ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY IS A GROUP OF ARTISTS COMMITTED TO PREVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, SAVING LIVES AND PROMOTING A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

MONTHLY BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2005

Welcome to the *Artists for Amnesty Monthly Bulletin*, which will keep you informed on critical human rights issues, cases of individuals at risk, and the life-saving work of Amnesty

LORD OF WAR

Amnesty International USA is proud to announce its support of Lord of War, a film starring Academy Award®-Winner Nicolas Cage which illustrates the deadly impact of the uncontrolled global arms trade. The national release is September 16, 2005. The film follows the story of Yuri Orlov (Cage), a New York-based arms broker who traffics weapons to dictators and human rights abusers, and the efforts of the Interpol Agent (Ethan Hawke) trying to stop him. The movie is written and directed by Andrew Niccol and co-stars Jared Leto, Bridget Moynahan, and Ian Holm.

Nicolas Cage in *Lord of War* courtesy of Lion's Gate Films.

Small arms kill approximately 800 people a day around the world. And every year, hundreds of thousands more are maimed, tortured, or forced to flee their homes because of weapons in irresponsible hands.

AIUSA is working to mobilize public pressure on the U.S. government to be a leader in efforts to curb the deadly arms trade. Over the next year, we will advocate for a global agreement on arms brokering and arms transfers as well as increased U.S. assistance to foreign governments to better secure their arms stockpiles and exports.

Throughout September, AIUSA will update its Lord of War/ Control Arms Campaign online action kit, Educators' Guide, and other activist tools to help your organizing around this film Log onto: http://www.aiusa.org/lordofwar

MILLION FACES

The **MILLON FACES** petition is collecting photos and self-portraits of people all around the world to demonstrate to governments that we need effective and urgent action to control the arms trade crisis. The campaign hopes to collect one million faces by 2008, as a powerful visual message of support for stopping the deadly flow of arms. With your help it will be the world's biggest popular movement against the misuse of arms.

From left to right, Michael Moore, Emma Thompson, Lilian Thuram, Bob Geldof, Daniel Bebe, Salif Diao, Joe Fiennes, and Dido

For more information please visit: **www.controlarms.org**

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

Rachel Wiesz and Fernando Meirelles at the LA Screening of The Constant Gardener.

On August 15, Artists for Amnesty and Focus Features co-hosted the Los Angeles screening of *The Constant Gardener* at the Linwood Dunn Theater in Hollywood. Director, Fernando Meirelles and actress Rachel Weiss participated in a Q&A after the film.

Rachel Weisz plays the role of Tessa Quayle, a dedicated activist who has been found brutally murdered. Tessa's traveling companion, a local doctor, appears to have fled the scene, and the evidence points to a crime of passion. Members of the British High Commission assume that Tessa's widower, their mild-mannered colleague Justin Quayle (Ralph Fiennes), will leave the matter to their discretion. However, Justin is determined to clear his wife's name as he embarks on a course to learn about the pharmaceutical industry, whose crimes Tessa was on the verge of uncovering, and searches for the truth.

The Constant Gardener opened nationally on August 31.

SEOUL TRAIN

Artists for Amnesty is proud to announce a partnership with *ITVS Community*, the national community engagement program of the *Independent Television Service* in support of the Emmy award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Artists for Amnesty will partner with ITVS' Community Cinema screening program around documentary films that feature important human rights themes. ITVS Community and Artists for Amnesty are committed to educating communities about important human rights issues and connecting them with the resources to get involved.

Artists for Amnesty and the City of West Hollywood will co-present *ITVS Community Cinema's* screening of SEOUL TRAIN at the Pacific Design Center's Silver Screen Theater on Monday, September 26 at 7:00 pm. Seoul Train is a daring documentary that uses hidden camera footage to film North Korean refugees as they risk their lives fleeing their homeland through China, desperately seeking asylum in other countries with the aid of activists who maintain a dangerous underground railroad. The screening is free and will be followed by a panel discussion and a reception featuring light refreshments.

