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# 'THE GREATEST EVIL IS INDIFFERENCE'



Vigil of fear: Relatives of men arrested by security police attend a candlelit church service in Santiago, Chile.

**I**N DIYARBAKIR MILITARY PRISON IN EASTERN TURKEY, 32-year-old Pasa Uzun struggles to survive in a world of cruelty that is beyond the darkest imagination of most people. Five years of systematic torture, miserable food and brutal discipline have reduced him to something akin to a living corpse. His feet are blackened from *falaka*—the beating of the soles of the feet—and he walks with difficulty. His family and friends, permitted only rare visits, dare not complain of his condition, for they are not anxious to join him.

Pasa Uzun is guilty of nothing more than being born a Kurd, a despised and savagely persecuted ethnic minority in Turkey. He faces 16 more years in Diyarbakir. Without help or intervention, his chance of surviving is slim. He is as alone, and probably as afraid, as any man can be.

Half a world away, in Cuba's Combinado del Este Prison, Ricardo Bofill, 41, once a professor of philosophy and the vice

rector of the University of Havana, spends day after day alone in a dark, windowless cell or lying on a cot in the prison infirmary. His health is precarious—he suffers from a serious heart ailment. He has served more than eight years in Cuban prisons for publicly complaining about the government's human rights violations. Fidel Castro, taking a cue from the Soviet Union, once had him locked up in a mental hospital.

Bofill is held *incomunicado*—he receives and sends no mail, is allowed no visitors. His wife, Maria Elena, and 18-year-old son, Alberto, live in Miami and depend upon released prisoners for scraps of news about his worsening condition. They worry about whether he can survive the 11 years his sentence still has to run.

Pasa Uzun and Ricardo Bofill are political prisoners, typical of uncounted tens of thousands of similar human rights victims who are rotting away, anonymous and largely forgotten, in the prisons of perhaps half the countries of the world. They are not terrorists who sought change by violence but activists whose only "crimes" were peaceful dissent, complaining of injustice, voicing opposition, demanding reform or seeking recognition for their cause—rights that are guaranteed and protected in the United States and other democratic nations.

Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, are the most widely known human rights victims: A critically acclaimed HBO television special last year starring Jason Robards and Glenda Jackson brought their poignant story into the homes of millions of Americans. Last January, during his tour of South Africa, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's visit with Winnie Mandela helped focus media attention on the 21-year imprisonment of her husband, Nelson Mandela, Africa's best-known political prisoner.

The vast majority of human rights victims, unfortunately, enjoy no such attention—or the protection that such publicity can bring. They are ordinary people like Pasa Uzun and Ricardo Bofill, far removed from America's consciousness and little known even in their own countries. Their greatest hope lies with human rights groups who work to ex-

By Michael Satchell

COVER PHOTOGRAPH FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEPICTS EDWIN LOPEZ, ARRESTED IN THE PHILIPPINES ON FEB. 20, 1982, AND TORTURED WITH ELECTROSHOCK

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pose abuses, end torture and executions, speed trials, improve conditions for prisoners and, hopefully, to engineer their freedom. It is a dauntingly difficult task. It is also one in which anyone can play a vital role.

There are three principal groups in the United States dedicated to ending human rights abuses: Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch and Americas Watch. Augmenting their efforts are pro-

fessional groups—doctors, lawyers, educators—and émigré organizations that focus on abuses within a specific country or region.

"Every American should be concerned about human rights, because every American has a vested interest in the issue," says Robert L. Bernstein, president of Random House publishers. Long an activist for human rights, he is also the chairman of Helsinki Watch.

"It's a powerful tool to get people of other nations to believe in our way of life," adds Bernstein. "Violating basic human rights often promotes communism. It creates unrest and instability in a country, and this can lead to conflict. Conflict in turn may involve the United States. It may be your tax dollars that have to pay for American aid. It may be your son who is drafted to fight this war. Human rights is a far more important issue than many people realize."

