



amnesty

international newsletter

MARCH 1981 Volume XI Number 3

Political killings in Guatemala Presidential agency blamed

Information available to *AI* shows that the long-established government program of extrajudicial killing and torture in Guatemala is run from secret offices in an annex to the National Palace in Guatemala City.

According to that information the task of coordinating civil and military security operations in the political sphere in Guatemala is carried out by a specialized agency under President LUCAS GARCIA's direct supervision.

Information about the agency is included in an *AI* report, *Guatemala: A Government Program of Political Murder*, published on 18 February 1981.

The report also includes transcripts of two unique interviews: the first with a peasant who escaped from an army base the day before he was to have been executed; the second with a former conscript soldier who served as a member of an army plainclothes unit and who described the abduction of civilians who were later tortured and murdered.

Nearly 5,000 Guatemalans have been seized without warrant and killed since General Lucas García became President in 1978. The bodies of the victims have been found piled up in ravines, dumped at roadsides or buried in mass graves. Many bore the marks of torture, and death had come to most by strangling with a garrote, by being suffocated in rubber hoods or by being shot in the head.

In 1980 alone some 3,000 people described by government representatives as "subversives" and "criminals" were either shot on the spot in political assassinations or seized and murdered later, at least 364 others seized in this period have not yet been accounted for.

AI has the names of 615 people reported to have been seized by the security services since July 1978—whose fate remains unknown.

The Guatemalan Government denies having made a single political arrest or holding a single political

prisoner since President Lucas García took office. All abuses are attributed to "independent" paramilitary groups beyond official control—such as the *Escuadrón de la Muerte*, death squad, and the *Ejército Secreto Anticomunista*, secret anti-communist army.

No convincing evidence has been produced that the groups described by the authorities do in fact exist.

AI believes that the abuses attributed by the Guatemalan Government to independent "death squads" are perpetrated by the regular forces of the civil and military security services.

- A number of anti-government guerrilla groups have been operating in Guatemala since 1966 and *AI* is aware that there continue to be armed confrontations between government and guerrilla forces, with lives lost on both sides. However, *AI* does not accept government assertions that all or most killings of the sort described in this report are the result of armed conflict or are the work of agents operating independently and out of the government's control.

AI opposes the torture and execution of prisoners in all cases, whether by government forces or opposition groups.

The latest report from
Amnesty International
● eye-witness accounts

illustrated

GUATEMALA
A government program
of political murder

£2.00

publication date: 18 February 1981
Orders to
Amnesty International Publications
10 Southampton Street, London, UK.

Poland Eight held for 'slandering' state's dignity

Eight people have been arrested and held in preventive detention in Poland since September 1980 for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association.

The first was Leszek MOCZULSKI, historian, lawyer, journalist and leader of an unofficial political group, the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN). His arrest on 23 September followed an interview he gave to the magazine *Der Spiegel*, published in the Federal Republic of Germany on 15 September. In it he described the aims of KPN as being "an independent sovereign Poland, free from Soviet rule and from the totalitarian dictatorship of the Polish United Workers' Party".

He is now in "preliminary" detention on charges of taking part in an organization with criminal objectives and of slandering the dignity of the Polish People's Republic. He is reported to have been refused access to his lawyer since his arrest; his wife and daughter are said to have been allowed to see him for the first time four months after his arrest.

Six other KPN members were later arrested and are being held on similar charges—Krzysztof BZDYŁ, Zygmunt GOLAWSKI, Tadeusz JANDZISZAK, Tadeusz STANSKI, Jerzy SYCHUT and most recently, on 24 January 1981, Romuald SZEREMIEŃ, who reportedly had gone into hiding after the others were arrested.

Wojciech ZIEMBINSKI, a journalist, is also held in "preliminary" detention on similar charges; he is a member of the unofficial Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCIO) and the leader of the unofficial group the Committee for Self-Determination of the Nation.

On 10 December 1980, following the arrest of seven of the above, the independent trade union Solidarity announced the formation of a Committee for the Defence of Prisoners

Continued on back page

China 'Gang of four' death sentences

Death sentences, suspended for two years, were passed on two members of the so-called "gang of four"—JIANG Qing and ZHANG Chunqiao—by a special court in Peking in January 1981.

In a telegram sent after the sentences had been announced on 25 January, *AI* urged the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to exercise its power to recommend commutation of the death sentences.

