

# AMNESTY

(International Movement for freedom of opinion  
and religion)

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

1961 - 1962

1 MITRE COURT BUILDINGS, TEMPLE,  
LONDON E.C.4

## OBJECTS OF AMNESTY

The AMNESTY movement is composed of peoples of all nationalities, politics, religions and social views who are determined to work together in defence of freedom of the mind.

The spread of dictatorship, the tensions that have resulted from the Cold War, and the increasing cleavage between races of different colour, have combined to make state persecution of the individual the gravest social problem of the 1960's.

The principal object of AMNESTY is to mobilise public opinion in defence of those men and women who are imprisoned because their ideas are unacceptable to their governments. It has been formed so that there should be some central, international organisation capable of concentrating efforts to secure the release of these 'Prisoners of Conscience', and to secure world wide recognition of Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Essentially an impartial organisation as regards religion and politics, it aims at uniting groups in different countries working towards the same end - the freedom and dignity of the human mind.

### THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

*Article 18* Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

*Article 19* Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

AMNESTY was created just over a year ago out of a just anger against man's inhumanity to man. Peter Benenson, the founder of this movement, has recalled how one morning, travelling in the tube to work, he read about two Portuguese friends dining in a restaurant in Lisbon. A remark they passed that was critical of the Portuguese Government was overheard, and the next thing was that they were arrested and imprisoned for treason against the Government.

The thought that it was possible to push two ordinary people around in such a way for doing nothing else but expressing a criticism of the regime under which they lived, so infuriated Peter Benenson that he decided something must be done about it. And so, in consultation with other writers and lawyers, AMNESTY was launched in a newspaper article in the London *Observer* on May 28th, 1961.

In the twelve months since then knowledge of the work of AMNESTY has spread to all corners of the globe. In practically every country (apart from the communist countries) there are individuals or groups who are supporters of this movement which was founded in defence of freedom of opinion and which bases itself on Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These articles state that it is the right of every citizen to be free to hold his own political and religious opinions and to express them. There were no dissensions at the United Nations when the Declaration was passed. Yet in at least two-thirds of the world today this basic human right is denied.

Perhaps the great achievement of AMNESTY in its short life is that Prisoners of Conscience are no longer forgotten. Governments know that it is not possible any more to throw their citizens into jail without there being inquiries and publicity about their actions. Prisoners know that there are friends in the outside world working on their behalf, and this gives them hope.

How has all this been done in so short a space of time? In the first year much has been experimental, but as this report shows, the main methods which have proved successful and on which we are basing our future work are:

- the sending of our own investigators to different countries to make on-the-spot inquiries;

- the establishment of a 'THREES' network, whereby groups of people in Britain and in other countries work for the release of three prisoners from the three main ideological regions of the world;
- continual publicity about the plight of prisoners and their families.

There are no concrete or tangible terms by which AMNESTY can claim success. If a prisoner is released or a general amnesty proclaimed after some publicity about conditions in a country, we can only note the co-incidence. We cannot say that AMNESTY was directly responsible. In the twelve months that AMNESTY has been working, however, there have been enough co-incidences to make us feel that what we are doing is having some influence.

In the past year there have been general or partial amnesties proclaimed in Czechoslovakia, Ireland, France, Ghana, The Sudan, and Yugoslavia, which have set many prisoners free. Individuals on whom AMNESTY has particularly focused attention, e.g., Agostinho Neto, Christopher Payi, Henriette Stahl, Anderson Ganyile, and others have been set free.

The list is tiny compared with the need; but it has at least established one firm fact - that is, that in the world of today where not more than one-third of the world's citizens live under governments which accept their right to hold individual convictions, the need for an organisation such as AMNESTY is painfully and terrifyingly clear.

LIONEL ELVIN

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*Librarian:* Christel Marsh  
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*Executive Officer:* Peggy Crane  
*Secretaries:* Chris Chattin, Karin von Soosten

## ACTIVITIES 1961-1962

AMNESTY'S first year's work has been largely experimental. Originally it was conceived as a short, sharp Appeal on behalf of those imprisoned for their convictions (rather on the lines of World Refugee Year) which was to run throughout 1961.

