air
amnesty international review

A Quarterly Review of news and comment on international human rights

Number 22
February 1968
One Shilling

Human Rights Year in Rhodesia

A Correspondent recently in Rhodesia writes:

More than two years have now passed since the illegal seizure of independence by the Rhodesian Front government. Salisbury has, until recently, been the scene of optimistic speculation kept alight by the continuous comings and goings and by gossip; for this is all that Rhodesian citizens hear apart from government statements, propaganda fed to the R.T.V./R.B.C. and to government newspapers and the murmurings of the "Free" Press, still muzzled by censorship.

"Law and Order" have been maintained. Despite and even on account of all the pressures, external and internal, the government has succeeded in uniting the European community to such an extent that it can now confidently implement the segregationist measures which are progressively leading Rhodesia to apartheid, South African style.

There are Europeans still sympathetic to the African nationalist cause; there were others who, given another lead, might have followed it. Most of these have only expressed their views by subscribing to "pressure groups" or petitions. There seems to be an almost united front against Britain, the U.N., the O.A.U., the "terrorists" and Rhodesia's African nationalists. Ordinary civil rights remain suspended and are being further suppressed by "illegal" legislation. Opposition consists of gestures of disapproval rather than of fundamental or constructive policy.

"The Iron Grip of the Regime"

The Africans have been waiting, maybe for intervention from outside, maybe for the inevitably closer alignment of Rhodesia with South Africa. The continuing State of Emergency gives the authorities a free hand. Efficient security forces, reinforced and penetrated with personnel from South Africa, oversee urban and rural communities. There are plenty of sources of information, for example a chief or headman who is a paid civil servant subordinate to a District Commissioner, or a deserting nationalist, possibly himself broken by questioning and later planted in detention to

inform on his fellows. The government continues to impose "Community Development" programmes through non-representative councils of chiefs and headmen. Rural Africans are confused by the paraphernalia of courses, demonstrations, etc., when these are introduced by the same authorities who remove their uncles and brothers.

Africans in Rhodesia have been accused of apathy by outsiders who do not realise how firm is the iron grip of the regime and how impossible it is to organise even passive resistance. The government continues to justify its policies and actions by invoking a mythical sense of security, appreciation of "justice" and "civilised standards" and a state of contentment that might be attributable to a well kept stable of horses.

According to recent figures there are still approximately 120 persons in indefinite detention and approximately 400 in restriction for periods of one to five years; a handful of these are women. There are several thousand prisoners convicted under the wide-sweeping Law and Order Maintenance Act, including more than a hundred who have been awaiting execution for two years or more. A small number of detained persons has been allowed to leave the country. During 1967 several Europeans were declared prohibited immigrants and recent legislation empowers the authorities to deprive of their citizenship those who have adopted it to work in Rhodesia.

Increasing Severity of Restriction and Detention

The situation of the detained and restricted nationalists and that of their families, whatever their material circumstances, is illustrative of the attitude of the government to Africans in general. Conditions in detention and restriction have become steadily more severe during 1966 and 1967. Recently the statutory Review Tribunal, which only applies to detainees, reviewed all cases of detention: it recommended that three men be released, into restriction. In Gonakudzingwa Restriction Area, restrictees have been re-sorted into four camps: the two main camps are thoroughly fenced and closely guarded; inter-camp contact and communication with the outside world is only possible via the police; supplies are basic and facilities minimal; the authorities seem incapable of maintaining a proper medical service; most wives may only visit their husbands for a four-hour interview once or twice a year and administrative obstacles make visits difficult for them and even for the permitted quota of pastors.

Restrictees are being released when their terms expire, but there are several hundred men with two or more years to serve and others join them all the time. A "Rehabilitation Committee" continues to try to persuade the nationalists to change their ideas; it takes a special interest in "advising" their families and even in deciding the remissions policy for their children's school fees; it finds jobs for some of those released (26 were placed in jobs in 1966).

Once released, restrictees are unlikely to find employment. Government departments tend to discharge them unconditionally; private employers regard them as a liability. Released men are constantly watched and may even be prevented from going to join their families in rural areas.

Economic Hardship of Prisoners' Families

Whether for reasons of political or economic expediency, or for administrative convenience, the government has still not recognised the special circumstances created for families by detention and restriction. Applicants for assistance are treated like any other case of need. Economic pressures have compelled the Ministry of Social Welfare to reduce its case load; the rules of "destitution" and "effective urbanisation" are harshly applied. Remission of school fees still operates in government schools only: most African children attend mission schools and have no alternative if a family has been forced to return to a rural district. An increased burden falls on local authorities and on voluntary agencies able to help.