Eight other defendants, including five military commanders, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, ranging from 16 years to life imprisonment.

In a news release issued on 25 January, *AI* said the proceedings in Peking had failed to meet internationally agreed standards for a fair trial. Of particular concern were:

- the time spent by defendants in detention before being brought to trial—between four and nine years;
- the official assumption from the outset that the defendants were guilty—this was clear from statements by the authorities and from official press reports that attempted to ridicule those being tried;
- the secrecy surrounding the trial, with only selected extracts being published;
- the fact that no defence witnesses were called;

- the fact that the court's verdict was final, with no appeal allowed.

Although it was unable to judge on the validity of some of the charges brought against defendants, *AI* is concerned that a number were purely political, not relating to actions which might reasonably be regarded as criminal.

The trial was given great prominence in the official news media and the government attached great "educational" significance to it. *AI* is concerned that the procedure followed may establish standards for the conduct of other political trials to be held in China in future. According to the country's Chief Procurator—in a statement on 27 September 1980—public prosecution of followers of the "gang of four" would be started in the Supreme People's Court and in local and military courts. Unofficial sources have recently reported that as many as 60 such trials may be held.

- On 13 October 1980 *AI* had written to the Chief Procurator about the then impending trial of the "gang of four". It asked for clarification of the facilities available to the defendants for presenting their case and stressed the principles that trials should be held openly and that accused should be presumed innocent until proved guilty, as laid down in Articles 10 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Fears are growing for the safety of 65-year-old Alaíde FOPPA de Solórzano (above), a professor of Latin American literature at the University of Mexico, who was kidnapped in Guatemala City on 19 December 1980. Her chauffeur, Leocadio AXTUN Chiroy, was kidnapped with her. Nothing has been heard of either since then and it is not known who is holding them.

The Mexican Government has asked the Guatemalan Government for information about Alaíde Foppa, without success. The Guatemalan Government has denied any responsibility for the kidnapping.

In Mexico City a special committee for the kidnapped woman has been formed; it includes supporters outside the country and comprises well known intellectuals, members of the press and government officials.

Alaíde Foppa lived in Mexico with her husband, Alfonzo SOLORZANO, until his death in a car accident in the second half of 1980. He had been in exile from Guatemala since 1954.

As well as teaching at the *Universidad Autónoma de México*, she runs a program for women broadcast by the university's radio station. She also edits a feminist magazine, *Fem*, writes poetry and is the author of a book about the Mexican painter José Luis CUEVAS.

- Alaíde Foppa de Solórzano has been an active member of the Mexican Section of *AI* for several years.

Viet Nam 'Re-education camp' releases

Substantial numbers of prisoners held in "re-education camps" in Viet Nam have been released, according to reports reaching *AI* in late 1980 and early 1981.

The most recent news concerns Nguyen Tran HUYEN, better known as Cao GIAO, a 63-year-old journalist and interpreter who was a prisoner of the month in November 1979. He was released during the celebration of *Tet* (5 February 1981), the Vietnamese New Year, having been detained without trial since June 1978.

Other people known to have been freed since December 1980 include the lawyer Trieu Ba THIEP, arrested in April 1977 after he had signed the

"Declaration of Disinherited Vietnamese on Human Rights", which denounced the government's "re-education" policy; BUU Huong, aged 60, a civil servant and diplomat under the administration of President Nguyen Van THIEU; and Nguyen An THONG, a Supreme Court judge from 1968 to 1975. The last two had been detained without trial since June 1975.

Prisoner releases and cases

The International Secretariat learned in January of the release of 112 prisoners under adoption or investigation; it took up 58 new cases.

DEATH PENALTY

AI has learned of 22 people being sentenced to death in 11 countries and of seven executions in two countries during January 1981.

Campaign for Prisoners of the Month



Each of the people whose story is told below is a prisoner of conscience. Each has been arrested because of his or her religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin or language. None has used or advocated violence. Their continuing detention is a violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International appeals can help to secure the release of these prisoners or to improve their detention conditions. In the interest of the prisoners, letters to the authorities should be worded carefully and courteously. You should stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. In no circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

Saida Botan ELMI, Somalia

A mother of three, she has been detained since 1978 in the women's section of Mogadishu Central Prison.

