



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

A MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM OF OPINION AND RELIGION, HAVING CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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750th Anniversary of Magna Carta

IN "World Conscience", the special Human Rights Day newspaper produced for AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL on Human Rights Day, 1963, the leading article dealt with forthcoming anniversaries and practical steps which might be taken to commemorate them. One major anniversary which is due in 1965 is the 750th anniversary of the MAGNA CARTA. The leading article proposed that an all-out endeavour should be made to ensure that Habeas Corpus, which is contained in the 36th Article of MAGNA CARTA, should be made available generally throughout the world. Accordingly, it is hoped that the movement will concentrate its attention on achieving this objective. It is proposed that the campaign for Worldwide Habeas Corpus should reach its culmination on Human Rights Day, 10th December, 1965. The actual anniversary date of the signing of MAGNA CARTA at Runnymede, is June 17th, but it is thought better to devote the whole year to preparing public opinion. It is suggested that efforts should be made in two principal directions: One, to draw attention to the state of affairs in all those countries where there exists neither Habeas Corpus nor its equivalent in the national system of law, or where its right has been suspended; two, to emphasise that the right to Habeas Corpus, established in 1215, is designed to provide a guarantee of bodily freedom, but does not ensure freedom from other arbitrary acts of the State which may in their turn lead to mandatory slavery or economic ruin.

National Sections are particularly asked to approach their government at an early stage in connection with the 750th anniversary of MAGNA CARTA, to enquire whether or not special stamps which may be issued on Human Rights Day, 1965, could depict either MAGNA CARTA or some incident such as its signature.

Delegates' Reports

REPORT ON CONDITIONS IN PORTUGAL

THE following extracts are taken from the report by AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S investigator who was in Portugal in December 1964.

'Jose Saldanha Sanches, 20-year-old law student, arrested in May. He is accused of subversive activities against the Government. He was arrested by the Secret Police (the P.I.D.E.) as he was leaving a cafe after midnight. He says he was knocked down and beaten up. As he tried to defend himself he was shot twice, in the shoulder and stomach.

'He was taken to the Hospital dos Capuchos for a week and then to the prison hospital at Caxias. He has been in the political prisoners' section there ever since.

'The "subversive activities" of which he is accused include "distributing Communist propaganda". But a student, a close friend of his, says that no papers were found on him.

'He is not a Communist; could probably best be described as an agnostic as he was once a Catholic and now professes no religion. The only witness is a taxi-driver who was arrested on a technical charge and after being kept for three-and-a-half months in prison, is now afraid to give evidence.

'The parents have been told that the Prosecution is going to ask for a sentence of twelve years.

'A second offence has been added to the "Subversive activities" (which come into a section "crimes against the State"): He is to be accused of resisting arrest and attacking police officers. (They were not in uniform when they arrested him.) He is twenty now but he was nineteen when arrested.

'The "Communist Propaganda" he is supposed to have distributed was in connection with May 1st, Labour Day, used by the Communists as an occasion for agitation. They appeal for a strike against the Government.

'After Sanches' arrest, the Law Faculty and the Medical Faculty at Lisbon University organised a "Day of Mourning" and boycotted lectures.'

Since this report was produced Jose Saldanha Sanches was sentenced to five months which is tantamount to immediate release.

'Another student who refused to give his name, said, "I am a Catholic and I daresay there are a number of Communists, as there are everywhere, but we are all accused of being Communists if we criticise the Government in any respect.

'This student, like a number of other Portuguese I met, asked me for news of Portugal. He explained that they do not know themselves what is happening, often, as all newspapers, magazines, etc., are censored and the only news to appear is what the Government has passed.'

'The Minister for External Affairs, S. Franco Nogueira, had given a T.V. Press conference, in which he complained that the Pope's visit to India was an insult to Portugal, since India had annexed Goa. For over a week there was a boycott of all news, though papers in every country in the world (except probably Communist China) were carrying news reports of the Pope's visit.

'After the Vatican announced that the Golden Rose had been awarded by the Holy See to the Portuguese shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, there was a slight easement; five lines appeared on the back pages simply announcing that the Pope was visiting "an Eastern country".

'The manager of a bookshop collected signatures of his customers, Catholics who protested at the ban. He was taken to police headquarters and questioned for twelve hours.

