

Liliane Bernard

One of the key persons in the creation of medical groups that work with torture is no longer.

Liliane Bernard died on 18 April 1993 at the age of 53.

It is not only a colleague who has left us. Liliane was a person of great integrity, professionalism, earnestness, with a strong sense of humour, who threw herself into work with torture victims with unbounded energy.

From her home in the Rue de Miromesnil, supported by her husband Dr. Alain Bernard and their two sons, she created a centre for this work, based on an atmosphere of warmth, humanity, and tolerance; a centre which we all loved to visit. A haven, but a very living one.

We spent many evenings there, few or many of us, even 40-50 people. Liliane and Alain's home was always open to those who from the very start supported medical work against torture. Their country home also welcomed us.

The first years, the early and mid-1970s, were full of *hard work* to make others understand the ideas behind what was created, of the *fight* against ignorance, but also of *friendship*.

Herman van Geuns, Erik Karup Pedersen, Ole Vedel Rasmussen, Sherman Carroll, Eva Forest, Liliane and Alain - we were not that many in the beginning, but the work grew in friendship. Within a few years, several thousand doctors were organized in Amnesty International's Medical Advisory Board, an advisory body for the Executive Committee.

Liliane and Alain Bernard were not only very efficient in the international medical work against torture. They created "La Commission Médicale" within the French section of Amnesty International. Liliane Bernard was the coordinator of this commission up to her death.

She helped to organize the first international medical meeting against torture: "Violations of Human Rights: Torture and the Medical Profession",

which was held in Athens 10-11 March 1978. Doctors from 15 countries participated.

It was at this meeting that various working groups were created, among them one for work on rehabilitation of torture victims. This is the main background for the existence today of rehabilitation centres in more than 50 countries.

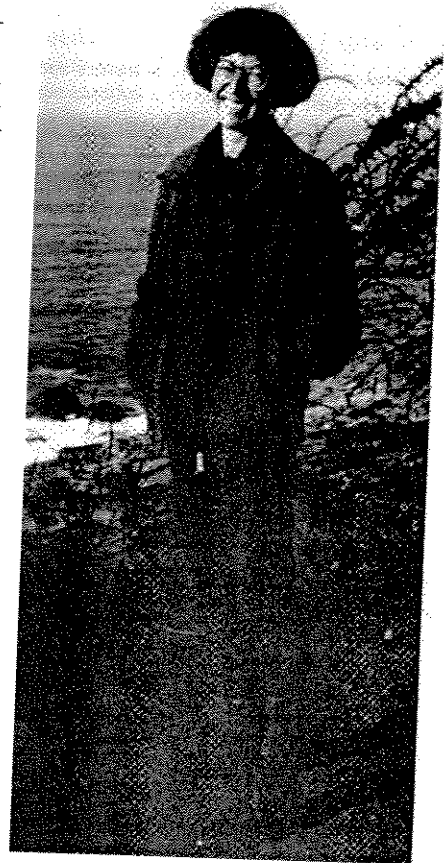
France was one of the first countries to create a rehabilitation centre, AVRE [Association pour les Victimes de la Torture en Exile], under the leadership of Dr. Hélène Jaffé. Here, as everywhere, Liliane Bernard was always ready to help, by word and, especially, deed.

Apart from the daily routine, Liliane was behind several meetings, large and small. The largest international meeting she organized was probably that of January 1989: "Médecine à risques: servir ou subir la répression", which was held in the UNESCO building in Paris. Most continents were represented. As always when Liliane was involved, cooperation with the press was excellent. A lot of publicity resulted from the meeting, as well as a book: *Médecins tortionnaires, médecins résistants*, which has been translated into English (*Doctors and Torture*, London, 1971) and Arabic.

Liliane Bernard was modesty itself, always putting others into the limelight. She had a particular talent for publicity, and understood its importance for the promotion of the cause. The purpose of the work and the results always counted first with her, never herself.

Someone who works with such unselfishness and intelligence, an unusual combination, will always accomplish something worthwhile. What Liliane did during her life reflected her personality: a complete human being of great integrity.

It was sad that she should pass her last years alone, without a complete family life. She bore the sorrows with dignity, courage, and strength. We, her



Liliane Bernard Photo: Eva Forest

friends, had all wished a happier end to her life than the hard one she got, but she knew what she meant to us, and, despite her modesty, she knew that she had used her life well.

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