The extent of material hardship among the families of detainees and restrictees varies. Some wives have professional occupations; others work unskilled or part-time; most are unemployed. Great hardship faces those who earn little or nothing and remain in town for lack of rural relatives who can support them. Rural families can manage at subsistence level in a year of good rainfall, but there are exceptions: there may be no male relative to help with ploughing; successive droughts may have depleted stock (cattle represents capital); local rainfall may have been insufficient; the family may have depended on cash sent from the breadwinner's earnings in town.

Those whose husbands have been detained for long periods face considerable moral and psychological problems. Their husbands may have been men of position and the family used to a high standard of living. They themselves are often well-educated, qualified, and specially aware of the implications of the current situation. They must provide a living for the family in a time of rising costs; they must bear all the family responsibilities; they have little or no contact with their husbands. Isolated, within a separate community, their own future and that of their children seems hopeless.

It is difficult to be other than pessimistic for the foreseeable future in Rhodesia. The Christian Council of Rhodesia and other local agencies plan to continue their aid schemes through a new organisation, Christian Care, which has been formed to encourage co-ordination between church and other voluntary agencies engaged in social and educational work. The material and moral support shown to Rhodesia's "political prisoners" and to their families has been of tremendous importance to them, and has been greatly appreciated by many sections of the communities in Rhodesia. There will remain complications and frustrations, nor is it possible to measure the success of the relief schemes. Far more real, and lasting, is the experience of human contact and the hope that this brings to thousands.

The Amnesty that never happened

The abuse of human rights in Greece remains one of AMNESTY'S *main concerns. In a fast-changing situation it is difficult, if not impossible, to forecast the turn of events but we continue to collect new information and keep pace with events. We hope to be able to provide further facts shortly; in the meantime we summarise here the fact and fiction of the Christmas "amnesty".*

The large-scale amnesty for Greek political prisoners announced by Prime Minister Papodopoulos on December 23rd received immediate and widespread press publicity. In London, *The Sunday Times* of December 24th declared under the heading "Theodorakis, Papandreou freed in Greek Amnesty" that the terms of the amnesty would bring freedom to "many if not most of the 2,500 prisoners held since April in the Greek islands as well as to Mikis Theodorakis, the composer, and others like him who are alleged to have been engaged in subversive activities". Already the former Prime Ministers, Constantine Kanellopoulos and George Papandreou had been released from house arrest and 22 politicians, most of them Centre Union Deputies, had returned from the island of Syros. Andreas Papandreou and Mikis Theodorakis could not apparently be released until the publication of the amnesty decree dismissing the charges against them, but the world was assured that both would be released. When asked specifically about Theodorakis, Mr. Papodopoulos replied: "Yes, yes! He will even write a song for the revolution". Also to be included in the amnesty were the ASPIDA officers sentenced in February 1967 for allegedly plotting a military coup d'état.

Retraction and Confusion

The very next day, a headline in the *New York Herald Tribune*: "Widespread Greek Amnesty stumbles over its first step" made it clear that the situation had changed. According to an A.P. report Colonel Ioannis

Ladas, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Public Order, had given another press conference to announce that the amnesty covered only 300 people. What the Prime Minister had meant, according to Colonel Ladas, was that those involved in the ASPIDA case and those who "had not committed crimes" would be freed. Those on the island of Yioura and Leros would be spending next summer there.

For the next few days there was confusion. Neither the Prime Minister nor his deputy Brigadier Pattakos were available—both were away visiting the troops in Macedonia and Thrace. In Athens, Cedric Thornberry writing in *The Guardian* of the "tragic farce for Greek prisoners" described how members of the crowd gathering outside the Averoff prison, among them prisoners' relatives, were arrested by a totally confused police force, while at the security headquarters in Bouboulinas Street the parents of a 20-year-old girl, Dora Constantinidou, were told by an official that he knew nothing of any amnesty. Prisoners' families had to wait until December 28th and the publication of a second amnesty law, to learn that those judged "dangerous to public order and security" and those with two previous convictions of over 6 months' imprisonment were not, after all, to be released and that Colonel Ladas's announcement was substantially correct. Those who were victims of "administrative deportation" to Yioura and Leros were also excluded.

2,500 Prisoners Remain

It seems that over Christmas 86 people were released. The main beneficiaries were the Centre Union politicians from Syros and a military camp outside Athens (except for one M.P. against whom Colonel Ladas is said to have a personal vendetta), Andreas Papandreou and the ASPIDA officers, and a number of people who had been awaiting trial for offences against the military authorities. Thirty-six detainees also came back from Yioura and Leros, but since all had signed the Junta's "Declaration of Loyalty" their release may not have been connected with the amnesty. Mikis Theodorakis and the 2,500 unsentenced detainees on the Aegean islands—hundreds of whom have tubercular trouble—remain prisoners.

