffering from haemorrhage due to a perforated stomach ulcer.

As he has already served half his sentence, he is eligible for conditional release. Please write urging that he be let out on health grounds to: Dr Marcelo Caetano, Presidente do Conselho, Lg. Cortes, Lisboa 2, Portugal; and to: Director, Cadeia do Forte de Caxias, Caxias, Portugal.

SALIH BIN ABDULLAH Aulag - People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

Salih bin Abdullah was the naib (deputy governor) of the Upper Aulaqi sultanate, and the Sultan's grandson. He is one of several prominent people connected with the pre-independence regime who have been in prison without trial since their arrest by the National Liberation Front at the time of independence (November 30, 1967), or, in some cases, since before independence when the country was still a British Protectorate but NLF forces had already seized control of various provinces.

Shortly after independence, a State Security Supreme Court was established to "hear cases prejudicial to the interests of the people and the revolution under the leadership of the NLF, as well as cases detrimental to the security and safety of the Republic and the Revolution". It was decreed that "there shall be brought before the court the accused rulers of the defunct era of Sultans, Ministers and agents and elements of sabotage or anti-revolutionary elements." In fact, only the Federal Ministers and two relatively unimportant officials have been tried (some in absentia). They got 10 - 15-year sentences.

Salih bin Abdullah has three younger brothers, all now in prison. One was Minister of Finance. In 1968, he received a 15-year sentence. Another had been Commander of the Upper Aulaqi Federal Guard. The third was only a schoolboy at the time of independence. Some of the brothers are believed to have resisted the NLF seizure of Nisab, capital of their sultanate. This took place some weeks before independence while they were still the constituted authorities.

The brothers' situation may well now be more dangerous than before. In June 1969, an extreme faction of the NLF came to power and has taken a very harsh line with right wingers. For instance, according to Radio Aden, 18 political prisoners were recently "ambushed by nationalist elements whilst on their way to trial". Opponents of the regime claim that they were shot by the authorities as a reprisal for the increased attacks by exiles along the Saudi Arabian border.

Cards urging the immediate trial or release of this prisoner should go to: Mr Abdul Fattah ISMAIL, Secretary General of the National Liberation Front, Aden, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.