The author, scholar and humanist Elie Wiesel says, "The greatest evil today is indifference. To know and not to act is a way of consenting to these injustices. The planet has become a very small place. What happens in other countries affects us."

Wiesel, who survived the Nazis' Buchenwald and Auschwitz concentration camps, shares a particular empathy with today's forgotten human rights victims.

"I felt during the war that what was being done was a secret," he says. "Later, I found out that it wasn't. Absolutely the greatest despair we Jews felt was when we realized that people knew what was being done but didn't care, didn't act to try to help. When we needed help, nobody came. This must not happen today."

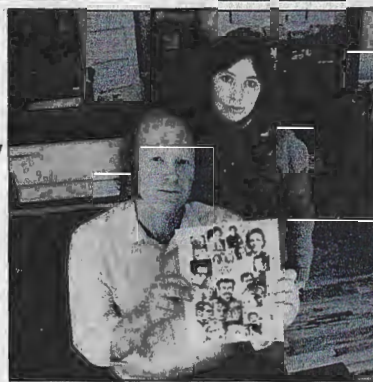
Amnesty International, headquartered in London, is the largest, best known and most influential of the groups, with 150,000 members in the United States and 500,000 worldwide. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, Amnesty enjoys a reputation for scrupulous research and strict impartiality as it catalogs abuses and uses its membership to pressure offending governments.

The organization is structured to allow anyone to channel his or her energy and concerns directly toward helping victims. The membership is broken down into small "adoption" groups scattered throughout some 50 nations, with the groups formed around a church, a club, a neighborhood, a factory or an office.

Each group is assigned two so-called "prisoners of conscience"—victims from other countries who have been imprisoned for nonviolent activities. Group members send material aid to the victims and their families—money, food, clothing, medicine—and also launch a mail campaign. Letters of encouragement are sent to the victims; polite, carefully worded appeals for freedom are sent to anyone of influence—prison officials, a minister of security, an ambassador or the country's political leader.

Often there is no way of knowing if

# Every American has a vested interest in the human rights issue



Scott and Ellen Harrison run Amnesty International network from their Colorado home.

the prisoner receives the letters or if the appeals contribute to his welfare. Many times, though, this polite pressure through the simple tactic of writing letters can have a powerful effect.

A Dominican Republic trade union leader named Julio de Peña Valdez, for example, was seized in a police raid and held naked in an underground cell. Amnesty launched an extensive letter campaign that prodded Dominican President Joaquín Balaguer to release him.

"When the first 200 letters came, the guards gave me back my clothes," the grateful prisoner later wrote. "Then the

next 200 came, and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming, 3000 of them. The president was informed. The letters still kept arriving, and the president called the prison and told them to let me go.

"After I was released, the president called me to his office. He said: 'How is it that a trade union leader like you has so many friends from all over the world?' He showed me an enormous box full of letters he had received and, when we

*continued*

## In Soviet Asylum



Anna Chertkova

For 11 years, Anna Chertkova, a former postal worker, has been imprisoned in the Ninth Section of the Special Psychiatric Hospital in Tashkent, USSR. She is neither ill nor crazy. The Soviet Union uses mental hospitals to punish dissidents and political prisoners. Anna Chertkova is a member of an officially unauthorized branch of the Baptist Church and a religious activist who refuses to renounce her belief.

Now in her late 50s, she has been the subject of official persecution for most of her life for her persistent religious proselytizing. For years, authorities denied her living accommodations in her hometown of Alma-Ata, and she was forced to survive for two winters in a lean-to hut she built from wooden scraps. In February 1974, she was tried on criminal charges of "spreading rumors and fabrications" and "disseminating anti-Soviet slander."

The Special Psychiatric Hospital in Tashkent was designed to hold dangerous mental patients and felons. It is surrounded by high walls and an electric fence and guarded by security men with automatic weapons. A source within the hospital got word to Amnesty International that Anna is subjected to repeated injections of powerful drugs because "she openly confesses her belief in God and refuses to accept communism."