The fact that the Prime Minister's announcement about such an important issue can be countermanded by one of his subordinates is an obvious indication of internal disunity within the present Greek government. Further, it is a measure of the continuing strength within the government of the group of extremist junior officers active in the original coup last April. It is nevertheless significant that senior members of the government should, at any stage, have been prepared to grant an amnesty as widespread as that originally announced. Whether or not this was the result of pressure by foreign governments who withdrew official recognition of the regime after the disappearance of King Constantine, or a wish to placate public opinion inside Greece and abroad, or a genuine desire to return to constitutional government and the rule of law, it does show that the most senior faction within the government accepts the need to relax restrictions and release the political prisoners.

For most prisoners and their families the abortive amnesty can only have meant bitter disappointment and increasing scepticism. Yet the real possibility that the original announcement was a reaction to international public opinion may perhaps encourage AMNESTY members in their belief that even the most dictatorial of governments is sensitive to external pressure.

STEPHANIE GRANT

200 Russian Baptists Imprisoned for their faith

During the last few weeks the world press has been full of the news about the imprisonment of Soviet writers who are demanding both greater freedom of expression and a closer regard by the judiciary for the existing laws. It is much less widely known that various religious groups in the U.S.S.R. have been making virtually identical demands—and they have had to take

200 Russian Baptists Imprisoned for their Faith (continued)

similar punishment for doing so. Yet it is probably true to say that we have more detailed information about the latter than about any other oppressed group in the country. We not only have a detailed knowledge of the evolution of these demands, but also have a considerable knowledge of the judicial processes instituted against them and of the prison conditions to which they have been subjected after being sentenced.

The campaign for new policies in the religious sphere has been led by a group of Baptists, but is not confined to them. It is not known for certain how many of the half-million Baptists support the reform movement, but the most active seem to have influenced members of the much larger Orthodox Church (numbering at least 30 million) and there are signs that the Roman Catholic Church is also affected. Most significantly this is a youth movement. We know the age of 171 of the 200 Baptists in prison at the moment, of whom only one-third are over the age of 45. The two instigators of the demand for constitutional legality in the State's attitude to the Orthodox Church are both in their thirties.

We shall here concentrate on the Baptists, both because we know more about them and because it is they who have been the principal object of state pressure since the fall of Khrushchev. It cannot be too emphatically stated, however, that there are also representatives of other religious minority groups in prison for their faith as well as some Orthodox priests and bishops remaining from the time of the Khrushchev "purge" against religion.

We cannot here go into the history of the Baptist reform movement,* but what we wish to point out is the detailed knowledge now available of the present situation. The new information is contained in two long documents, extracts from which were printed at the end of 1967 in *The Observer* (November 19th), *The Times* (December 12th—an excellent article by Peter Reddaway) and the *Church Times* (December 29th). Plans are afoot to publish the full texts and they will be announced in AIR as soon as details are known.

As a sampling of the detail contained in these documents, here is an account of what one prisoner, Pavel Overchuk, was subjected to, merely because he insisted on keeping up his religious devotions in prison.

> "I was put into the *shizo* because I had prayed to God and had been talking about God to other prisoners. Thus, instead of the visit which was due to me, and which I had not had for five months (I was also deprived of food parcels), they put me in the *shizo*, where I spent Easter and the May holiday (April 26th to May 6th, 1967).
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> "What is the *shizo* like? It is a cell without windows, light or air, about 14-16 square yards in area. Electric light filters in from the corridor through a Judas-window with a narrow grille. In such a cell, deprived of air and light, about 12-15 or more people are crowded, after they have had their warm clothes, handkerchiefs and bedding taken away from them. In such a cell one has to sleep on the wooden floor, either crouching or sitting.
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> "During the ten-day period of confinement the cell is not opened to be aired and the prisoners may not leave the room for a single moment, not even to attend to their physical needs. Food is served in a trough —a pound of black bread, a pint of boiling water and on the next day a bit of tasteless, cold food with no fat (the ration for five days is less than what a normal prisoner eats in one day).
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> "One asks whether such actions stopped me praying to God. On the contrary, I value all the more the divine gifts of air and light, and have seen the baseness of atheistic influence, which is not an ideological struggle with believers but is purposefully designed to destroy them physically."

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* See *Religious Ferment in Russia: Protestant Opposition to Soviet Religious Policy*, by Michael Bourdeaux (to be published by Macmillan in February 1968 at 42s.). This book contains the full text of every document available to the author up to June 1967 and gives details of all prisoners known up to that time.