It was soon evident, however, that a more permanent organisation was necessary. The walls of the prisons were not going to fall down at a single, short blast of the trumpet. Continual pressure and publicity were the only ways of making any impression. Out of necessity, therefore, AMNESTY was firmly founded as an international organisation, and the 'Prisoner of Conscience Fund' is now established as a recognised charity.

From the start it was agreed that AMNESTY should concentrate on two things: firstly, the building up of a 'Prisoner of Conscience' Library; secondly, that it should try to create a network of local groups—'THREES'—which would undertake to work on behalf of three prisoners, one each from the main ideological regions of the world, communist, capitalist and the newly emergent nations in Africa and Asia.

Both these things have been done, together with a great deal more to enable AMNESTY to become better known and its work more effective.

#### BUILDING UP THE LIBRARY

Under the guidance of Christel Marsh, the AMNESTY Library has become a unique repository of information about those imprisoned for their convictions. It is staffed entirely by voluntary help.

Foreign newspapers from eight countries are regularly scanned for information about those imprisoned, and these reports are filed, specific information about each prisoner being transferred to index cards. Many organisations and individuals interested in this field of human rights also supply information.

In 12 months the Library has accumulated histories of about 1,200 prisoners, and these are much used as a source of information by the press and other interested bodies.

Collecting facts, however, is only one part of the Library's work; equally important is the work it does servicing 'THREE' groups by sending them information about their prisoners, providing contacts and suggesting ways of making protests effective.

### THE 'THREES' NETWORK

The network consists of groups of people who have undertaken to work for the release of three prisoners, one each from the East, the West and the Afro-Asian countries. They are an essential infrastructure of the AMNESTY movement. They demonstrate that working for the freedom of others is not limited only to a few people in a London office, but can be undertaken by anyone, anywhere and at any time and also are examples of AMNESTY's concern with prisoners all over the world, irrespective of the religion, ideology and creed of their governments.

There are 70 such groups working at the present time (a list is given on page 15). Most of these are in Britain, but groups are also working in Australia, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden. There has been particular enthusiasm to form 'THREES' at the Universities. In Oxford there are 12 active groups; other universities are showing increasing interest.

In practical terms this means that the cases of 210 prisoners are under active investigation; that governments and embassies are continually being lobbied, and 210 human beings and their families know that they are not forgotten. Even so, this is only a tiny handful of those in need.

Variable conditions make it impossible to lay down hard and fast rules for trying to release prisoners. Head Office has now appointed a voluntary worker, Mrs. Marlys Deeds, as Technical Adviser to 'THREES' to help co-ordinate work and provide contacts. One thing has clearly emerged, however. Namely that there need be no fear about writing openly to prisoners regarding the steps being taken to obtain their release. Even if the letter is confiscated and never reaches him, it will be opened by the government or prison authorities. Realisation that the man or woman concerned is not forgotten has often resulted in the prisoner receiving better treatment and an improvement in his conditions.

Efforts are also being made to expand the work of 'THREES' to include local publicity about AMNESTY; money raising activities, etc.

### INVESTIGATORS

In an effort to obtain more detailed information about the state of prisoners and to plead for their release at the highest levels, AMNESTY, with financial assistance from certain newspapers and other sources, was able to send out four investigators in the early part of 1962.