## Disappeared After Arrest in Haiti

The case file on William Josma of Haiti is marked "DISAPPEARED," for there has never been any official acknowledgement by the authorities of his arrest and detention. An engineer, owner of a construction business and a former math teacher, Josma, 36, was arrested in Port-au-Prince on April 4, 1981, by the infamous Tonton Macoutes, the security forces of Haitian President Jean Claude Duvalier. He was taken first to the Caserne Dessalines military barracks, where political prisoners are held incommunicado and in solitary confinement. Torture is often employed during interrogation.

The reason for his arrest isn't clear, but in 1979 Josma had stood as an opponent of Duvalier in the legislative elections. Government pressure forced him to withdraw as a candidate.

After three weeks of interrogation, he was transferred to the National Penitentiary. In January 1982—following an abortive invasion attempt by U.S.-



William Josma

based Haitian exiles—Josma was reported by fellow prisoners to have been taken away in handcuffs from his section of the jail. He has not been heard of since. The inmates report that Josma was accused of knowing about the invasion beforehand. An Amnesty International support group based in New York has written to about 40 Haitian officials, and Duvalier also has been petitioned, all without response. There is hope that Josma is still alive.

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## GREATEST EVIL/continued

parted, he gave them to me." Karel Kyncl, an imprisoned Czechoslovak journalist, said after his release: "A political prisoner comes to know about Amnesty's work on his behalf usually only indirectly, from the sarcastic remarks of his jailers or from pieces of information communicated to him by members of his family in their strictly censored letters. But it is enough to give him a wonderful feeling that he is not completely forgotten after all, that somebody cares."

Amnesty also has become synonymous with the effort to expose nations that practice torture—an issue steeped in both horror and hypocrisy. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which all UN members subscribe, prohibits torture, and few nations are willing to admit that it happens within their borders. Yet a 1984 Amnesty report titled "Torture in the Eighties" carried meticulously detailed accounts of inhumane treatment of prisoners in 66 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

By publicizing the abuses, Amnesty hopes that the leaders of repressive regimes will be shamed or pressured into curbing torture in the glare of world public opinion and, perhaps, the censure of other nations. "Even the cruelest tyrants have an element of pride—they want to go down in history looking good," observes Richard Roach, Amnesty's chief of press relations.

Amnesty's focus on torture victims includes a sort of emergency response team called the Urgent Action Network, which also relies on fast, direct input from members. It works like this: Word is received in London headquarters that a person has been arrested, taken to a detention center and is likely to be tortured. The information is quickly evaluated and flashed to Urgent Action Networks in various countries.

In the United States, Scott Harrison, a former Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, and his wife, Ellen, run the nationwide operation from their home near Nederland, Colo. By telephone, Telex and computer, they contact a network of volunteers. Within days, hundreds—perhaps thousands—of telegrams and letters are on their way to the country in question, appealing for the threatened prisoner.

Americas Watch and Helsinki Watch cooperate closely with Amnesty and share the same broad goals, but they operate differently. Instead of a mass-membership, grass-roots organization, the Watch committees are made up of small groups of experts and professionals within various fields.

Helsinki Watch monitors human rights chiefly in the USSR, eastern Europe and Turkey, while Americas Watch concentrates on Central and South America and the Caribbean. The two committees, which can exert strong pressure, serve as watchdogs of official U.S. actions on human rights and are regularly called to testify before Congress.

Selective morality is one of their recurring complaints about U.S. foreign policy. Critics say that our government historically has denounced our Communist or leftist

adversaries for human rights abuses while downplaying or ignoring the atrocities committed by our allies.

Aryeh Neier, vice chairman of both Watch committees, asserts: "One-third of the world's countries use torture on a regular basis. If the U.S. government genuinely put its muscle to work, it could influence many of these nations, and we would clearly be more effective. Most of the time, the State Department won't put its muscle behind human rights—it's just not willing to sacrifice its interests. It just looks the other way—and the awful suffering continues."

A perfect example of this dilemma is Turkey—and the case of Pasa Uzun, who is one of the thousands of political prisoners incarcerated and tortured under a martial-law crackdown that began in 1978 and was followed by a military coup in September 1980.