Saida Botan ELMI, the wife of a former Supreme Court judge, is detained indefinitely under Somalia's National Security Law. The government has issued no statement on her detention—the names of detainees are not published—but she is thought to be held as a reprisal for her husband's flight to Ethiopia shortly before. There he joined the opposition Somali Salvation Front (SOSAF) and has broadcast on its *Radio Kulmis*.

The Somali Government has produced no evidence that Saida Botan Elmi has been involved in any clandestine activities by SOSAF and her detention appears to be an attempt to force her husband to desist from opposition activities.

According to information received by *AI*, she was in an advanced state of pregnancy at the time of her arrest in 1978. She suffered a miscarriage, allegedly after ill-treatment, and she has been in hospital a number of times since because of ill-treatment.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for the release of Saida Botan Elmi to: His Excellency Major General Siyad BARRE, President of the Somali Democratic Republic, President's Office, Mogadishu, Somalia.

Angel CUADRA Landrove, Cuba

A poet and lawyer born in Havana in 1931, he is being held in Boniato Prison, a maximum security prison in Santiago de Cuba.

Angel CUADRA Landrove, whose first book of poems was published just after the Cuban Revolution, was at first a supporter of President Fidel

CASTRO but from the early 1960s he became critical of the country's leadership.

He was arrested in April 1967—he was legal adviser to the Cuban Institute of Musicians, Authors, Actors and Writers at the time—and sentenced in May that year to 15 years' imprisonment, after being convicted of activities against the state.

He was conditionally released for good conduct in December 1976, having served two thirds of his sentence. In March 1977 however his parole was revoked on the grounds that he had violated its conditions—just how was not specified, but *AI* believes it was as a result of a book of his writings being published abroad that year.

He is being held in Boniato Prison, where inmates are reported to have been ill-treated recently—some went on hunger-strike in protest—and conditions are said to be poor; as a result Angel Cuadra's family and friends are concerned for his safety and well-being.

According to Cuba's new penal code, in force since November 1979, people convicted of the offence Angel Cuadra was charged with face a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment (he has now been in prison for 13 years); the Cuban constitution makes it clear that this part of the code should be applied retroactively. However, when Angel Cuadra appealed on this basis to the Supreme Court in 1980 he was turned down.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for his release to:

S.E. Comandante en Jefe, Fidel Castro Ruz, Presidente del Consejo de Estado y del Consejo de Ministros, La Habana, Cuba.

Willybal RUM, Indonesia

A 30-year-old former local government employee, he was arrested in February 1975 in Serui in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya.

Willybal RUM and five others were detained after they had signed and distributed a document known as the "Serui declaration", calling for the independence of Irian Jaya. One of the six, Charles MIRINO, died in detention soon after his arrest. The others—Willybal Rum, Anton TEWA, Sam SATIA, Petrus MOABOAY and Piet PEDAI—were tried in March 1977 on charges of subversion and showing contempt for the head of state, and were sentenced to between five and eight years' imprisonment; Willybal Rum is believed to have been sentenced to eight years'. All were adopted as prisoners of conscience by *AI* in 1977.

In 1962 Irian Jaya, the western part of the island of New Guinea, was ceded by the Dutch to Indonesia, which agreed that its inhabitants could vote on the territory's incorporation into Indonesia. The incorporation was formally ratified in 1969 after a plebiscite, the conduct of which was criticized internationally; its results have been challenged by many inhabitants of Irian Jaya, including those who signed the Serui declaration.

Willybal Rum and his co-defendants were initially detained in the state prison in Jayapura. In September 1977 he and Anton Tewa were transferred to Kalisosok prison, Surabaya, in Java.

Two of the five are believed to have been released but it is understood that Willybal Rum's sentence is to run to 1983. Although the Indonesian Government announced in 1979 that sentenced political prisoners would be eligible for remission on the same terms as non-political prisoners, Willybal Rum is not thought to have benefited.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for his release to: President SUHARTO, Istana Negara, Jalan Veteran, Jakarta, Indonesia; and to: Major General MUJONO S.H. (Minister of Justice), Departemen Kehakiman, Jalan Taman Pejambon 2, Jakarta, Indonesia.

In 1980 alone some 3,000 alleged "criminals" and "subversives" were murdered in Guatemala, most of them after being seized illegally and tortured. An AI report published on 18 February 1981—Guatemala: A Government Program of Political Murder—points to those responsible and includes the testimonies of two people who were directly involved—one, as a victim of detention and torture; the other, as a plainclothes agent in the security services.

