

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## POSTCARDS FOR PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

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May 1969

News of people who have previously been on the Campaign:

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, South Africa (June 1965) was one of the three prisoners with whom this scheme was initiated. The South African authorities have announced their intention to release Robert Sobukwe from Robben Island, 'subject to such restrictions as may be necessary for the security of the state.' We cannot tell how much freedom Mr Sobukwe will have until the details of the restrictions on his liberty are known, but at least it is to be hoped that he will be re-united with his family.

Eustaquio Tolosa, Argentina (July 1967), the prominent trade union leader, was released in January 1969.

Adem Demaci, Yugoslavia (April 1968) is reported to have been released. This is surprising in view of recent nationalist outbursts of violence in the province where he lived.

Demetrio Vallejo Martinez, Mexico (December 1966). Following an appeal to the Supreme Court his 16-year sentence has been reduced to 11 years and 4 months. His sentence is thus due to expire on October 8th, 1974. However, since he has served more than two-thirds of his sentence he could now be granted 'provisional liberty'. This might well be a good time to renew appeals on his behalf, particularly as a Parliamentary Committee is at present reviewing the Penal Code. Cards should be sent to: Su. Exelencia Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, Presidente de Mexico, Palacio Presidencial, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico D.F.

Telo de Mascarenhas, Portugal (September 1966). Mohan Ranade who, apart from de Mascarenhas, was the only remaining Goan imprisoned in Portugal, was released at the beginning of this year. A campaign has been initiated for the release of Dr de Mascarenhas who is now seventy years old and in poor health. Members are asked to renew their appeals on his behalf, sending cards to: The Prime Minister, Dr Marcello Caetano, Presidencia do Conselho, Largo Cortes, Lisboa 2, Portugal.

Edouard Chapuis, Malagasy Republic (March 1969). Several members have received letters from M. Chapuis expressing his gratitude for their moral support. He also writes of himself that he is 48 years old and has a Malgache wife.

Jusu Sheriff, Sierra Leone (December 1968). Many members have received personal letters from Mr Sheriff thanking them for their action on his behalf. Although at present out on bail he still faces charges and is awaiting trial.

Howard Levy, U.S.A. (July 1967). Dr Levy has entered the last stage of the legal proceedings by which, since his court-martial in June 1967,

he has been appealing against different aspects of his 3-year sentence. None of these appeals has been successful; he has even been denied parole despite very strong arguments and precedents in his favour. His sentence was finally confirmed at the last step of the intra-military appeals procedure in January this year. He was then released from the armed forces and transferred to the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, Pennsylvania. His lawyer writes: "He has been incarcerated longer than most prisoners accused of the crime of rape or murder on comparable sentence terms but apparently the government has decided they must keep him in jail beyond the parole period." If Dr Levy continues to earn credit for 'good time' his sentence may expire in August this year; but legal procedures are still under way seeking his earlier release.

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These are this month's prisoners:

Patrick Peter Ooko, Kenya

Patrick Peter Ooko was arrested on August 4th 1966 under the Preservation of Public Security Act and has been detained without trial ever since. This law gives the President powers to detain without trial, restrict movement, impose censorship, prohibit meetings, ban societies, etc. It was passed in June 1966 and was followed by the arrest of numbers of Kenya Peoples Party (KPU) supporters, among them most of the Kenyan trade union leaders. Of those arrested in 1966 only two now remain in detention and Ooko is the only trade unionist. (New arrests have, however, brought the numbers in detention up to 30.)

A single man in his late twenties Ooko was, before his arrest, secretary-general of the East African Common Services African Union (the civil servants union in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya) and was considered one of the ablest trade unionists in Kenya. He was a supporter of Oginga Odinga, the Opposition leader, and organising secretary of the Nairobi branch of the KPU.

The Central Organisation of Trade Unions in Kenya (COTU), formed to co-ordinate the activities of all trade unions, was continually torn by disagreement between the Western-oriented and left-wing groups. In the autumn of 1965 those trade union leaders who supported the KPU broke away to form a new body, the Kenya Workers Congress. This, the government alleged, was a focus for political rather than trade union activity and accused it of receiving money from Odinga for political ends. A number of strikes, said by the government to be politically motivated, took place. The arrest of trade union leaders involved in these strikes appears to have been an attempt to break the KPU domination of certain unions.

Ooko does not seem to have been involved in any anti-government conspiracy, nor to have had any association with violence. He was the only one of the trade union leaders arrested to attempt to challenge the legality of his detention by bringing an action against the Kenyan government in the first half of 1967. He appeared in a lower court, his plea was dismissed and no appeal to a higher authority allowed. The government alleged that Ooko had received money from foreign sources and used this for political purposes in the trade union movement. No specific evidence was produced to substantiate either of these two charges and in any case there is no law in Kenya prohibiting a person from overseas either for personal



or organisational purposes. (The official Kenya trade union movement and many of its leaders have often received money from abroad which was used for the movement.)