'The Catholic newspaper *Novidades* had an editorial, not even making any protest, simply stating, with great tact, that the Pope's intention was purely spiritual; when it came back from the censor, it was cut so badly it was impossible to print it. An American newspaperman filed a cable stating this and the police called at his office, told him it was untrue. He had proof of the article in his desk drawer but dared not bring it out to show the police for fear that he would be asked to leave the country.'

'I was told by the relations of a prisoner that the worst affliction is the uncertainty about the six-monthly renewal of the "security-measures" after completion of the sentence.'

'Among those not critical of the regime, the only reason advanced, over and over again, was an obsessive fear of a return to the conditions of anarchy before Salazar took office.

'The Bishop of Oporto however, along with a growing number of educated Portuguese felt that the very best way to ensure a return of such conditions was to forbid an open Opposition (he was exiled for asking Salazar to allow at least a Catholic, official, Opposition). It is thought that, with conditions as they are now, the only group who will be in any way organised, will be the Communists, at present working underground. They, at least, having backing from Communists from outside the country. The genuine liberals have no organisation and little chance of developing one.'

THE RUMANIAN AMNESTY

THE report by Anthony Rhodes who visited Rumania on behalf of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL from September 24th to October 13th, 1964.

The releases began in February 1963, and by the time of the final release in August 1964, something between 11,000 and 12,000 political prisoners had been freed. This comprises all those arrested since the Communists took power in 1948—with small scale exceptions mentioned later in this report. These men are now at large in the country, and a special governmental decree, No. 1,051, states that they are to be reabsorbed into society, and to be re-employed as far as possible in their old jobs. It adds that everyone shall have the right to at least one room to live in. These releases include all the members of the Iron Guard. Apparently the security authorities were chary about including this last category in the release, but the Prime Minister, Gheorghiu-Dej insisted on it in a personal note on the report, in his

own handwriting, just before he went into hospital for a serious operation.

I understand that these political prisoners, who were confined in three special prisons, first suspected that they might be released in January 1963, when their living conditions suddenly improved. They were allowed books to read; a club or recreational room was made available; certain chosen prisoners were allowed to watch the TV. It may seem surprising that they had not had wind of this from the warders, the prison "grape-vine"; but the warders in charge of political prisoners, are specially chosen, indoctrinated young Communists who regard political prisoners as dangerous traitors, and whose conversation with them is confined entirely to routine matters.

The government authorities refused to see me, although they had granted me a visa. I was forced therefore to obtain my information entirely from chance encounters with released prisoners. This convinced me that the government statement is substantially correct. These men have not been *pardoned*—which would imply that they had been wrongfully imprisoned. They are still regarded as having committed crimes against the state, but have been released as an act of grace (the difference between the untranslatable *freigesprochen* and *freigelassen*). There is nothing therefore to prevent their being imprisoned again, if the political situation should demand it.

Although the law 1,051 enacts that they shall be given back, as far as possible, their old jobs, this is not easy to put into practice except in the case of certain technicians, engineers, electricians, etc. Many of these men are old and broken in health, and out of touch with modern technique; and younger men are preferred. Also, local employers are still frightened of employing men who have been in prison on political grounds.

Another anomaly concerns old people of pensionable age who have been released. They have not yet been allowed to draw the usual old-age pensions, and have therefore to rely on the charity of their families. Here AMNESTY might achieve something; agitation in the West over specific cases generally seems to have a good effect.

The releases reveal that the Rumanian government is more securely in the saddle than it was a few years ago, and it has less fear of anti-Communist revolt. They also appear to be connected with the more liberal state of affairs in Russia, which has enabled the Rumanian government to pursue a more independent policy. The government has also profited from the Sino-Russian quarrel. Rumania has often survived in the past by playing off one set of oppressors against another (the Turkish and Austrian dominations). In the early summer of this year, the chief of the secret police, Pintilie (a man of Russian origin, who really has a Russian name, who had returned to Rumania with the Russian armies in 1944, and who has held this key position since 1948), was relieved of his post; and he is now living under house arrest in Bucharest. This shows that the Rumanian government is trying to curb Russian influence in their internal affairs.

There are two small groups of political prisoners who do not appear to have been released. The first are about a dozen high Communist officials, who have been accused of currency offences—smuggling money and depositing it in Swiss banks. This is regarded as "sabotage", and therefore a form of treason, in Communist lands.