Government killings in Guatemala

The human rights issue that dominates all others in Guatemala is that people who oppose or are thought to oppose the government are systematically seized without warrant, tortured and murdered, and that these tortures and murders are part of a deliberate and long-standing program of the Guatemalan Government.

The selection of targets for detention and murder, and the deployment of official forces for extra-legal operations can be pinpointed to secret offices in an annex of the National Palace; the offices are used by an agency controlled by the President.

Known until recently as the *Centro Regional de Telecomunicaciones*, Regional Telecommunications Centre, the agency is situated under two rooftop telecommunications masts on the block-long building.

It was previously called the *Agencia de Inteligencia de la Presidencia*, Presidential Intelligence Agency. During 1980 reliable sources in Guatemala City reported that the name had been changed to the *Servicios Especiales de Comunicaciones de la Presidencia*, Presidential Special Services for Communications; an alternative title was said to be the *Servicios de Apoyo de la Presidencia*, Presidential Support Services.

Sources in the capital say that the agency is directed by the joint head of the *Estado Mayor Presidencial*, Presidential General Staff, and Military Intelligence.

Policy decisions and the selection of who is to "disappear" and be killed are said to be made after consultations between top officials of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, and the Army General Staff, which command the forces responsible for the abuses.

Files of political suspects were established by law in Guatemala in the wake of the 1954 coup which overthrew the government of Colonel Jacobo ARBENZ, and later under the auspices of Military Intelligence in Decree Law No. 9 of 1963.

In many cases on record with AI political activities during the 1940s and 1950s appear to have been the sole motive for a detention followed by "disappearance" or by a "death squad" killing. For instance, the



Rear view of the National Palace of Guatemala with the *Guardia Presidencial*, Presidential Guard, annex (left) and the *Casa Presidencial* (right), the President's Residence. The *Guardia Presidencial* building houses the principal offices of the presidential intelligence agency which is accused of selecting targets for political killings.

submachine-gun attack in September 1980 on Professor Lucila RODAS DE VILLAGRAN, 60-year-old head of a girls' school (see November 1980 *Newsletter*), was widely attributed to her active membership in her youth of the *Partido Acción Revolucionaria*, Revolutionary Action Party, which ceased to exist more than 25 years ago.

During 1980 the security forces were reported to have been involved in unexplained detentions and murders of people generally considered as leaders of public opinion: members of the clergy, educators and students, lawyers, doctors, trade unionists, journalists and community workers. But most of the victims had little or no social status; they came from the urban poor and the peasantry

and their personal political activities were either insignificant or wholly imagined by their captors or killers.

By far the majority of victims were selected after they had become associated—or were thought to be associated—with social, religious, community or labour organizations, or after they had been in contact with national political parties.

- The former soldier whose testimony forms part of the AI report describes house-to-house searches in which the discovery of certain "papers"—leaflets or circulars—was sufficient reason to wipe out an entire family.

The selection of victims is often based on denunciations by neighbours, employers or local security officials.

• The former prisoner believes that a neighbour denounced him as a "subversive" because of a dispute over a village basketball court—a good enough reason, as far as army officers were concerned, for him to be tortured and put to death; he escaped the day before he was due to die in February 1980.

The report contains case histories of trade union, university and peasant and Indian victims of "disappearance" or violent death during 1980. For instance, Guatemalan newspapers reported that the body of Liliana NEGREROS had been found on 19 March 1980 with 37 others in a deep ravine near San Juan Comalapa, about 13 km from Guatemala City. She was earlier reported to have been detained by a National Police unit, *Comando Seis*, 6th Commando, during the funeral procession of 21 Indians who had died in the Spanish Embassy on 31 January 1980 (see March, May 1980 *Newsletters*).

Most of the bodies had short loops of rope around their necks; the loops had been twisted with pieces of wood—death was attributed to strangulation by garrotte. The same technique was witnessed by the escaped prisoner; he saw army personnel strangle three prisoners by garrotte in Huehuetenango army base. Many of the bodies found in secret cemeteries and mass graves in Guatemala show signs of strangulation.

Most of the responsibility for the thousands of cases of human rights violations reported to *AI* during the presidency of General Lucas García has been laid either on army or police units, according to information received by *AI*.