Ooko has been adopted by two Amnesty groups who are paying for him to take a correspondence course in law and also helping to support his mother and younger brother who were dependent in him. Ooko, who is a Roman Catholic, belongs to the Luo tribe and comes from Nyanza. While prison conditions are believed to be fairly good it is known that the political detainees were held in solitary confinement for at least two years. We do not know whether this is still the case.

Cards appealing for the release of Ooko, the last trade union leader still in detention, should be sent to:

EITHER

The Attorney General,  
Mr Charles Njonjo,  
State Law Office,  
Harambee Avenue,  
P.O. Box 112,  
Nairobi, Kenya.

OR

The Kenyan High Commissioner or  
Diplomatic Representative in your own  
country: if there is none to -  
H.E. Mr Burudi Nabwera,  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipoten-  
tiary, Permanent Representative to U.N.,  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of  
Kenya to the United Nations,  
886 United Nations Plaza, Room 486,  
New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Narciso JULIAN Sanz, Spain

Sr. Julian, a 56-year old railway worker from Barcelona, has been in prison continuously since 1954. A pro-Russian Communist he fought with the Republicans in the Civil War. After their defeat in 1939 he was sentenced to death, but this sentence was commuted first to 30 and subsequently to 20 years imprisonment. Later, benefitting from the 1954 Decree granting partial amnesties, he was released in 1946. (However this Decree contained a clause that in the event of a further political conviction the remitted sentence would have to be served in full.)

The Spanish Communist Party, which is banned, at this time pursued a policy of non-violent opposition to the government. Leaders were trained abroad - either in France or Russia - in methods of organising cells, strikes and peaceful protests among the workers. After such a period of training Sr Julian returned to Spain

In 1954 he was arrested on two charges involving just such political activity. The first trial took place in 1955, Sr Julian being sentenced to 21 years imprisonment. Because of this conviction the remission of his earlier sentence was revoked. The case involving the second charge was heard in 1956 and this time he was sentenced to 20 years. The whole case is extremely complex. Although his sentence has been reduced several times, Sr Julian still has a number of years to serve. All attempts by his lawyer, Sr. Rodriguez - a well-known Madrid lawyer - to have him released on grounds of ill health have failed so far. Sr. Julian suffers from a deteriorating spinal condition and from arthritis with the result that at times he is confined to a wheelchair. This prevents his earning remission of sentence by undertaking work in prison. He has been moved from prison in Madrid to Almeria which has made it more difficult for friends and family to visit him.

The Minister of Information and Tourism, The Minister of Justice,  
Fraga Iribarne, S. Ex. Don Antonio Maria Oriol  
S. Ex. Don Manuel Fraga y Iribarne, Yurquijo,  
Ministerio de Informacion y Turismo, Ministerio de Justicia,  
Avenida de Generalisimo 39, Madrid,  
Madrid. Spain.

Janusz Szpotanski, Poland

Janusz Szpotanski, aged 35 and described as a literary historian, literary critic, amateur song writer and translator, was reported in February 1968 to have been sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on charges of 'spreading false information on political, economic and social relations in Poland of a nature to harm the authority and prestige of the state.' He was also fined 500 Polish Zlotys.

Information about the case is rather sparse because the trial, which lasted a week, was held in secret. However, the basic reason for Szpotanski's imprisonment is that he composed a satirical operetta called "Cisi y Gegacze" - which has been translated as "The Silent, and the Honkers". The operetta which has never been performed in public is reported to have satirised Polish leaders, including Mr Gomulka, the Party leader and the Archbishop of Warsaw, Cardinal Wyszynski. Szpotanski was sentenced under the so-called Small Penal Code introduced in 1946 and intended to deal with the post-war reconstruction period only. Under this Code anyone disseminating alleged false information or other material deemed detrimental to state interests is liable to a sentence of at least 3 years imprisonment. The defence lawyers are reported to have argued that the law dealt only with information and that a writer engaged in literary work cannot be charged with spreading false information.

Cards should be sent to:

EITHER

Wladyslaw Gomulka,  
First Secretary of the Polish  
United Workers Party,  
Ul. Nowy Swiat,  
Warszawa, Poland.

OR

Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwosci P.R.L.,  
Warszawa - Leszno,  
Poland.  
(i.e. the Ministry of Justice)

Amnesty International,  
Turnagain Lane,  
Farringdon Street,  
London, E.C.4.