The second group are Hungarians, members of the minority in Transylvania who have been agitating against the suppression of their countrymen (closing of Hungarian

schools, universities, etc., in Transylvania). How far this is "suppression" is hard to determine. So violent is nationalism in Transylvania, that totally different reports will be received depending on whether the informant is a Hungarian or a Rumanian. Both may be violent anti-Communists. The old traditional passions override all feelings about communism, capitalism, socialism and the other isms.

The main prisons for political prisoners were at Cnele Mari and Rimnicu Sarat, the latter being the worst, with solitary confinement. It has been closed down; and the other prisons are being used for civil prisoners.

SOUTH AFRICA

Report by Louis Blom-Cooper who recently visited South Africa on behalf of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL:

THE suspension on January 11th, 1965, of the ninety-day Detention law marks the end of a phase in South African politics. Even though the Minister of Justice, Mr. Vorster, can reimpose the law at the stroke of a pen, the temporary removal of this instrument of a totalitarian state is sufficient. It represents the successful crushing of what little effective opposition remained to the Verwoerd Government.

Doubtless the continuation of a regime committed to a degree of authoritarianism such as the Nationalists will serve only to arouse new waves of resistance; and when they come they will resort increasingly to violent tactics which in turn will be met with laws even more draconian than their predecessors.

The fact is that the last phase of the struggle of Dr. Verwoerd's opponents has given clear notice of future resistance. Those who ordinarily find violence alien to their nature, who are either non-Communist or anti-Communist, who find themselves intellectually frustrated in the wilderness that is political South Africa—it is these who have constituted the saboteurs. The paradox is striking. In November, there were three major trials proceeding in the twin cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. In the latter five members of the Liberal Party were facing charges of sabotage who had joined ARM (African Resistance Movement). Their chief accuser was a former colleague, a bright graduate of Cape Town University and a former President of the South African Student's Union, Mr. Adrian Leftwich. He had been taken in under "90-days", had cracked under "interrogation" and had then agreed to give evidence for the Prosecution in trials in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. All but one were convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In Johannesburg there were two other major trials. In the Supreme Court, a relic of the Rivonia trial was in progress. Five people (two Europeans, two Indians and an African, Wilton Mkwayi, the last of the outstanding Africans to remain at liberty) were charged with fifty-eight separate acts of sabotage—they had for one reason or another escaped the rounding-up at Rivonia, but were caught later as a result of the effective infiltration of their organisation by Secret Police spies. Their trial has ended; fortunately because sabotage has ceased, they were not sentenced to death, but received sentences from fifteen years to life imprisonment.

In the Resident Magistrate's Court in Johannesburg there began—and it is still wending its weaving way through reams of tedious testimony—the trial of Bram Fischer, Q.C. and thirteen fellow Communists is taking place. They are not charged with any act of violence. Their alleged activities

are simply proscribed by the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950; they have conducted meetings and published literature under the aegis of an outlawed political party. The 90-day law had been used against nearly all these people and one of their most trusted and respected leaders, Piet Beylvelde, turned state evidence. The situation is not only tragic, it is profoundly distressing. And yet although the situation is pregnant with courageous acts it all seems so unheroic. The amateurishness of the opposition, ill-led and undisciplined, and the lack of security in their activities, have shown the Government's opponents up as politically effete. That is why Mr. Vorster can obtain some useful propaganda value from suspending the law giving the State the right to detain persons without trial, while retaining his confidence in suppressing any further anti-Government action.

Just as the English-speaking whites in the 1950's were destined to fail politically because they were so intent on defending only their economic interests, so in the 1960's the small band of whites who have supported African political activity against apartheid have confirmed their subordinate status as a minority group in an Afrikaner State, to the point where all hope of future dominance in any sphere of life has gone. The English insistence on attachment to economics throughout this century and its failure to foresee the political struggle ahead is now being paid for in the coin of Afrikaner dominance and consequent suppression.

The non-Whites have never held any position of political power; their striving towards a determination of their own destiny has temporarily petered out. But the price of their pertinacity in the face of overwhelming odds will be ultimate victory with what loss of life and misery cannot yet be gauged. But 1965—the year in which apartheid as practised in South-West Africa will come under international judicial scrutiny—may prove to be the turning point. Whether any White South African lives to survive the inevitable holocaust may depend on how much goodwill the resisters of the last seventeen years have stored up with the African politicians. It may yet be that the unheroic and directly unavailing attempts of a sprinkling of Whites in the last few years will have saved from complete dissipation the relationships between the races in South Africa.

CONSULTATIVE STATUS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL has been granted Consultative Status category 1 with the Council of Europe.

