

CULTURE

THE DALHOUSIE ART GALLERY is on the lower level of the ARTS CENTRE, across from the SUB. The Gallery, formerly in the A.&A. Building was originally started and operated by a volunteer group of professors and students who believed that the students, staff and faculty of Dalhousie (and the community at large) should be given more opportunity of seeing local, regional, national and international art (including painting, drawing, sculpture, and crafts).

The Gallery's permanent collection has been built up with gifts of works of art from generous donors, funds donated by alumni(ae), graduating classes and student bodies for the purchase of works, and, in more recent years, an acquisitions fund in the University's budget for the Art Gallery.

Part of the permanent collection is now on view in the Gallery. We would like you to come and see it. (Tues.-Sat.: 1-5 and 7-9 p.m.; Sunday 2-5 p.m.) Forthcoming exhibitions will be listed in the Gazette, as well as the Tuesday lunch-hour films in Room 406 of the Arts Centre.

Art Gallery Offices: Rooms 213 and 214; tel. 424-2403

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Letters for Liberation

by Corrie Douma

"Amnesty International is an independent, non-governmental organization which has consultative status with the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States. It is recognized by the Organization of African Unity. Amnesty International endeavours to ensure the right for everyone to hold and express his beliefs. It works, irrespective of political considerations, for the release of men and women who are in prison because of their beliefs, or their ethnic origin, colour or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence."

This statement on Amnesty International is widely used by its members all over the world to explain in a few words what this organization is all about, yet it hardly gives an idea of the different aspects of the work being done.

Amnesty International was started in 1961 in London, England, with the intent that it strive for a year to help alleviate the prison conditions under which political prisoners were held and to work towards their release. So much interest was shown in, and support given to, the work of the original temporary committee that it has now grown into an international organization recognized throughout the world for its work.

Patrons of the organization include the Archbishop of Canterbury, Great Britain; Roger Baldwin, President of the International League for the Rights of Man, U.S.A.; Pablo Casals, Puerto Rico; Professor Erich Fromm, New York and Mexico; Lt. Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks, Great Britain; Yehudi Menuhin, Great Britain; Professor Gunnar Myrdal, Sweden; Alan Paton, South Africa; Sean MacBride, S.C., Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists. The Patrons include several winners of the Nobel Peace Prize such as Abbe Dominique Pire of Belgium and the British M.P. Philip Noel-Baker and other Nobel Prize winners such as Professor Max Born of Germany, noted for his pronouncements on the political responsibilities of scientists and the need for them to try to ensure the peaceful use of their inventions.

Amnesty International is completely impartial in its operations and with this in mind, strives to maintain a balance between its adopted prisoners on both sides of the Iron Curtain and also within relatively "uncommitted" countries. Each of the local groups which comprise Amnesty is thus required to "adopt" a minimum of three prisoners (whose release they strive for) one prisoner being from the Communist bloc, one from the Western bloc,

and one from an uncommitted country. There are over a thousand groups now in operation, about 20 in Canada.

The organization is also most concerned with the currently escalating use of torture in many countries and is appalled by the fact that, in some countries, torture (sometimes called "interrogation in depth") is used as a routine part of any questioning of suspects and prisoners.

The Halifax Group was started in May 1974. For a short time they adopted a Greek prisoner, who was released after the recent change of government there. They have now started to work towards the release of an Indonesian prisoner and soon we hope to receive the case sheets of two other prisoners of conscience.

The case of each prisoner is thoroughly investigated by A.I. research department in London prior to its adoption by a local group, to ensure that the prisoner is in no way connected with (or has advocated) acts of violence. The members of each group strive to obtain the release by a variety of means but principally through correspondence with the appropriate government departments in the country concerned, and with the government's Embassies in other parts of the world. The group also corresponds with the prisoner, where this is permissible and thought to be helpful. In addition to corresponding with the authorities and, in some cases, the prisoners, the group can often be of assistance to the wife and family of the prisoner while he is in prison and may also help them and the prisoner after his release (when their plight is often not much better than when he was in prison).

Members of A.I. receive a monthly International Newsletter and a Canadian Bulletin which keeps members informed of major new items regarding political prisoners and which gives lists of information material, special actions, national and international meetings, etc. Also, every month three prisoners, again one from the Communist Bloc, one from the Western Bloc and one from an uncommitted country, are especially adopted by all A.I.

members all over the world. Postcards are sent to Government officials of the country involved, asking for the release of the prisoner. This means that within a couple of weeks thousands of letters and postcards arrive on behalf of these prisoners from all over the world. This quite frequently results in the release of the prisoners.

It is difficult to estimate just how effective A.I. is, for although prisoners are released, this may not always be due to pressure from A.I. members, and, of course, governments do not often admit that the release was in fact the result of A.I. action.

The Halifax Group is drawing attention to the anniversary of the coup in Chile on September 11. A report on Chile will be published on that date by the international organization. — A year after the coup there are still no signs of improvement in the general human rights situation. An estimated 6000-7000 prisoners are still detained in military barracks, detention centres and public prisons. Arrests (and re-arrests) continue. Torture is still wide-spread and in fact has become more sophisticated.

On September 11 they hope through the media to communicate our deep concern for this situation. —

At the end of September they will co-sponsor a special "Week of Concern" on South Vietnam, where according to conservative estimates at least 100,000 prisoners are held.

No need to mention that all this requires funds — not only directly for the support of adopted prisoners, but funds for traveling, research teams, observers to trials, sometimes lawyers fees, etc., etc.

The group is still looking for members and hope to raise funds through membership drives, benefit concerts, sale of calendars and just straight donations.

They are meeting every second Wednesday of each month at 8 P.M. at room 218 at the SUB, but may have to move to a larger meeting place, so watch for announcements around that time of the month, or call

Eileen Dyer, 835-8955 or
Corrie Douma, 463-3498

Evening Courses at Dal

More than 100 classes in 19 subjects are being offered in Dalhousie University's 1974-75 program of late afternoon and evening courses, it was announced yesterday by Dr. Tom Parker, the university's director of summer school and extension.

Dr. Parker said the courses, at different levels and ranging from biology to theatre, would begin on Sept. 16. Registration for the classes begins on Sept. 9 and ends on Sept. 14.

The 122 classes being offered cover biology, business administration, classics, commerce, economics, education, English, French, German, geology, history, mathematics, music, philology, physical education, political science, Russian, sociology and theatre.