Regular uniformed army units, including paratroops and *Kaibiles*, Special Forces, are those most often held responsible for arbitrary detentions, "disappearances" and killings in rural areas where guerrilla groups are active, notably El Quiché Province. In addition, plainclothes army squads are routinely reported to be operating in Guatemala City.

The most widely-reported mass killings by regular army forces took place on 29 May 1978 in the town of Panzos, Alta Verapaz. More than 100 Kekchi Indians were shot dead (see September 1978 *Newsletter*).

The *Policía Militar Ambulante* (PMA), Mobile Military Police, is an army unit with powers to arrest civilians. It is named in many reports of abuses on and around rural plantations, and of seizure and "disappearance" of trade union leaders at factories where the PMA provides

security.

The *comisionados militares* are civilian agents of the army, serving under military discipline. They are responsible for recruitment—forcible conscription is the norm in Guatemala—and for routine intelligence reports to regional army headquarters; *comisionados* are stationed in every hamlet in Guatemala and are regularly reported to be involved in arbitrary detentions and killings.

The *Policía Nacional*, National Police, is headed by an army colonel and is the major civil police body in the country; it is particularly active in Guatemala City. The National Police works closely with regular army units in provincial areas; in the cities it works closely with the PMA.

In 1980 the National Police was responsible for killing prisoners officially recognized to be in police custody—some of these killings took place during transfers from one prison to another, others while prisoners were receiving treatment in public hospitals for gunshot wounds (see November 1980 *Newsletter*).

Other killings attributed to the National Police are those of prisoners just released from prison. Many of the 37 bodies of victims killed by garrotte and found in the ravine in San Juan Comalapa were identified as those of former prison inmates.

Two special units of the National Police, the *Comando Seis* and the *Pelotón Modelo*, Model Platoon, have been particularly active during political demonstrations and are said to have detained demonstrators who later "disappeared".

The *Cuerpo de Detectivos de la Policía Nacional*, National Police Detectives Corps, is a semi-autonomous branch of the National Police, known popularly as the *Policía Judicial* or *Policía Secreta* (Judicial or Secret Police). Members are reported to have directed two mass arrests of leaders of the labour federation, *Central Nacional de Trabajadores* (CNT) in June and August 1980, when 44 people "disappeared"—*AI* has adopted them as prisoners of conscience.

The former prisoner cited in the report was abducted on 15 February 1980 by a plainclothes army squad in a village in northern Guatemala. He escaped from Huehuetenango army base in the west of the country after being held for 11 days.

He gives details of his place of detention—in the base slaughterhouse—and of how he was interrogated under torture by army officers.

"... they kicked me in the ribs,

the mouth, the stomach until I passed out. . . . They pulled me up by my testicles; and they hooded me with quicklime—that means they put a bit of quicklime inside the inner tube of a truck tyre, then they put it over your nose and then they roll it onto you and you feel like death itself until you pass out. . . ."

He describes the execution of three prisoners in his presence; he also saw six other bodies.

"Yes, before my very eyes they killed three people; they strangled them. . . . with a piece of rope, a kind of noose, which they put around the neck and then used a stick to tighten it like a tourniquet from behind—handcuffed, and with their heads held down in the trough [of water] . . . I also saw one of these three, a boy, when they threw him down on the floor with his clothes wet, was still moving and one of the officers ordered them to put the tourniquet on him again until he stopped moving."

The former conscript soldier—he was forcibly recruited—gives an account of his second year of military service, when he served in a plainclothes army unit in Guatemala City. He describes the surveillance of civilians under political suspicion and the abduction of civilians for interrogation under torture—he was present on certain occasions—and then murder; this happened at the army base of the *Brigada Militar Mariscal Zavala* on the outskirts of the capital.

His testimony is of particular significance. Political killings and "disappearances" are not new in Guatemala: in 1976 *AI* estimated that about 20,000 people had been victims of these abuses since 1966. But although in the past other members of the security services have told of their participation in abductions and killings—for instance, see *Guatemala: Amnesty International Briefing*, 1976—this former conscript's testimony is the most extensive and detailed of its kind and the first by a conscript soldier describing the routine extra-legal security measures of regular army units.

"They said to me, if you discover your father is in subversive movements—I didn't understand the word—'subversive', they said, is whatever is against the government and is what causes disorder in Guatemala—if your father is involved in groups like that, kill him, because if you don't he'll try and kill us. . . . I could have done it then, that's how I used to feel, I'd do anything the army told me to."

