

## Amnesty International not Marxist

I feel compelled to correct the impression which may have been created in some readers' minds by V. L. Williams' letter, *Librarians and censorship*, in *InCite* of 30 August.

Many of the points made by Mr or Ms Williams could be challenged, but I will restrict myself to the juxtaposition of 'Amnesty International; and other Marxist movements'.

Apart from the premier of one state, who chose to label Amnesty as a Marxist organisation, most people who take an interest in world affairs are already aware that Amnesty is non-political. It includes members of all political parties and of none. To quote from its August 1985 Australian newsletter, 'it seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, gender, ethnic origins, language or religion, provided they have not used or advocated violence.'

Each month details are published of three prisoners of the month, chosen from a communist country, a capitalist country and a member of the non-aligned group. Supporters of Amnesty around the world write to the authorities in all three countries appealing for

the release of these prisoners of conscience.

For example, the prisoners chosen for the August 1985 issue were detained in Kenya, Taiwan and East Germany.

So, how can Amnesty International be regarded as a Marxist movement?

*Herbert Compton*

## More on fees

Whilst I do not intend to 'quibble' about the worthiness of the LAA nor the scale of fees charged, I feel that I must take issue with the argument raised by Joan Walker (Letters, *InCite*, 30 August 1985).

Ms Walker makes the point that '... \$258 down to \$23 seems a lot to pay out all at once, recognise that the weekly amount is infinitesimal by comparison ...'

Unfortunately, LAA fees are not paid on a weekly basis — they are extracted painfully in full, or in two largish lumps at the beginning of each year.

If some realistic form of instalment payment was offered, the burden of LAA fees for new and continuing members would be reduced. Many unions offer a 'check off' system for their subscriptions. This kind of payment is negotiated with employers and involves automatic deductions from one's pay to the union involved. The 'check off' system is used successfully by many white collar unions to retain and extend membership.

Within the LAA, the issue of declining membership has been seen as crucial. I feel that a realistic system of instalment payment of LAA fees is integral to the retention and extension of LAA membership.

*Anne Doherty*

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## Library automation disasters

There is a constant and justified lament that virtually all publications on library automation provide information only on projects or aspects of projects that were successful, or, all too often, on projects that never in fact began.

To remedy this situation, and enable the library profession to profit from the hard-won experience of those who were at least brave enough to try, I wish to compile a book with the probable title *Library Automation the Hard Way*.

All those who have been responsible for or involved in disasters or major hiccups in automation projects, including automation-related areas such as retrospective conversion, and who would like to contribute, anonymously or otherwise, are invited to contact me on (02) 99 2442, or at PO Box 184, Narrabeen, NSW 2101. We can provide typing assistance if your fingers have been burnt right up to the elbows!

*Glenn Sanders*

Sanders Information Management Services

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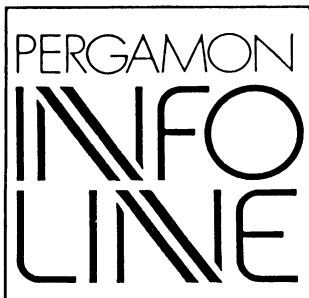
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College Librarian, SACAE

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