

Publicity is key for Amnesty International, speaker says

By LYDIAN BERNHARDT
Staff Writer

In Paraguay, former Capt. Napoleon Oregoza sits in prison, as he has for the past 25 years. Imprisoned on a false murder charge after protesting against his country's government, he is now the most forgotten prisoner in all Paraguay. According to government officials, he could have challenged the

falsity of the charge through his lawyer, but the officials refused to let his lawyer see him. After several years of imprisonment, Oregoza was eligible for parole, but again the lawyer was refused access to him. Several years later, Oregoza could have appealed again for parole on the grounds of good behavior, but because of his "bad" behavior — attempted suicide — he was assigned

to solitary confinement instead. Now, after 25 years, Oregoza is due to be released from prison on Dec. 17. In August 1987, however, the Supreme Court of Paraguay made an annual visit to the jail to review the prisoners and their cases. During this visit, Oregoza screamed his name to them and begged for release through the window of his cell. The officials' response was to brick up the window.

It is doubtful, now, that he will be released. Oregoza's case has been adopted by Amnesty International. James David Barber, former chairman of the board of Amnesty International and a Duke University professor, told students during a speech at UNC Friday night that the next step in Oregoza's case will be bringing it to the attention of the public. Barber spoke as part of the Campus Y's Human Rights Week.

To raise awareness of Oregoza's situation, Barber said Amnesty International will employ a tactic it does not usually use: media sensationalism. "Media is a frontier for us," Barber said. "We have the information, but we need to understand how to work better with the media to get it out. The next generation — the one that's in college right now — is important to us because they will be the next ones to continue our work, and they're the visual generation. They're used to watching movies and television to get information, which means that our organization should take a new direction and learn to target these media."

be used in Oregoza's case. "Often, there is one dramatic event that enables us to enliven a case," he said. "Bricking up the window was the event that helped us enliven Oregoza's and get some news out. But these methods alone are not enough. Pope John Paul has plans to visit Paraguay next spring. Paraguayans don't like Americans, but they do respect the Pope and value his opinion of their country. We hope to write the Pope before his visit and ask him to request the release of Napoleon Oregoza during his visit."

Barber quoted television newscaster Ted Koppel's explanation of why the press doesn't cover more human rights violations: "Suffering isn't news." "We've got to make it news," Barber said. "We have to find an angle on it that makes it newsworthy. Our aim is to get these people out of jail. If we have to jazz it up, we'll jazz it up. We'll get Bono to sing and Sting to smile if we have to. How do we get this stuff on the evening news? By getting people to think about it dramatically. Human rights is becoming fashionable."

The organization works by "adopting" a prisoner on a completely global, non-partisan basis and working to get that person released, usually through writing letters directly to him, his government and his jailers.

All the prisoners who are adopted are "prisoners of conscience," which means they have not committed a violent crime and are not in prison for advocating violence. Barber said this stipulation keeps people from being afraid to endorse the release of violent prisoners and keeps Amnesty International from being associated with violence. "Our goal is to establish the individuality of human rights victims," he said. "We're making some progress in the universality of caring." Although the public is becoming more educated, Barber said, the jailers are too. "Opponents of human rights are more rich, more powerful, more sophisticated than ever before," he said. "They hire consultants in the lobbying business to promote their cause in Washington. They work on getting loans for countries that torture throughout the prison system. Those countries then rationalize to make torture seem plausible."

Congress committee suggests changes in the Student Code

By BARBARA LINN
Staff Writer

To make the Student Government constitution a more unified document, the Student Congress Rules and Judiciary Committee is proposing changes in the Student Code.

The committee hopes to eliminate useless sections and discrepancies in the document.

Committee chairman Stuart Hathaway (Dist. 12) said the committee is considering making changes in all six titles of the Student Code.

"Changes on the scale we're proposing have not been made since the Campus Governing Council replaced the Student Legislature in 1972," Hathaway said.

The committee has been examining student constitutions from about a dozen other universities, he said.

"We have gotten a lot of ideas, but one has to be careful when taking a model from another school and placing it here at UNC because it won't turn out like it looks on paper," Hathaway said.

Areas in which changes may be made are election dates, inauguration dates, congress procedures and the responsibilities of all student government appointees and congress committees, Hathaway said.

Changes in election dates have already been approved, Hathaway said. The February elections have been moved from the first Tuesday of the month to the third Tuesday.

Hathaway said the committee is thinking about changing the inauguration date from two weeks after the February elections to probably sometime in April.

Postponing the inaugurations will smooth out the transition between the administrations, Hathaway said. "This will allow the present administration to finish the programs it started, and allow the new administration to organize itself before taking office."

Possible changes in congress procedures involve how legislation is implemented and how it moves from the congress speaker to the student body president, Hathaway said.

Committee member Curtis Small (Dist. 5) said a few changes in the code should have been made long ago to make the campus governing process fairer.

"We need to revamp the system to pass bills so that what will happen is like what happens in the United States' government," Small said. The present congress legislative system

allows a bill to be killed by a congress committee so that the whole congress never sees the bill, he said.

The committee is also considering increasing the number of the congress' standing committees. Small said. The congress has only three standing committees: finance, student affairs and rules and judiciary.

Committee member Gene Davis (Dist. 18) said some universities have as many as eight committees, with each congress member serving on two or three committees.

"We need to re-evaluate which bills go through which committees," Davis said. "We especially need to restructure the Student Affairs Committee.

It gets all the new business in Student Congress. We need to take some of the load off that committee."

Before changes can be made to the Student Code, Hathaway said, "We need to make sure the committee itself is satisfied with what it is proposing."

He said committee members hope to bring their proposals to the congress at its Dec. 2 meeting.

Changes to Title I of the Student Code would require a constitutional referendum. Changes in Title II, Part I would require approval by two-thirds of the Student Congress. Changes in other titles would require approval by a majority of the congress, Hathaway said.

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Camp said it would be logistically impossible to search each person who enters the Smith Center.

"How long would it take to search 20,000 people?" he asked.

Camp said his chief concern is to protect the safety of Smith Center patrons, as well as those people who may be carrying something illegal.

"We're trying to protect the people who have an illegal item or an illegal liquid, because once they're in there, there's nothing we can do for them," he said. "They're going to get arrested."

The Smith Center must walk a fine line between protection and persecution of its patrons, Camp said.

"On the one hand, we don't want to violate anyone's civil liberties. But on the other hand, if you're sitting on the lower level, and someone sitting on the upper level is drinking illegally and gets sick over the railing, that's also a violation of your rights."

The disclaimer has no effect on Smith Center operations, Camp said.

"It is a general statement written in a general way so it conforms to all general laws," he said. "It is so general that it is nothing to be concerned about."

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