Cuba

It is still very difficult to obtain reliable up-to-date information. Some groups have achieved indirect contact with their prisoners usually through the families, but very little progress has been made.

There seems to have been no change in the general political situation which has much bearing on Amnesty's work. The estimates of the total number of political prisoners which vary between 15,000 and 65,000, remain unconfirmed. Many of these are kept in "indoctrination" camps. It should be noted that the treatment is said to be comparatively good. Among our adopted prisoners there are trade unionists, lawyers, students, and members of illegal organisations,

Mexico

The unrest which started in July last year and culminated on the eve of the opening of the Olympic Games in October when at one time some 1,500 persons were under arrest (among them several students and University professors) and hundreds of Mexicans were killed and injured, does not seem to have calmed down completely. In April and May there were reports of new arrests, among them many students and the leader of the University Teachers' Organisation. Amnesty is investigating some arrests that have taken place during the past year. Among adopted prisoners is the well-known trade union leader Demetrio Vallejo Martinez who was arrested in 1959 following a labour conflict. He was not tried until 1962, although the Mexican Constitution states that in this type of case the interval between indictment and trial can be no longer than 12 months. He was condemned to 16 years imprisonment which was later reduced to 11 years and 4 months.

Most political prisoners in Mexico are prosecuted under the law "Disolucion Social" which among other things provides heavy sentences for those who distribute propaganda "that will disturb public order or affect Mexican natural sovereignty,'

Panama

After the coup in October 1968 when a military junta took over, the number of political prisoners increased. About a hundred were released at the beginning of March 1969. According to official sources there are now 400 political prisoners, but the number is likely to be higher. Amnesty investigated the case of the International Secretary of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession who is now released.

Paraguay

The Church is demonstrating its opposition to the present 15-year-old regime. Unlike other Latin American countries, the liberal priests are also being supported by bishops.

The number of political prisoners is said to be about 200. Reports of torture are persistent and some prisoners have been held for more than 10 years without trial. Paraguayan bishops, politicians and students recently called for trials for these prisoners.

Amnesty is now expanding its work on Peru and during the past year some good and reliable contacts have been established.

The military coup in October last year did not change the situation for political prisoners. It is estimated that there are slightly more than a hundred political prisoners at the moment. Many of them are Inca peasants who are accused of having helped the guerrillas during the guerrilla activities in 1965. In February this year the biggest political trial in Peruvian history took place at a military court in Lima. Several of these illiterate peasants were tried and received sentences ranging from 2-15 years. It would appear that the help most of the peasants had given was selling potatoes or giving shelter to guerrillas.

There are also revolutionary students and journalists imprisoned, many of whom were active during the guerrilla operation in 1965.

Finally there is a third group of prisoners, also mainly Inca peasants, who are accused of taking over land. The much needed agrarian reform is one of Peru's greatest problems, and it exists in most of the Latin American countries.

Prison conditions are reported to be very bad, and there is often a gap of several years between arrest and trial. As elsewhere in Latin America the violence is widespread and it is difficult to identify non-violent prisoners of conscience from those who have participated in one way or another with revolutionary or guerrilla groups.

There are at present approximately one thousand American conscientious objectors imprisoned in civilian or military centres. The US recognise conscientious objection on grounds of religious beliefs, but not selective objection to a particular war. This creates a real conflict of conscience and has resulted in imprisonment for many.

Sentences vary considerably, although some are very high, such as the 10-year sentence on a draft resister from Georgia. Opposition to the war within the armed services also leads to conflicts and imprisonment or desertion.

Amnesty has adopted some selective conscientious objectors and is preparing a study on the American prisoners in the hope that accurate information can lead to an amnesty being granted on all sides once the peace talks achieve success.

ASIA

Amnesty's work in Asia is still in its infancy. The political complexity of the area, coupled with the difficulty in obtaining accurate and detailed information over such a distance has meant that Amnesty's work has in the past tended to focus on Commonwealth countries for which London still acts as a clearing house for news. This very unsatisfactory situation is gradually changing as Amnesty contacts improve and it becomes possible to send investigation missions to collect information on the spot

As in other parts of the world, the type of political prisoner reflects the political problems facing Asian Governments. In South and South East Asia, the threat to central authority presented by secessionist movements has resulted in widespread arrests—Shans and Kachins in Burma, or the Nagas in India. On the whole these movements have adopted guerrilla tactics, and their members are not prisoners of conscience. Numerically, Asian Governments tend towards the right or centre of the political spectrum and so suspected communists form a large proportion of Amnesty's adopted prisoners in countries as disparate as Indonesia. Taiwan and the Malay Peninsular.

China

No adoptions have been made in China for some time: in the recent climate of xenophobia and political isolation Amnesty intervention could jeopardise a prisoner's chance of release. Files are maintained on the general human rights situation, but factual information is a rarity. No estimates can reliably be made of the total number of prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty's concern has been concentrated on those foreign nationals who have been detained during the course of the cultural revolution; some have been held for two years and, in many cases, it is not even known where they are held. In only one case, that of Anthony Grey, is there contact between the prisoner and his family. Those detained include Japanese, German, British, Belgian and an Italian. Publicity and adoption have seemed advisable only in the case of Anthony Grey, the Reuter's Correspondent in Peking.

Hong Kong

During the last year, not only were all political detainees held without trial under Emergency Regulation 31 released but the Emergency Regulations themselves have been repealed. This means that there are now no prisoners of conscience in the colony.

India remains one of the few countries where there are no adopted prisoners. Indeed, to a great extent Amnesty's work is done for it by the Indian courts whose respect for individual liberty and the rule of law is an example which could well be followed in countries with less intractable internal problems.

Indonesia

There are probably about 150,000 political prisoners in Indonesia at the present time. The figure has remained fairly constant for the last eighteen months. Many have been released during that period, but the army has continued to round up communist suspects and there have been many purges of government departments and sections of the armed forces. Most of the prisoners were arrested for alleged communist associations and about half of them have now been in prison for over three years—since the period following the abortive communist coup of 30th September 1965. Only about 100 have been brought to trial.

Reports of overcrowding, undernourishment and even brutal mistreatment of prisoners are still current. The Indonesian government has frequently voiced its intention of releasing the majority of the prisoners—other than those accused of direct involvement in the coup—and announced in February a plan for the transfer of 60,000 prisoners from Java to less densely populated areas in Kalimantan and the Moluccas where they would be employed and gradually re-

While recognising the immense problems of organisation and the economic and social difficulties involved. Amnesty is concerned that such plans should be put into action without further delay, and that meanwhile greater efforts be made to improve the conditions in the jails and prison camps. It is hoped that Professor Julius Stone, an international legal expert, will be visiting Djakarta shortly on Amnesty's behalf to discuss these issues with the Indonesian government, He will be accompanied by a staff member from the International Secretariat. Amnesty has so far adopted about 20 prisoners in Indonesia, mostly prominent

intellectuals and public figures.

Malaysia

Until mid-May 1969 there were about 400 persons detained under the internal security act, most of them in the Borneo territories. About thirty detainees are under adoption, most of them detained since about 1965 or 1967. Conditions of detention have given rise to some concern, and an Amnesty delegate discussed these with the Ministry of Home Affairs in February, following which some improvements were made.

The racial clashes after the election in May were followed by the arrest of about 2.000 people, including a number of leading moderate politicians, and it is hoped to arrange for another delegate to visit Malaysia in August 1969.

Pakistan

Shortly before the resignation of Ayub Khan in March 1969 the state of emergency, in force since 1959, was lifted and most if not all detainees held under it