Turkey's importance to the United States is unquestioned. It anchors the southern flank of the NATO defensive line, provides an important intelligence listening post into the Soviet Union (with whom it shares a border) and operates bases for vast amounts of military equipment, including nuclear weapons.

After Israel and Egypt, Turkey is the third-largest recipient of American military and economic aid—\$878 million approved by Congress in this fiscal year. The United States obviously can wield considerable influence over Turkey, yet this ally's human rights record is one of the worst.

Jerri Laber, executive director of Helsinki Watch, has traveled extensively throughout Turkey investigating abuses. She reports mass arrests, deplorable prison conditions and widespread torture of men,

women—even children—that is, she says, "barbaric, primitive and horrendous."

"Diyarbakir Military Prison is possibly the most horrifying hellhole in the world," Laber recently testified before a Congressional hearing. "It is a dungeon of horrors where prisoners are tortured bestially. Seven prisoners reportedly died in Diyarbakir in January 1984. A lawyer held in the prison, one of the few people who have emerged to report his experiences, personally witnessed the murders of 10 of his fellow prisoners, two of whom were burned alive."

Diyarbakir was built to hold 300 inmates. Pasa Uzun is one of 5000 who are jammed into the nondescript, modern concrete structure lodged in the headquarters complex of Turkey's Seventh Army. Diyarbakir is the center of the Kurdistan region, where the Kurdish people have been under constant attack by the ruling Turks for decades.

A former student training to be a teacher, Pasa Uzun was a founding member of a Kurdish cultural and youth association. He was arrested in 1979 during a wave of violent oppression against Kurds, trade unionists, peace activists and others.

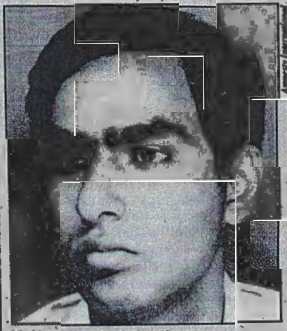
After a series of court hearings over a four-year period, he was found guilty by military judges of "separatist activities" and sentenced to 16 years. An Amnesty International investigation of his case states: "Pasa Uzun is reported to have been extensively tortured after he had delivered a 16-page defense statement during the opening hearing of his trial in November 1980. He is reported to have been unable to walk when brought to a trial hearing on March 19, 1981, and to have been barely audible when he tried to tell the court how he and

## Facing Death Sentence In Pakistan

**C**onvincing evidence of a political frame-up is of little comfort to the Massachusetts relatives of Mohammed Ejaz Bhatti, a 24-year-old Pakistani currently held in the Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore. After voluntarily appearing at a police station for questioning on Dec. 26, 1981, he was arrested, taken to the Moghaipura police station, hung upside down for several days and severely beaten.

An official report maintains that the police arrested Bhatti three days later (when he was in custody), after he fled from his parent's home with a grenade in his pocket. He was sentenced to 14 years of hard labor, later charged with terrorism and now faces a death sentence.

A student, Bhatti is a member of the Pakistan People's Party, which opposes the country's ruler, President Mohammed Zia. He appears to be the victim of a widespread police roundup of dissidents. His sister, Kausar, who works for Blue Cross in Boston, was allowed to visit her brother recently. Torture sessions involv-



Mohammed Ejaz Bhatti

ing beating and burning have left him in pitiful condition, she reports, and he is forced to wear leg irons continually.

"He survives on a punishment diet of moldy bread, boiled radishes and turnips, and tea," she reports. "He is allowed no protein. He is like a skeleton, and his teeth are dropping out. He has open wounds which will not heal. These people are so cruel."

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A patch worn behind an ear can control motion sickness for up to three days.

changes. A breakthrough is the ALZA Corporation's new OROS system, which safely releases drugs at a controlled rate for up to 24 hours through a tablet that becomes a kind of pump after it's swallowed. "Any of the widely used oral drugs that must be taken three or four times a day become candidates for OROS to simplify treatment down to once or twice a day," says Dr. John Urquhart, a scientist at ALZA.

