17 million new prisoners
AMNESTY’s German group reports on the Communist border closure

Arrested Basques
The Spanish Ambassador denies torture of nationalists

Ordeal of a Conscript
AMNESTY writes to Kruschev to free a husband lost for 16 years

Faith and Punishment
A teacher is in gaol for giving lessons in religion

The British Dissenters
AMNESTY calls for an inquiry into archaic laws and civil disobedience

“I am certainly freer than my Government.”
Behind the Wire—
17 Million Political Prisoners

Closing the border between East and West Germany forced the Communists into visible admission in Berlin that the eastern part of the city is now a political concentration camp. All the familiar trappings are there—the wall, the barbed wire, and the patrolling armed guard. There is only one ironic deviation from the dreary norm in the picture above: the civilian at the wall is on the outside looking in; the guard himself is a political prisoner as much as any of the 17 million people in Eastern Germany whose escape he is there to prevent.

A member of Amnesty's German group, Peter Bender, writes from Cologne:

The reasons which in the last twelve years daily prompted hundreds of people to leave their Eastern homeland, have ranged from direct physical danger and the sudden or gradual threat to their economic existence (as, for instance, peasants, artisans, shopkeepers or industrialists), to the simple attraction of prosperity and an easier life in the Federal Republic.

In a wider sense, however, all those who left Eastern Germany were political refugees; for their motives were all connected with the conditions created by Communist policy. The more ruthless the Communist authorities became the higher the number of refugees; and whenever the Communists softened their policies, the smaller the number of people who found their way to the West. This rule, though it was not completely broken, became less valid after autumn.

It was in the spring of 1960 that the Communists forced the still free peasants of Eastern Germany into collectivisation, which up to that time had applied to only about half the agricultural land of Eastern Germany. The number of refugees—not only among the peasants—increased. Then in the autumn the Communist régime switched to a policy of concession for the benefit of certain particularly important professional groups, trying, by the renunciation of force, to calm the population. The watchword became “persuasion” instead of “command.” But it failed. The Communist régime had by then lost the trust of the people; very few believed that these concessions were more than a short-lived tactic.

The number of refugees dropped only a little. It jumped steeply in June, after the Kruschev-Kennedy meeting, when it became clear that Russia meant to conclude a separate peace treaty with Eastern Germany by the end of the year and to solve the Berlin problem according to Russia’s ideas. In June there were 19,000 refugees, in July 30,415, in August 47,433.

These figures reflected the fear that West Berlin would be sealed off and future flight made impossible.

For many years it had been assumed in the West that the Germans still living in Eastern Germany were, on principle, willing to stay, and that they had begun to come to terms with the régime and with the prevailing conditions. But now, faced with the decision either to live indefinitely under Ulbricht or to give up everything and make a new start in the

continued on page 6
THE ORDEAL OF
MR. AND MRS. RUKS

Is there any good reason why Latvian-born
Janis Arnold Ruks should not be allowed to
join his wife in the U.S.A?

For the last 16 years he has been imprisoned in a
series of camps in the U.S.S.R., and since 1949 Mrs.
Albotine Ruks has been fighting a lonely battle to
obtain his release.

After ten years of making inquiries Mrs. Ruks
eventually received this answer from the Soviet
Government:

It has been established that Ruks committed the
most serious of crimes, irrebutably proved, and is
guilty of the destruction of many Soviet people. In
face of that, the competent authorities, after verifica-
tion of all aspects of the case, find no basis for change
in the methods of his punishment.

The letter, addressed to the American Red Cross,
is dated February 13th, 1959, and signed M.
Chikalenko, Member of the Presidium of the Execu-
tive Committee, Office of External Relations, Alliance
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the
U.S.S.R.

Ruks was born in 1906 in the Russian province
of Latvia. When that country was granted indepen-
dence by Lenin in 1918 Ruks became a citizen of
Latvia. He grew up, married and got a job as a clerk
in a small town. Then, during World War II Latvia
was first incorporated in the Soviet Union and, soon
afterwards, invaded by the German Army, Latvia
was "occupied" in 1941, when the Germans marched
on Leningrad. Some Latvians volunteered to join
the German Army; these were almost all those of
German Balt families. The remainder of the popula-
tion, including Ruks, tried to continue with their nor-
mal lives despite the German and Russian armies.