These were:

- (a) Louis Blom-Cooper, who went to Ghana in January, to obtain information about those members of the Opposition and others detained under the Preventive Detention Act, 1958. He was able to have a personal interview with the Minister of the Interior and to collect useful information, some of which was later published in the *Guardian* and the *Amnesty Quarterly*.
- (b) Sean MacBride, s.c., formerly Irish Minister for External Affairs, visited Prague in February, to take up the case of Archbishop Beran and others detained or imprisoned by the Czechoslovak government. He discussed the situation with Dr. Jiri Hajek, the Deputy Foreign Minister; although not allowed to see the Archbishop, he was assured he was living in a disused monastery and was well cared for by nuns. Mr. MacBride was also able to obtain some information about the conditions of other religious prisoners.
- (c) Neville Vincent, Joint Honorary Secretary of AMNESTY, went to Portugal in February, particularly to intercede with the authorities for five doctors who were in prison because of their political beliefs. Although he was unable in the time available to obtain interviews with any Ministers he was received by Cardinal Cerejeira, head of the Portuguese Catholic Hierarchy, and a close friend of Dr. Salazar's; the Cardinal agreed to pass on Mr. Vincent's representations to the Prime Minister.
- (d) Prem Khera, an Indian Lawyer and trade unionist, visited East Germany in March to investigate the disappearance from West Germany of a fellow trade unionist, Heinz Brandt, and a forestry expert, Dr. Röhrig; and to intercede on behalf of 18 year old Jurgen Wiechert, sentenced to eight years for protesting to the captain of a holiday cruising ship about a sudden change of route.

Mr. Khera had a long interview with the Attorney General of East Germany who assured him that should AMNESTY wish to be represented at Heinz Brandt's trial, every facility would be offered. (In the event the trial was held in secret and Brandt sentenced to 13 years hard labour.)

In addition to the above Miss Audrey Sander, a young woman barrister, went on behalf of AMNESTY to Paris in January, to join the defence counsel of Father Davezies,

‘Amnesty’ and Prisoners

Income and Expenditure Account for the

	£	s.	d.
To Salaries and National Insurance .. .. .	2,238	1	5
„ Office Rent and Services .. .. .	356	11	3
„ Office Stationery .. .. .	641	12	5
„ Printing and Publicity .. .. .	1,234	1	8
„ Postages .. .. .	467	14	6
„ Telephone .. .. .	92	17	11
„ Advertising and Public Relations .. .. .	894	8	9
„ Travelling Expenses .. .. .	700	13	9
„ Swiss National Section Expenses .. .. .	18	3	8
„ Investigation Expenses .. .. .	50	0	0
„ Sundry Expenses .. .. .	145	19	2
„ Excess of Income over Expenditure .. .. .	1,019	1	0
	£7,859	5	6

Balance Sheet at

	£	s.	d.
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the Period ..	1,019	1	0
SUNDRY CREDITORS .. .. .	383	18	9
	£1,402	19	9

We have prepared the above Accounts from the books, vouchers and other information supplied and in our opinion they give a true and fair view of the transactions of the London Policy Committee for the period under review and of the state of affairs as at 31st May, 1962.

of Conscience Appeal

period from 27th May 1961 to 31st May 1962

	£	s.	d.
By Donations and Subscriptions .. .. .	7,510	2	11
„ Advertising .. .. .	140	0	0
„ Surplus on Christmas Cards, etc. .. .. .	209	2	7
	£7,859	5	6

31st May 1962

	£	s.	d.
OFFICE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT AT COST ..	185	11	5
SUNDRY DEBTORS .. .. .	14	10	0
BANK AND CASH BALANCES .. .. .	1,202	18	4
	£1,402	19	9

78 South Audley Street,  
London, W.1.

HOWARD, WADE & JACOB  
Chartered Accountants.

13th June, 1962.

charged with assisting the F.L.N. Informal, but helpful investigations have also been carried out by several AMNESTY supporters visiting different countries on holiday or on business.

NOTE: It is encouraging that, apart from Eastern Germany, there have been a number of releases in the countries visited by our investigators. In June, 1962, 152 detainees were released in Ghana; the Czechoslovak Government has granted an amnesty affecting an unknown number of prisoners; three of the doctors, on whose behalf Neville Vincent went to Portugal, have been released. Father Davezics has also been released on grounds of ill health.

#### COMMEMORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Human Rights Day was commemorated for the first time in this country on December 10th, 1961, at a special AMNESTY service in the Crypt of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and at similar services in Bristol, Edinburgh, Oxford and Plymouth. The climax of the service was the lighting of the AMNESTY candle by Mrs. Odette (Churchill) Hallowes, and a vigil by people of many nationalities to guard the candle on the steps of St. Martins until midnight.

James Griffiths, M.P., gave the Human Rights Address and the Rev. Austen Williams, Vicar of St. Martins, led the Ceremony in which Julie Christie, Cy Grant and Andrew Cruickshank played important parts. The Rev. John Pellow was responsible for handling the Human Rights Day commemoration on behalf of AMNESTY.

#### PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Until the beginning of January, 1962, AMNESTY published a fortnightly journal, *Amnesty*, which was mainly concerned with publicising information about Prisoners of Conscience. In 1962 it was decided to change to a larger *Quarterly Journal*, interspersed with a small *Newsletter* in the months when the *Quarterly* does not appear. This has allowed more scope for articles about the movement's work and concerns.

The national press, both in Britain and many countries abroad, have been generous in spreading information about our work, and often taking up particular cases of individual injustice. It was through the generosity of the London *Observer* that AMNESTY was launched on May 28th, 1961. Without the help of this paper and the others AMNESTY would not be the established movement it is today.

The B.B.C. has devoted two special programmes on its Home Service to AMNESTY's work. The first of these, 'Liberty to the Captive' took place on March 4th, as part of the 'Way of Life' series; the second, on May 27th, dealt with 'Political Prisoners'. In addition the B.B.C. has given considerable publicity to AMNESTY on its overseas networks.

#### CONFERENCES

An important part of AMNESTY's work is to encourage people to think more deeply about human rights. To this end plans were put in hand to hold an international conference in Holland in December, 1961, to discuss 'The Boundaries of Freedom', but, largely owing to lack of funds, this had to be abandoned. In 1962, AMNESTY planned a series of conferences on 'Personal Freedom in Contemporary Society'. The first of these took place in the Niblett Hall, Temple, on January 27th and considered 'Personal Freedom in the Emergent Countries', with particular reference to Ghana and the Sudan. The speakers were Dr. Antony Allott, Louis Blom-Cooper, Peter Kilner and Professor Stanley Smith, with Gerald Gardiner, Q.C. in the Chair. It was attended by over 100 people.

The second conference on June 16th discussed 'Personal Freedom in the Marxist-Leninist Countries'; the third, to be held in November, will concern itself with 'Personal Freedom in Western Europe'.

In addition to the above the officers of AMNESTY and volunteers have spoken at a number of meetings throughout the year. Peter Benenson, in particular, has visited most of the Universities which have shown great interest in the movement.

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS

A special AMNESTY Christmas card was printed in 1961, with quotations on freedom in six languages. With each batch of 12 sent to AMNESTY supporters was enclosed a list of 12 prisoners to whom cards could also be sent. Over 5,000 cards were sold and a large proportion of these were sent to gaols all over the world. Both senders and Head Office have received a number of replies from prisoners saying that the cards had brought much hope and comfort.

In addition to the above activities, increasingly, organisations and individuals from different parts of the world are appealing to AMNESTY for help for those imprisoned for their convictions. We have also been able to help some of those seeking asylum abroad.

Head Office has been quick to approach embassies and other bodies on behalf of individual Prisoners of Conscience; it has also arranged deputations, for example, to Her Majesty's Government, urging the ratification of those Articles of the European Convention of Human Rights dealing with individual right of appeal to the European Commission and the jurisdiction of the European Court. A deputation also waited on the High Commissioner for Rhodesia and Nyasaland to urge the release of 'restrictees' at Gokwe.