Most articles published in the Soviet press on the "dissident" Baptists claim that they have been imprisoned only because they have broken the existing laws on religion. None of these points out that the laws are so spongy as to make almost any religious activity punishable, if the whim so takes the authorities. The constitutional guarantee of "freedom of religion" exists on paper only. Technically, any religious group has the right to exist if it is prepared to accept Soviet legislation. In practice, those Baptists (very many of them young people) who have insisted on not worshipping with those of their co-religionists who are prepared to accept the State's conditions are being indiscriminately punished by heavy fines or imprisonment. The situation has become so out of hand that even some Soviet atheist writers have publicly protested at the illegal application of "administrative measures" to the reformers. A. I. Klibanov and L. N. Mitrokhin recently wrote: "On the other hand, one must condemn various types of attempt at administrative interference in the life of religious congregations and every sort of unqualified local activity which has been giving rise to a feeling of just indignation on the part of believers." (*Questions of Scientific Atheism*, Vol. 3, pp. 109-10.)

This "just indignation" has now fully reached Western ears—and it should find just as much sympathy as Sinyavsky, Daniel and Galanskov have evoked. It may be some time yet before Soviet citizens are able to express open admiration for AMNESTY's work, yet it is evident that there will be sympathy for it even in the least corrupted sections of the Communist Party itself.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

U.S. Government Tightens Draft Laws

A week after the October 21st Washington demonstration in which an estimated 100,000 protesters marched from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon—the culmination of a nation-wide "Stop the Draft" week organised by a coalition of some hundred draft resistance and anti-Vietnam groups—the Director of the Selective Service, General Hershey, issued an ill-advised memorandum to all local draft boards. He recommended that they should be responsible for the immediate induction into the army of all students who, in any way, physically interfere with campus recruitment activities of the military service. This was seen as a direct retaliation against the draft obstruction movement. In recent months this has mushroomed throughout the country, particularly on campuses where young men of draft age have organised hard cores of resistance, staged sit-ins, burned or returned draft cards and picketed the induction centres.

The Hershey statement released a barrage of moral and legal protest from university presidents, congressmen and civil libertarians. They were relying on the 1967 U.S. Court of Appeal's upholding of the principle that "free expression of views of critical national importance" must be permitted, and "it was not a function of the local draft boards to reclassify young men for immediate induction because they protested against the Government's involvement in Vietnam".

Convictions and Sentences Increase

On December 9th, the White House, with General Hershey as a nominal signatory, issued a second statement announcing the creation of a special unit of the Justice Department to ensure prompt prosecution for violation of Selective Service laws and statutes. It assured the Ivy League colleges that draft boards would not be able to use the induction process as a punitive measure for demonstrators. This in effect specifically contradicted the General's earlier recommendations.

The second announcement was clearly prompted by the recent government disclosure that more young men were prosecuted and convicted last year for draft violations than in any year since the Second World War. 952 persons were convicted in 1967 compared to 536 in the previous year. Violations of the Selective Service laws cover a wide range of activities,

from refusal to co-operate with the draft board and failure to report for induction to non-possession of a draft card. (Last year the Supreme Court ruled that draft-card burning was a legitimate expression of protest.) The maximum sentence for any violation of the Selective Service Act is 5 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 dollars. Statistics show that longer prison sentences were given last year: in October 1967 Clifton Haywood, a 24-year-old Black Muslim from Atlanta, Georgia, was given the penalty of two consecutive 5-year sentences and two 10,000 dollar fines. This was the heaviest sentence given to a draft violator since World War I and has so far curiously escaped mention in the national press.

Leaders Indicted

Early in January 1968 the government, following its proposals for a new crack-down on draftable demonstrators, made a move in the direction of the older leaders of the war resistance movement. A grand jury in Boston indicted five well-known intellectuals and opponents of the war. They included Dr. Benjamin Spock, the famous pediatrician, William Coffin, the Yale University chaplain and Marcus Raskin, the author. It marks the first time that charges of "incitement to violate the Selective Service laws" have been brought against persons aiding and abetting the draft resistance, and they have seemingly been brought under considerable pressure from the military and its supporters. Conviction carries the same maximum penalty as other violations of the Act. No date has yet been set for the trial but it promises to become a *cause célèbre* which will, inevitably, bring the maximum public attention to the issues of the morality of the war and the interpretation of the Bill of Rights clause protecting the individual's freedom of speech.

Already a general academic strike is threatened as a national protest against the indictment. General Hershey is reported to have said on hearing the indictment, "I couldn't be better satisfied. This is awful good news."