SEOUL TRAIN will broadcast nationally on PBS' *Independent Lens* on December 13, 2005. To RSVP or for more information, please call 310.815.0450 ext. 107.

GET UP, STAND UP

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the recently passed law governing the demobilization of armed groups in Colombia is wholly inadequate. It threatens to guarantee the impunity of those responsible for heinous and widespread human rights atrocities, not only paramilitaries, but also those who have backed the paramilitary such as wealthy landowners and government and military officials. The demobilization law may not rid the country of the scourge of illegal armed activity and human rights abuses against the civilian population. In fact, it may make the situation worse by:

-Providing de facto amnesties for paramilitaries and guerrillas responsible for serious human rights abuses and violations

-Perpetuating impunity for human rights abusers and violators thereby undermining the rule of law in Colombia;

-Failing to guarantee the effective dismantling of paramilitary structures by focusing solely on individual combatants;

-Failing to expose those Colombian security forces, government officials, and private citizens who have supported and benefited from the activities of the paramilitary;

-Failing to establish a full and independent judicial process to oversee the demobilization process;

While the demobilization of Colombia's armed groups is a laudable goal, Amnesty International believes that this law could fail to ensure that the victims' rights to truth, justice and reparations are guaranteed and may actually worsen security and human rights for all Colombians.

For example, the law provides for maximum sentences of 8 years, even in cases such as the Mapiripan massacre in which approximately 100 paramilitary forces assailed this small town for five days killing as many as 30 people. They used machetes and chainsaws to torture and decapitate their victims, and then dumped their bodies -- some still alive -- into the Guaviare River. The law would allow those responsible for this heinous crime to potentially reduce their sentence by another 18 months, serving as little as 6.5 years. Worse, the law does not guarantee full and truthful confessions from those who wish to benefit from it and the role of victims is limited to the reparations process after a sentence has been determined.

Please write to Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and urge her to ensure that U.S. assistance is not utilized to fund this flawed process and to send a clear message to the Colombian authorities that the U.S. expects those responsible for gross human rights violations to be held accountable in accordance with Colombia's international obligations.

TAKE ACTION

Send appeals to:

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC 20520

BELARUSIAN POC RELEASED

"The eminent Belarusian academic, Professor Yury Bandazhevsky, was conditionally released from prison on August 5, after serving four years of an eight year sentence. Speaking to Amnesty International, Yury Bandazhevsky said that he is now spending his time getting used to his freedom and looking into work possibilities. He also said "*I would like to send a huge thank you to all Amnesty International members across the world whose support I could feel. The work of Amnesty International is very useful.*" He was released suddenly under a recent amnesty declared by President Lukashenka on May 5, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

However, Amnesty International is concerned that Yury Bandazhevsky will remain under the authorities' control for the next five years, subjected to various conditions that include having to report regularly to the police, and being prohibited from assuming any managerial or political functions. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the conditions to be lifted.

On June 18, 2001, Professor Yury Bandazhevsky was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment after being convicted of taking bribes from students seeking admission to the Gomel Medical Institute, where he was a rector. He has always maintained his innocence. Both domestic and international trial observers believed the trial to be unfair and Amnesty International was concerned that he did not have access to a lawyer during his pre-trial detention. Amnesty International adopted him as a Prisoner of Conscience, believing that he was convicted on trumped up charges because of his open criticism of the authorities' response to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Since 1999, Yury Bandazhevsky's case has been taken up by numerous national and international human rights organizations as well as by celebrities, including the popular Russian rock band, Leningrad, and the English rock band, The Cure.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Screening: ***Lord of War***

Screening: ***Seoul Train,***
Monday, September 26
The Pacific Design Center 7:00pm

OCTOBER

Screening: ***Human Trafficking***

Screening: ***Innocent Voices***

Book signing: ***Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*** **by Jimmie Briggs**

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