AMNESTY also maintains close liaison with all organisations working in the Human Rights field, including the International Commission of Jurists, the International Red Cross, International Press Institute, International P.E.N., U.N.A., etc.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

France was the first country where AMNESTY took root, although, due to difficult political conditions, the roots have not yet grown deep. On 20th June, 1961, a Conference on Religious Persecution was held in Paris, which was attended by spokesmen of the principal faiths.

Shortly afterwards a meeting was convened of the men and women in Western Europe who had responded immediately to the publication of 'Appeal for Amnesty'. This meeting was held in Luxembourg on 22nd/23rd July, 1961, and was attended by representatives from France, West Germany, Belgium, Ireland and Great Britain.

During the months which followed progress was made in forming National Sections representative of the main streams of political and religious opinion in Belgium, West Germany and Ireland. A Swiss group was established in Geneva, and another in Zurich. Another group was founded in Athens, Greece.

By the end of the year 1961 wireless reports of the work of AMNESTY had led to sufficient enthusiasm in Australia to encourage organisers to call meetings in Sydney and Melbourne. There are now firmly established Sections of AMNESTY in New South Wales and Victoria, and an increasing number of individual supporters in other states.

A provisional committee was formed in New York when Peter Benenson was in U.S.A. in September 1961, but it has not been found practical as yet to constitute a single American National Section. But there are groups operating in New York, Washington and San Francisco.

In January 1962 a provisional committee was set up in Amsterdam, and this has led to the formation of a Dutch National Section.

A group of THREE started work in Oslo last autumn, and a national organiser is now forming a Norwegian Section. The Swedish Section of AMNESTY began to function in May, and a Swedish translation of 'Persecution 1961' was issued in July.

Preliminary contacts have been made with those interested in forming National Sections in a number of countries, and negotiations are now taking place to secure the all-party backing which is considered an essential pre-requisite to the establishment of a Section. It is hoped that these negotiations, which are proceeding in Canada, Ceylon, Ghana, India, Israel, Mexico and Nigeria, will produce concrete results during the latter part of 1962.

Individual supporters are growing in number all over the world. It is not possible to list all the countries where they live, but the London office is in contact with supporters trying to form local groups in Argentina, Congo (Leopoldville), Ethiopia, Jamaica, Malaya and New Zealand.

The Second International Meeting of organisers of National Sections and groups is being arranged by the Belgian National Section. It will be held at the historic Chateau de Male, at Sijsele just outside Bruges over the weekend 28/30th September.

Wherever possible the London office is encouraging National Sections to establish groups of THREE and to get ahead with the work of 'adopting' prisoners of conscience. THREES are at work in Australia, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and U.S.A.

#### ADMINISTRATION

AMNESTY is a registered Charity, and as such is governed by a Board of Trustees.

General policy is controlled by the *Policy Committee*, a body composed of 20 people, many of whom are eminent in various walks of life. This meets monthly.

The day-to-day running of the movement is in the hands of the Joint Honorary Secretaries, Peter Benenson (the founder of the movement) and Neville Vincent, a London barrister. They are advised by a small Executive Committee that meets every fortnight.

The Joint Secretaries would like to take this opportunity to express their appreciation of all the work and devotion of Mrs. Peggy Crane and Miss Christine Chattin.



The work of AMNESTY could never have been undertaken, far less continued, without the generous help of many volunteer workers. If only a few names are mentioned here, it is only because of lack of space. But, in particular, the Secretaries would like to thank Eric Baker (in charge of relief work), Mrs. Christel Marsh (the Librarian), Hugh O'Shaughnessy (Quarterly Editor), Mrs. Marlys Deeds (Technical Adviser to the THREES) and Mrs. Marna Glyn (Membership Secretary).

#### A YEAR'S ACHIEVEMENTS

As the Chairman has pointed out, it is impossible to assess AMNESTY's achievements in tangible terms. We can never claim that, as a direct result of any action we have taken, a prisoner has been released. There are too many other factors involved. But we can note certain coincidences - such as, following AMNESTY's conference on 'Personal Freedom in the Emergent Countries', the Sudan Government proclaimed an amnesty for former Ministerial detainees, or following Neville Vincent's trip to Portugal, three doctors were released. There have been sufficient coincidences such as these to make us feel that, at least, our efforts have been a contributory cause to these releases.