SARAH RICHARDSON

Economic Development and Human Rights

An Extract from Amnesty's Human Rights Day Lecture

On December 10th, 1967, Victor Reuther delivered AMNESTY's *inaugural Human Rights Day Lecture. Mr. Reuther is Director of the International Affairs Department of the United Automobile Workers of America and an Honorary Chairman of the American Section of* AMNESTY. *In his Lecture he placed the issue of human rights in its historical and international context and analysed the role of* AMNESTY *now and in the future. In this brief extract, Mr. Reuther examines the influence of economic underdevelopment in Asia, Africa and Latin America on the liberty of the individual.*

I am hardly the first to have noted that man's history is not, unhappily, a straight-line march from the peat bogs to John Stuart Mill. While it may be obvious that the physical and civil condition of man is now generally superior to what it was in any time past, it is far from obvious that this condition will necessarily improve through the remainder of this century. I am familiar with the dangers of extrapolating future trends from even the recent past, but if the long-faced gentlemen with computers who project population totals into the future are even *half*-right, the world is due for a shattering Malthusian confrontation within what is left of the average lifetime. I have no wish to argue its intensity, dimensions, or outcome—nor even the many ways in which, theoretically, it might be blunted or avoided altogether. It does seem clear, however, that the next several decades will find most of the world—but especially that two-thirds of it still locked inside traditionalist economies—in a constant subsistence crisis which must, inevitably, express itself in constant political and social upheaval and tension. The thrust and shape of things to come are concealed in the murk of unpredictability, but one thing in the murk *is* discernible, and that is a sharply rising need for AMNESTY's care-taking of human rights.

Economic Development and Human Rights

I intend neither offence nor condescension in suggesting that an impending subsistence crisis in Asia, Africa and South America is likely to produce human rights casualties in sharply increased number. The responses of desperation have no known ethnic or geographical peculiarities. For that matter, it is next to improbable that the developed world can remain immune to the afflictions of that two-thirds of the globe which is already entering into a population crisis. And even if this *were* possible—and conceding that the condition of man, both materially and in terms of the health of human rights, is perhaps best in the liberal democracies of the North Atlantic world—it is by no means certain that this condition is permanent. There persists in American attitudes (and, one gathers, in British attitudes as well—although doubtless to a less marked degree) a usually submerged but, in crisis periods, potentially powerful component of opinion which is not only illiberal, irrational, intolerant and paranoid, but capable of doing serious damage to the essential fabric of our society if thrust into power.

Serious damage, indeed, may be done by the repressive authority even short of the outright assumption of power. The Sacco-Vanzetti case in the United States is but the most publicised of many instances in which the passion, hysteria or intolerance of the moment has infected the judiciary itself. The shameful McCarthy era produced hundreds upon hundreds of instances of violations of individual rights of speech and opinion by the very agencies of government whose duty it was to safeguard the Constitution. The mere possession of democratic institutions and of laws protective of human rights is not, unhappily, a guarantee that the institutions will forever perform democratically or the laws be scrupulously observed. In highly organised and structured societies, moreover, there is the constant danger of corruption of due process through the usurpation of quasi-judicial powers by administrative agencies. The man who is denied employment or discharged for holding views, or having associations unpopular with this agency or that, suffers a violation of his rights which is often more severe in its consequences than any punishment which might be visited upon him by the authorised court.

No society is ever so inextricably welded to constitutionality and respect for freedom to dissent that it cannot—in that instant reshuffling of traditional values which is presumed a threat to the national security seems always to bring about—find a justifying gloss for doing violence to individual rights. It must be the eternal and passionate dedication of AMNESTY to keep the candles of personal liberties burning against the gales of nationalist expediency.

But if not even the presumptively "developed" nations, several of which now have extensive histories of studied respect for human rights, are permanently immune to repudiation of the very essence of their traditions, it should hardly surprise us that nations barely emergent, and still in the process of creating a collective identity, should produce regimes inclined to equate dissent with treason and disposed to strangle deviant utterance as a "threat to the national security". Many of the developing nations are, indeed, under a "security threat" every moment of their existences, scrabbling for the very tools of subsistence, traditionalist, economically at the mercy of trivial shifts in world trade or prices, humiliatingly dependent on the help of others, yet flushed with nationalist pride and hopes of quick emergence into modernity. Yet many will remain so for decades to come, their governing groups under persistent interior challenge and subject to frequent change. All of which spells trouble for human rights—and work for AMNESTY.

AIR is published by Amnesty International, Turnagain Lane, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 (telephone: 01-236 0111/3) and printed by Social Service Supplies Ltd., Witham Essex