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INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS  
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

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AMERICAN REPUBLICS

RELEASED IN FULL

Dominican Republic

New Amnesty Law Close to Final Implementation. The Attorney General told newsmen last week that no political prisoners remain in Dominican jails. According to Embassy Santo Domingo, this marks the completion of stage one of the government's new amnesty law, under which 200 people have now been released.

The second stage, involving the review of impediments to the return of political exiles, is nearly completed. As a result of this review, impediments have now been lifted for approximately 160 exiles. Among these are three persons implicated in political kidnappings and three others implicated in airplane hijackings. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ (Santo Domingo 4458 and 5634, October 4 and 6, respectively)

Paraguay

Hunger Strike Ends. On October 6, the last six political prisoners ended their 56-day hunger strike after Paraguayan officials guaranteed Ambassador White that they would be freed soon thereafter. The Paraguayan pledge was given on condition that it not be publicized by the US government or the Inter-Faith Committee, a local group that closely monitored the strike.

Embassy Asuncion considers that the release decision demonstrates the effectiveness of coordinated, multilateral human rights efforts because it followed informal representations by the American, West German, British, and French ambassadors. The latter carried a personal message from French President Giscard d'Estaing to President Stroessner. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ (AL, Asuncion 4287 and 4332, October 5 and 6, respectively)

INR Comment. With the strike over and all known political prisoners either free or soon to be released, the way now should be open for more rapid movement on the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) visit to Paraguay. President Stroessner's long-standing reluctance to set a date for the visit should also be attenuated by the expected announcement that the IAHRC will travel to neighboring Argentina. The

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The Paraguayans have frequently cited pressure from larger neighbors as a reason for delaying the decision on the visit.

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NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Iraq

Status of Iraqi Jewish Community The US Interests Section in Baghdad reports that while the Iraqi regime "mistreats all of its citizens equally," it has gradually but effectively eliminated measures which discriminate against its Jewish citizens on the basis of religion.

Prior to 1948, according to the Interests Section, the Jewish community in Iraq was one of the largest, best-educated, and most prosperous in the Arab world, with a population of 300,000 to 500,000. The Interests Section believes that the Iraqi Jewish community now numbers about 500. With no rabbi left to serve the community, the 30 Jews who meet regularly for worship hold services under the leadership of a layman. [REDACTED] L, Baghdad 1970, September 25)

Tunisia

Union Leaders Sentenced to Ten-Year Prison Terms. On October 10, the state security court sentenced former trade union federation (UGTT) head Habib Achour and former UGTT regional secretary Abd al-Razzak Ghorbal to 10 years in prison on charges of attempting to overthrow the government during the violent one-day general strike on January 26. The prosecution also claimed that Achour had conspired with the Libyans and attempted to link him with the recent discovery of a Libyan arms cache in the southern part of the country.

Thirteen other union members were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 5 to 8 years. Twenty other defendants were either acquitted or given suspended sentences. The trial had attracted international attention, and both the AFL-CIO and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions had been active in trying to get the charges dismissed.

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Defense lawyers have announced that they will appeal. According to Embassy Tunis, they will argue that:

- the defense was denied many pertinent documents;
- defense lawyers were frequently denied access to their clients;
- the defendants were deprived of their legal right to choose their own lawyers even after the original court-selected lawyers had withdrawn from the case; and
- the court was illegally constituted. (UNCLASSIFIED, Tunis 7247 and 7248, October 10; UNCLASSIFIED, Reuter 930, October 10)

INR Comment. Embassy Tunis considers that the defense lawyers will be on safe ground in arguing that irregular procedures were followed in constituting the security court. The sentences probably would have been even harsher if it had not been for the international attention given to the trial. Prime Minister Nourma has hinted to an AFL-CIO official that Achour's sentence may be commuted at a later date.  
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SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

Czechoslovakia

Police Move to Prevent Contacts With Polish Dissidents. Charter 77 spokesman Jaroslav Sabata was arrested recently and will be tried on charges of "violent resistance to the state," according to dissident sources in Czechoslovakia. Two men arrested with Sabata and later released said that Sabata was beaten by police who took him into custody near the Czechoslovak-Polish border. He had gone there in order to make contact with Polish dissidents. (UNCLASSIFIED, Washington Post, October 7)

INR Comment. Representatives of Czechoslovak and Polish human rights groups met secretly near the border in August and September in order to establish wider cooperation and form "permanent working groups" designed to advance human rights in the two countries, as well as in other communist countries.

Czechoslovak police, who are said to have penetrated the Charter 77 movement, probably decided to move against Charter representatives before contact with Polish dissidents could be more firmly established. In mid-September, Polish police raided the apartment of the spokesman of the Polish Workers Defense Committee in Warsaw and confiscated documents pertaining to cooperation between the two human rights groups.

Soviet Union

Rights Update

Ukrainian Dissident to Emigrate. Ukrainian dissident Nadezhda Svetlichnaya is scheduled to leave the USSR within a day or two. Although comparatively few Ukrainian dissidents have been allowed to emigrate, Soviet authorities issued her visa on the basis of a direct US invitation rather than the customary Israeli visa.

Snegiryov Case Revisited. In a recent letter, Ukrainian dissident writer Geliy Snegiryov denounced as a KGB forgery his alleged confession which was published by a Ukrainian paper following his arrest in 1977. The "confession" implied that Snegiryov was released after he realized the error of his ways. Dissident sources subsequently learned that, in reality, he had been paralyzed as a result of beatings during interrogation. He was transferred to a hospital, where he remains under guard. Several of his manuscripts have reached the West and are being readied for publication.

Rosh Hoshanah. Annual October 1 Rosh Hoshanah services in the Central Moscow Synagogue drew an overflow crowd. As usual, Jews danced and sang in the street outside under police surveillance which, this year, was discreet and unobtrusive.

Jewish Emigration: Some Trends and Problems. The number of Soviet Jews arriving in the Vienna refugee center who choose not to go to Israel reached a new high of 68 percent in early October. This trend has aggravated a variety of problems and concerns:

--The resident Israeli representative bemoans the fact that Israel receives only the old and the sick, while the young professionals go elsewhere.

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--Austrian officials express concern that the increasing flow of refugees is straining existing facilities, especially when there are delays in onward processing.

--Representatives of voluntary agencies in Vienna note that many Jews arriving there have little or no sense of Jewish identity and that many have relatives in the US and elsewhere in the West.

Like any large group representing a cross-section of society, Soviet emigres include a small percentage of difficult cases. Some credible witnesses who have gone through the Vienna-Rome emigration route raise the possibility that local Soviet authorities take advantage of the emigration process in order to get rid of a variety of trouble-makers, including misfits, hoodlums, and petty thieves. ~~( )~~)

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