Bangladesh

Concern about new security bill

Legislation recently proposed to Bangladesh's parliament—the Disturbed Areas Bill 1980—conflicts with human rights safeguards laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The bill is designed to increase the effectiveness of security forces against insurgents in the Chittagong Hill tracts. It would permit any non-commissioned officer or police sub-inspector who is satisfied that such action is necessary to prevent "unlawful activity" to: shoot to kill; arrest any person; conduct searches without warrant; destroy any area,

ammunition or explosives dump.

AI wrote to the President of Bangladesh on 2 February 1981 expressing concern about the legislation. It believes the provisions could facilitate arbitrary killing and authorize the arrest of people for the non-violent exercise of their human rights.

The bill is being examined by a parliamentary standing committee. All opposition and independent members of parliament are reported to have sent cables to newspapers abroad asking them to urge the government not to push the bill through parliament.

GDR

Appeal sent to HONECKER

In an appeal sent to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in February 1981, *AI* called on the government to review the GDR's criminal laws to bring them into line with its international commitments on human rights.

The appeal was contained in a letter sent to the Chairman of the GDR State Council, Erich HONECKER; the letter cited the rights to freedom of expression and to emigrate, among others set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These rights are restricted in law (and in practice) in the GDR, resulting in systematic imprisonment of prisoners

of conscience.

The letter urged Erich Honecker to "initiate a review of the penal code in the GDR to ensure that it is in line, both in substance and application, with your country's international commitments to respect human rights". It urged that, pending the outcome of such a review, arrests and prosecutions under laws which contradict these commitments should be suspended.

A copy of the 16-page *Amnesty International Briefing: German Democratic Republic (GDR)*, published on 4 February 1981 (see February *Newsletter*) was sent with the letter.

Czechoslovakia

'Charter' man sentenced

Petr CIBULKA, a 30-year-old surveyor and a signatory of the unofficial Czechoslovak human rights movement Charter 77, who has been in prison since April 1978, has been sentenced to a further 10 months' imprisonment. The latest sentence, imposed by a court in Plzen on 27 January 1981, followed his conviction on a charge of "grossly insulting" two prison officers of the Plzen-Bory Prison on 7 April 1980. He has appealed against the verdict.

Petr Cibulka was first sentenced in November 1978 to two years'

imprisonment for organizing private performances of nonconformist musicians and for reproducing and disseminating typewritten and tape recorded "anti-state" works.

In May 1979 he went on hunger strike to protest against unacceptable working conditions and repeated physical attacks on him by non-political prisoners. He was reported at the time to have lost 27 kg.

His hunger-strike led to a second trial, on 30 January 1980, which resulted in a sentence of one year's imprisonment.

CAR

Six executed by firing squad

Six people were executed by firing squad in the Central African Republic on 24 January 1981—the first executions there since Emperor BOKASSA was deposed. Afterwards the bodies were put on public display.

The six had been convicted of murders carried out while the Emperor was in power. They were originally condemned to death by Bangui's Criminal Court in February 1980 but successfully challenged the legality of the court's proceedings in August 1980. They were retried in September 1980 and again condemned to death. President DACKO refused to grant clemency and commute the death sentences.

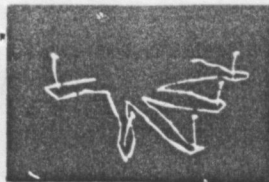
Those executed included a former army captain, Joseph MOKOA, who was reputed to be the head of a special security unit which carried out at least 20 murders on the Emperor's orders between 1976 and 1979. The murdered victims included a number of prisoners whose cases were being investigated by *AI*.

A soldier and a prison guard who went before the firing squad were convicted with Joseph Mokoia of murdering school-children and students in Bangui's Ngaragba prison in April 1979. Two other former officials were convicted of murders carried out in January 1979, when there were widespread demonstrations in Bangui against the Emperor's orders that all school-children should wear uniforms.

The sixth person executed was the Emperor's son-in-law, Dr Jean-Bruno DEDEAVODE. He was found guilty of the murder in February 1976 of the baby child of an army officer alleged to have been involved in a coup attempt.

