

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

5th May, 1972

TO ALL GROUPS WITH INDONESIAN PRISONERS

During the last few weeks several developments have taken place which could affect Amnesty's work for Indonesian prisoners. We would like to report these and suggest action to be taken by adoption groups.

1. For the first time, Indonesian officials have begun to respond to letters from Amnesty. We attach a letter from the Commandant of Buru, Major General Wadly Prawirasupradja, in which he tells a New Zealand group that they may send letters and parcels to their adopted prisoner. General Wadly has also sent information to a German group about its adopted prisoner, while another official concerned with the Buru camps, Major Roesno, who works for the Military Police in Djakarta, has also written to the New Zealand group expressing his interest in Amnesty and asking for information about its methods, character and aims. Recently, the Indonesian Ambassador in Australia approached the Victorian Section asking for a meeting with groups, and on 28th April spoke to 100 members and answered their questions.
2. In contrast to this, there seems to be a continuing attempt in Djakarta to discredit Amnesty's work for prisoners by presenting it as an attempt by a left-wing political organisation to assist 'communist' prisoners. About a year ago, an article appeared in the Army newspaper, Angkatan Bersendjata, accusing Amnesty of being "an organisation of the New Left" whose work was to defend political detainees "especially communists who are imprisoned in various countries outside the communist bloc". It claimed that Amnesty "remains silent about the political prisoners in communist lands". This argument was repeated in March this year in an editorial which claimed that Amnesty's criticisms of Indonesia were ideological in basis, lacked objectivity, and suggested that the organisation had never "made accusations about happenings in the socialist countries". The paper's purpose seems to be to discredit Amnesty appeals and activity for Indonesian prisoners on the grounds that Amnesty members' interest is political rather than humanitarian.

These two situations seem completely contradictory: one possible explanation is that a debate may now be in progress in Djakarta on what should be the Government's policy towards Amnesty work.

Suggested action

We would ask groups to take some or all of these steps:

- a) Through their National Sections write a letter to Angkatan Bersendjata which should be politely worded, and should explain the work done on behalf of adopted prisoners in communist and socialist countries, referring specifically to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Letters could also describe the organisation's general activities, and perhaps mention the Chronicle of Current Events which is published by Amnesty and which contains reports about political prisoners which cannot be published within the Soviet Union. You should also refer to the adoption of religious prisoners - for example, Baptists in the Soviet Union and priests in Hungary.

The letter should be written in English or Dutch, and if possible a good Indonesian translation or summary should be attached. Your aim in writing it should be to describe Amnesty principles and practices, stressing that

concern for Indonesian prisoners is only one small part of the organisation's general opposition to imprisonment for political reasons. You might also mention that it has been much more difficult to obtain any response from the Government or prisoners in Indonesia in comparison with other countries where Amnesty works.

- b) Groups should write to the Attorney-General, General Suggih Arto, making similar points.
- c) National Sections should write to the Indonesian Embassy in their country referring to this misrepresentation of Amnesty in the Indonesian press, and requesting a meeting between Amnesty groups and the Ambassador, together with his Press Secretary, in which further clarification can be given about Amnesty's character. You could refer to the meeting which has already taken place in Australia.
- d) Groups whose adopted prisoners are on Buru should write to Brigadier General Wadly and Major Roesno again explaining Amnesty, and asking for their agreement that you correspond with your prisoner. You should quote General Wadly's letter which is attached. You should also ask whether you could send reading material. It may be useful here to quote countries - for example Spain - where considerable contact between adoption groups and prisoners has been established. Letters should be friendly and courteous.
- e) Groups with adopted prisoners on Buru should then write to them, remembering to send international reply coupons to cover the cost of return postage. Groups with adopted prisoners in Plantungan should write similar letters to those suggested in (d) to Major Prajogo, quoting General Wadly's letter, asking for similar permission in the case of Plantungan.

International reply coupons should be sent with all letters

ADDRESSES:

Angkatan Bersendjata (official armed
press paper)

Editor: Colonel S. Djojopranoto,
Djalan Asemka 29,
Djakarta.

Attorney-General
General Suggih Arto;
Kedjaksanaan Agung RI,
Djl. Hassanuddin 1,
Kebajoran Baru, Djakarta.

(Buru) Brigadier General Wadly
Prawirasupradja, (TNI)
Kedjaksanaan Agung RI,
BAPRERU,
Djl. Hassanuddin 1,
Kebajoran Baru, Djakarta.

(Buru) Major Roesno (CPM)
Djalan Merdeka Timur No. 17,
Djakarta,
Indonesia.

(Plantungan) Major Prajogo (Komandan)
Tefaatra,
Plantungan,
Sukoredjo,
Central Java,
Indonesia.