

Saigon Penalizes American Newsmen

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 30—The South Vietnamese national press center has withdrawn the press accreditation of the American journalist and former social worker who first publicized the "tiger-cage" prison cells on Con Son, an island 60 miles off South Vietnam.

According to the journalist, Don Luce, a correspondent for the Ecumenical Press Service of the World Council of Churches, his press card was taken away on Oct. 13 by the director of the press center, Nguyen Ngoc Huyen. Mr. Luce said he had been refused a new card.

Prisoners Had Complained

Mr. Luce said that Mr. Huyen told him today: "You should not have gone to Con Son. The Government did not give you permission to go to Con Son as a journalist."

Mr. Huyen, the Government's chief spokesman, was not available this evening for comment. Mr. Luce's account was confirmed by Arthur Dommen, president of the Association of

Foreign Correspondents in Vietnam, who met with Mr. Huyen on Oct. 27.

On July 3, Mr. Luce accompanied two United States Representatives—Augustus F. Hawkins of California and William R. Anderson of Tennessee, both Democrats—and a Congressional aide in a visit to Con Son to check prison conditions.

Gaining access to a closed-off section of the prison, the visitors found a series of small cells under the floor below a steel grate that served as the cells' roof. Prisoners in the cells, termed "tiger cages," complained of inadequate food and overcrowding and said guards had dumped lime on them through the grate.

The South Vietnamese Government has since said that the cells have been emptied but a trip to Con Son promised to newsmen has not yet taken place.

Without press credentials, Mr. Luce will be unable to use United States or South Vietnamese military transport and attend official news briefings. However, he is expected to be allowed to remain in the country at least until his visa expires in February.

Mr. Luce worked in South Vietnam for the International Voluntary Service from 1958 to 1967, when he resigned with other volunteers to protest American policy. He returned in 1968 as a journalist.