AI repeatedly appealed to the authorities of the Central African Republic to commute the death sentences on humanitarian grounds. The executions were carried out a week before the country's new constitution was put to a referendum; President Dacko had been facing criticism for not punishing officials guilty of crimes under the Bokassa administration.

Another senior official condemned to death in February 1980 on charges of murder is due to be retried shortly. In December 1980 the former Emperor was sentenced to death *in absentia*; he is living in exile in the Ivory Coast.



amnesty international

campaign for the abolition of torture

Large-scale torture in Turkey

AI has informed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that it believes that torture in Turkey is continuing systematically and on a large scale. Turkey is one of the council's member states.

AI now has the names of 18 people reported to have died in custody since the military coup of 12 September 1980. Although there have been official investigations into a number of cases—with some police and military personnel being prosecuted for causing death by torture—the authorities are not known to have taken any preventive measures against further torture.

In its message to the Parliamentary Assembly on 18 January 1981 AI suggested that it urge Turkey to adopt the following:

- The government should issue public instructions to police and military personnel that torture is prohibited and constitutes a criminal offence.
- The 90-day period during which

suspects may be detained before being brought before a judge should be drastically reduced, with access to lawyers and family being accorded in all cases throughout the period of custody.

AI has copies of the autopsy certificates of three detainees—Ekrem EKSI, Hasan Asker OZMEN and Zeynal Abidin CEYLAN—which make it clear that death was caused by torture.

Although AI has been told that the deaths of Hasan Ozmen and Zeynal Ceylan were investigated by the military authorities, no inquiry has taken place into the death of Ekrem Eksi, who died in Numune Hospital, Istanbul, on 14 October 1980.

He was a final-year student at the Architecture Faculty of Istanbul Technical University; he and his wife were detained on the day of the coup, 12 September 1980. When she was released in the first week of October

she told the family that she had been tortured.

Ekrem Eksi's family asked the police for information about him on 16 October and were told he had been transferred to hospital on 12 October. At the hospital they were told he had died on 14 October.

The autopsy certificate states the cause of death was "Blows to the thorax causing rib fractures; these in turn produced rupture in the lungs, inducing internal bleeding and pneumothorax [lung collapse]."

Please write courteously worded letters expressing concern about continuing reports of torture and asking for the implementation of the measures cited above; ask also for an investigation into the death of Ekrem Eksi. Address your letters to: General Kenan EVREN, Ankara, Turkey. Send copies to the Turkish diplomatic representative in your country.

Death penalty appeal

Todd ICE,

A 16-year-old youth, Todd ICE, was sentenced to death in the electric chair by a Kentucky circuit court on 9 October 1980, after being convicted of murder. He was 15 years old when the offence was committed.

Under state law, an appeal is automatically lodged with the Kentucky Supreme Court.

On 1 June 1977 the United States Government signed the American Convention on Human Rights and on 5 October it signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Both human rights instruments state that sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by people under the age of 18. Although the USA has not yet ratified the two conventions, Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties states that a signatory nation has the obligation to do nothing that would defeat the object and purpose of any signed treaties.

- Latest figures available to AI show that 718 people were under sentence of death in the USA on 20 December 1980, 5 of them in Kentucky.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for the commutation of Todd Ice's sentence on humanitarian grounds—now, in view of his youth—to: Governor John BROWN Jr, Capital Building, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, USA.

UN 'moratorium' vote postponed

The United Nations General Assembly decided in December 1980 to postpone a vote on a resolution which would have called for a moratorium on executions. On the initiative of the Indian delegation, the Third Committee (economic and social affairs) of the General Assembly voted not to take any action on the draft resolution "while awaiting the conclusions of the Sixth Committee" (legal affairs).

If adopted, the resolution, sponsored

by Sweden and other countries, would have established that "further restriction in the application of capital punishment and its eventual abolition would be a significant contribution to the strengthening of human rights, in particular the right to life". The resolution would also have recommended states which had not abolished the death penalty to consider the possibility of a moratorium in its application so that they could study the effects of abolition on a provisional basis.

The General Assembly adopted without a vote two less far-reaching texts relating to the death penalty: under a decision proposed by the Federal Republic of Germany, the Third Committee decided to consider at its next session the idea of elaborating a draft of a second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty; under a resolution sponsored by Belgium and other countries, the General Assembly urged member states to take measures against arbitrary and summary executions.