Perhaps the most important achievement of AMNESTY, however, has been that without it peoples and Governments would today be less aware of how narrow are the boundaries of freedom in at least two-thirds of the world; more people would be languishing forgotten behind prison bars; fewer people would be so actively concerned with promoting the basic human freedoms of opinion, religion and of expression; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be mouldering in the pigeonholes.

Since AMNESTY started in 1961, general or partial amnesties have been proclaimed in Burma, Czechoslovakia, France, Ghana, Greece, Iraq, Ireland, Portugal, S. Korea, Spain, Sudan, and Yugoslavia.

In addition, a number of individual prisoners, on whose behalf AMNESTY has intervened, either through Head Office or through THREE groups have also been released.

## NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF 'THREE' GROUP ORGANISERS

#### LONDON

Miss D. Alton, 7 Montagu Square, w.1.  
 Mr. C. L. Bindman, 11 Greenhill, Hampstead High Street, n.w.3.  
 Miss Hilary Cartwright, 2 Mitre Court Buildings, Temple, E.C.4.  
 (*Clapham*).  
 Mr. R. Elton, Guild T.V. Service, Exchange Court, Strand, w.c.2.  
 (*Guild T.V.*).  
 Miss Pamela Hart, 67 Lullington Garth, n.12.  
 Miss T. Heschel, 217 Goldhurst Terrace, n.w.6. (*Hampstead*).  
 Mr. B. Howard, 5 Hanover Terrace Mews, n.w.1.  
 Miss Barbara Johnston, 29 Ashdale Grove, Stanmore, Middlesex.  
 (*Harrow East*).  
 Rev. D. H. Jones, 21 Balmuir Gardens, s.w.15.  
 Mr. J. Martyn, Baron's Court Labour Party, 303 North End Road,  
 w.14. (*Baron's Court*).  
 Mr. Stuart Morris, Dick Sheppard House, 6 Endsleigh St., w.c.1.  
 (*Peace Pledge Union*).  
 Mr. P. Moule, 41 Courtfield Road, s.w.7. (*South Kensington*).  
 Mr. J. Penry, 6 King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C.4.  
 Mr. A. Redhouse, 16 Brim Hill, n.2.  
 Mrs. Catriona Robertson, 57 Ladbroke Road, w.11. (*N. Kensington*).  
 Mrs. E. Salthouse, 25 Mervyn Avenue, New Eltham, s.e.9.  
 Miss A. Sander, 18 Old Brompton Road, s.w.7.  
 Mrs. M. Sander, 5 Ovington Gardens, s.w.3.  
 Miss J. Saxby, 36 St. Mary's Grove, n.1. (*Islington Family Service Unit*).  
 Miss L. Stephens, Selby House, Ham Common, Richmond, Surrey.  
 Mrs. H. Warner, 18 Abergeldie Road, s.w.12. (*Eltham*).  
 Miss K. Wilson, 3 Wythfield Road, s.e.9.

#### PROVINCES AND SCOTLAND

Mr. D. Castleton, 36 Ashford Road, Bromley, Kent.  
 Mr. A. Cooper, Pond Farm, Stone Street, Nr. Sevenoaks, Kent.  
 Mr. K. Cottman, 75 Rydes Hill Road, Guildford, Surrey.  
 Mr. B. Hooper, 67 London Avenue, North End, Portsmouth.

Mr. D. Lambert, Room 12, 29 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.  
Mr. K. Nicholson, Friends School, Saffron Walden, Essex.  
Mr. W. E. Norman, The Lodge, Shootersway Lane, Berkhamstead,  
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You can subscribe to AMNESTY for £1 a year  
Local organisations can affiliate for £2 a year  
National organisations for £5 a year

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