Human Rights Day

THE CEREMONY IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

THERE are frequent disappointments and you have to keep on hoping in AMNESTY, but to see the 1963 Prisoner lighting the candle in St. Paul's Cathedral in honour of Dr. Julieta Gandra, Prisoner for 1964, was one of those satisfying occasions that make the keeping on easier. Heinz Brandt had been released six months earlier, after serving only two-and-a-half years of a thirteen year sentence.

AMNESTY itself was being honoured this night. Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin had long ago expressed a willingness to play for AMNESTY and the assembly was treated to the recital of César Franck's Sonata in A Major, chosen by

Mr. Menuhin himself as being particularly suitable for Human Rights Day, and also for the acoustical reverberations peculiar to St. Paul's. These had been but barely discernible earlier, when the Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, M.P., a Nobel Peace Prize winner, read with careful deliberation, those confident tidings of hope for the prisoner and the persecuted that Isaiah had offered to Israel.

Majestic prophecy, symbolic ceremony, sublime music; but it was left to the Bishop of Chichester to make explicit what is commemorated on December 10th each year. Whatever separates Christians and other faiths which were represented in the Cathedral, they are united in the importance each accords to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And the right mood of struggle to get this Jerusalem built everywhere was inspired in us as we closed the ceremony singing Blake's famous hymn.

Altogether a moving occasion; additionally so, let it be admitted, for those who, despite the idealism that inspired the ceremony, were obliged to render a balance sheet afterwards, and whose worries lessened at the sight of almost two thousand rising to their feet at the entry of the choir.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The Prime Minister who had originally agreed to read the lesson but was later unable to attend owing to his trip to North America, sent the following message which was read during the ceremony:

'On Human Rights Day each year the world celebrates the anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On this occasion I wish to affirm the faith of Her Majesty's Government in the ideals which are embodied in the Declaration and their conviction that by working for the translation of those ideals into practice the United Nations can help in the advance of freedom and justice as the basis of world order.'

Amnesty Plaque

The plaque for Dr. Julieta Gandra has been safely delivered to its destination in Portugal.

VOIS FESTIVAL

AMNESTY hopes to take part in the Voluntary Organisations International Screen Festival to be held in London this Autumn. Films made by charities and voluntary organisations will be judged by leading critics and producers. The winning films will be given awards and will be promoted on television in this country and abroad. All groups and individual members who are interested should write to head office for further details. If there are enough people interested AMNESTY will award a prize of £50 for the best film. The winning film will then be entered in the Festival.

Amnesties during last year

The following are some countries where amnesties have been granted in the last year:

Bulgaria: On September 9th, 1964, an amnesty was granted to political prisoners, except those convicted for espionage, treason, or acts of subversion.

Burma: In May, 1964, 492 detainees who were arrested in November, 1963, were amnestied. A further amnesty was granted in January, 1965 to 227 prisoners (mostly belonging to the National United Front).

Chad: The President announced at the end of October 1964 that some political detainees were to be amnestied.

Egypt: In March it was announced that Nasser had decided to release all political detainees and to abolish martial law.

East Germany: On October 3rd, 1964 (fifteenth anniversary of the G.D.R.) an amnesty was granted to all prisoners whose sentences were pronounced before September 30th, 1964.

Greece: In November 1963, the Greek Government began releasing all political prisoners, except those convicted under 375 of whom there are 125.

Iraq: After the cease fire between the Kurdish rebels and the Iraqi Government, the majority of the Kurdish detainees were amnestied.

Ivory Coast: On January 6th, 1965, the President of the Republic granted an amnesty to all students detained for political reasons.

Poland: On October 21st, the Minister of Justice stated that a total of 261,000 prisoners had been amnestied. These seem mainly to have been criminals.

Rumania: On June 14th, 1964, it was announced that thousands of political prisoners had been released and that a general pardon would follow in August, 1964.

Sudan: After the *coup d'état* in early December, 1964, the new regime announced that all political prisoners would be amnestied. Although they may have amnestied former prisoners, they did arrest some more prisoners after the *coup d'état*.

Syria: On November 14th, 1964, the Presidential Council granted an amnesty to all political prisoners, except those guilty of treason or murder.

Turkey: On October 28th, 1964, the President pardoned twenty-three Yassiada trial prisoners and the position of the remaining eight was to be considered. This brings the total of Yassiada people pardoned to thirty-seven.

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