UN working group on 'disappearances'

More than 11,000 victims reported

The United Nations working group on "disappearances" received specific information on between 11,000 and 13,000 "disappearances" in 15 countries, according to the group's first report issued on 26 January 1981.

The report says the information dealt with "disappearances" in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa and Uruguay.

The working group stressed that the number of cases received varied greatly from country to country. It added that the fact that a country did not appear on the list did not mean that "disappearances" had not occurred there.

The working group—officially called the "Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances"—was set up in March 1980 by the UN Commission on Human Rights in response to widespread concern by relatives of "disappeared" people and human rights organizations. The group was asked to seek and receive information on "disappearances" anywhere in the world and "to respond effectively" to the information.

The report, which contains few conclusions, presents an analytical summary of the information received on each country and includes the replies of those countries that responded to inquiries.

These replies are rarely specific. For instance, the Government of El

Salvador—with one of the highest current "disappearance" rates in the world—replied that it was unable to provide the information requested "owing to lack of time". The Ethiopian Government replied: "The information received by the Group concerning enforced or involuntary disappearances in Ethiopia is baseless and unfounded. Our views about Amnesty International from which this information has originated are well known to the Commission on Human Rights." On the other hand, the Mexican Government's reply contained detailed information on specific cases.

The most detailed section of the report deals with Argentina. The group received specific information on between 7,000 and 9,000 cases, usually sent by close relatives of the "disappeared" in Argentina. In many cases information was provided about the people carrying out the arrests, such as members of the police, security forces, army and navy. Between 1975 and 1979, there was rarely any attempt to carry out the arrests in a clandestine way. According to some of the reports received, when the local police were called in on an operation they either "refused to respond to the call or... withdrew after having been shown the identity documents of the persons carrying out the arrest".

The report lists the names and locations of 16 secret detention centres in Argentina—with names such as "Club Atletico", "Sheraton" and "Pozo" (or "The Chamber of Tortures", near Quilmes, Buenos Aires, and under the authority of Argentine and Uruguayan military officers).

The working group notes "a high degree of consistency" between reports of relatives of the "disappeared" and information provided by witnesses in the detention centres (including a former member of the Argentine police).

The reply of the Argentine Government to the allegations of "disappearances" is to the effect that they have been fabricated by "terrorist" organizations in an orchestrated campaign to undermine the present government.

The working group also established a procedure whereby after receipt of an urgent report the Chairperson could immediately dispatch a telegram to the government concerned requesting

clarification. This was done in response to the "disappearance" of a journalist in Argentina, a church leader in Bolivia, 10 people in El Salvador, 17 trade unionists in Guatemala and five Argentinians in Peru. The group reports that in two cases the "disappeared" people were subsequently released. In two cases the government reported that the people concerned were being held on criminal charges.

The working group was established for one year only, with its mandate ending in February 1981. Amnesty International considers that it is important for the group to be allowed to continue its work without restrictions. So far, AI has submitted to the group information on "disappearances" in Argentina, Brazil, Ethiopia, East Timor, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and the Philippines.

Information on cases of enforced or involuntary "disappearances" anywhere in the world should be sent to: "Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances", c/o Division of Human Rights, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.

Nicaragua

In a telex message dated 14 February 1981, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry informed AI that the country's Justice Minister had on 14 February released the offices and property of the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights to its President, Ricardo PAIZ Castillo. The message added that the commission could continue to function "within the limits of our laws, especially in the area of monitoring and promoting human rights".

On Friday 13 February, AI had called on the Nicaraguan Government to clarify reports that the Ministry of Justice had ordered the closure of the independent Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights. In a telegram to the five members of the country's ruling junta AI had appealed to the government to overrule any such orders.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England. Printed in Great Britain by Hill and Garwood Ltd., Fourth Way, Wembley, Middlesex. Available on subscription at £5 (US \$10) per calendar year.

POLISH ARRESTS

Continued from page 1
of Conscience in Poland.

The arrests have taken place against a background of continued unrest in Poland and continued attacks in the official news media against "disruptive anti-socialist forces" within Poland. Among the most severely attacked have been Leszek Moczulski, of KPN, and Jacek KURON and Adam MICHNIK of the Social Self-Defence Committee (KSS KOR). The last two have in the past been adopted by AI as prisoners of conscience.

AI has appealed to the Polish authorities to release all those arrested for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.