Controlled release also has come to liquids, through the new Pennkinetic system. Developed by Pennwalt Corp., it is tasteless and a boon to children and the elderly, who have difficulty swallowing pills. Delsym's 12-hour dextromethorphan cough syrup uses this system, and two liquid decongestant antihistamines have been introduced.

Because the new systems simplify the way we take drugs, they also improve patient compliance, a major problem in effective treatment. Most of us frequently don't take medicine as prescribed (especially if we're starting to feel better), and the result can be serious.

Studies show that compliance jumps when the number of doses is reduced. This is a central concern for the chronically ill, who may need treatment for a lifetime. Some glaucoma patients, for example, can replace eyedrops taken 28 times a week with ALZA's Ocusert, an insert similar to a contact lens that releases medication for an entire week.

Improvements in drug delivery also can help asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema patients who take theophylline. G.D. Searle now offers it as a once-a-day controlled-release capsule (Theo 24), while Key uses a novel approach to make the drug available for those who find it difficult to swallow tablets. Its Theo-Dur Sprinkle, tasteless mini-pellets of the normally bitter drug, are sprinkled on soft foods, like applesauce, for 12-hour relief.

Many other innovative delivery methods, including implant pumps for insulin, are in varying stages of research and development. Experts expect a female contraceptive implant that protects for five years or more to be available soon in this country. It is already sold in Europe. Farther into the future, experts predict systems that will have homing devices to focus on particular cells without harming the rest of the body, thus minimizing side effects. These may be significant for anticancer therapy.

But, for now, the new patches and pills are making it easier for all of us to take our medicine.



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other prisoners had been tortured."

And what of Pasa Uzun today?

"He's alive," reports an official at Amnesty's London headquarters. "We are uncertain as to his present state of health. Our last reports were that it was very poor. He needs help."

Information on Ricardo Bofill in Havana's Combinado del Este Prison is similarly sketchy. Like Pasa Uzun—and some 5000 other nonviolent political prisoners around the world—he has been adopted as an Amnesty "prisoner of conscience," but it's doubtful that he realizes that strangers overseas are aware of his plight and are writing appeals for his freedom.

Bofill first ran afoul of Cuban authorities in 1967, when he was imprisoned for five years for protesting human rights violations. After his release, he was prevented from returning to his academic career and was allowed to work only as a floor-sweeper in a can factory. His political activities continued, and he was locked up again in 1980 for sending human rights complaints and documents to the United Nations. (Castro has little patience with political dissent. A 45-year-old auto mechanic named Jesus Barrios is serving four years in Combinado del Este for publicly uttering, "Viva Reagan.")

After Bofill's release in 1982, he was subjected to constant official harassment. On April 29, 1983, fearful after telephone threats and other pressure, the small, slightly built Bofill sought refuge in the French Embassy. Cuban guards surrounded the compound, and high-level negotiations began. The French ambassador was given assurances by Cuba's vice president that Bofill would be allowed to leave the country, but the promise was broken. His attempts to emigrate and join his wife and son in Miami were rebuffed, and in September of that year—after he gave a brief interview to two French journalists—Bofill was arrested. After being locked up in a psychiatric hospital, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison for "deviationism."

"My mother and I are very worried about him," says Alberto Bofill, his son. "We have been told that he has received mental and physical torture. He has had a heart attack and gets no medicine. We were very disappointed when Castro did not release him last year with other political prisoners when Jesse Jackson went to Havana. We feel helpless because there's nothing we can do at this time."

Like Pasa Uzun, Ricardo Bofill is no longer an anonymous political prisoner. Whether he returns to the ranks of the forgotten and uncounted thousands of human rights victims remains to be seen. 18

For more information, write to: Amnesty International U.S.A., Dept. P, 322 Eighth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001; or Helsinki Watch/Americas Watch, Dept. P, 36 W. 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

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