But in 1944 when the Germans were in full retreat,
they called-up all Latvians of military age in a
desperate effort to halt the Russian advance. Ruks
was then 38 years old. If he had refused the order
to join the German Army he would have been shot.
A few months later he was captured by the Russian
Army.

His wife had in the meanwhile joined the long
column of refugees fleeing westwards. When the war
ended she was put in a D.P. camp somewhere in
Germany, and in 1949 eventually received an immi-
gration visa to the U.S.A. She now lives at Battle
Creek, Michigan.

Through the German Red Cross she learned that
her husband, together with many other Latvians had
been made prisoners of war and held in a Soviet
camp. But it was not until January 1957 that she
had any confirmation that he was still alive. Thirteen
years after his capture she received a post-card from
him giving the address of the camp where he was a
prisoner.

From then on Mrs. Ruks started a campaign of
letter writing to obtain his release from the U.S.S.R.
and admission to the U.S.A. She wrote to her Con-
gressman, to President Eisenhower and Vice-President
Nixon. All were sympathetic in their replies, saying
that the U.S.A. would do what it could to re-unite
her husband to her in Michigan, but that the decision
depended on the Soviet Government.

Premier N. S. Kruschev did not reply personally,
but a letter reached Mrs. Ruks from the Soviet
Embassy in Washington dated July 28th, 1958. It
read as follows:—

Please be advised that your husband Janis A. Ruks,
who wishes to leave the U.S.S.R. should personally
apply to the local authorities in the area in which he
resides for the necessary information and permission
to leave the U.S.S.R.

As Mrs. Ruks pointed out, this answer was pointless
since so long as Janis Ruks is a prisoner he cannot
make a personal application to the authorities. But
despite her continued emphasis on this point and
similar representations made by the U.S. Embassy
in Moscow, the Soviet Government's attitude remains
unaltered.

It is only fair to say that in the twelve months
from September 1959 to September 1960 about 200
people were permitted to leave the U.S.S.R. to go
to the U.S.A., and that some of these were Latvians.
However, there remain in Soviet prisons a great
many Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians whose only
offence appears to have been that they did not com-
mit suicide by refusing to obey German Army orders
in 1944.

The suggestion that Ruks committed any other
offence was only raised by the Soviet authorities,
after much prompting, 13 years after he had been in
prison. Had he been pro-Nazi he would surely have
joined the German administration or army in Latvia
in 1941. The fact that he continued in his civil em-
ployment until he was conscripted is good evidence
that he was not the sort of man who wished to work
off any score against the Russians.

Since the mounting pressure of inquiries from
leading American officials who have raised this case
with the Russians on several occasions, Ruks has been
allowed to write more frequent letters to his wife.
Now, with the aggravated tension between U.S.A. and
U.S.S.R., it looks as if Ruks's chance of freedom
has become even more remote.

In order to draw to the attention of the Soviet
Government the profound disquiet of the Amnesty
Movement all over the world about this case, a letter
has been written to the Soviet Premier. The reply, or
failure to reply, will be published in AMNESTY.
Arrested Basques
By Michael Harnett

BETWEEN July 18 and 31 several young men, some of them trade unionists, were arrested in the Basque provinces of Spain on charges of participating in demonstrations hostile to the Spanish Government.

The demonstrations, according to reports received by Amnesty headquarters from the Basque Delegation in London, are alleged to have been the burning of two flags and some sabotaging of the railway lines on the outskirts of San Sebastian.

The arrests have been fairly widespread: Felix de Arrate, Eustaquio de Narbaiza, Jose Antonio de Izaguirre, Serafin de Basauri, and Ormaetxea y Getari, have been detained.

What do you think?

OUT of the mass arrests of Britons for demonstrating against the nation's possession of nuclear arms has arisen a separate debate. How should a democracy deal with a minority determined to alter the nation's policy and prepared passively to defy the nation's laws to bring the change about?

Arguments range from demands that the State act more forcefully to crush a dangerous rebellion to pleas that the best way is to ignore the minority's antics and even suppress newspaper reporting of them. And the Government is the object of anger, some sympathy, much derision, and very little applause.

In Britain itself, an old democratic hand, such public debate on any issue is familiar; the issue itself is not. How would the newer democracies of the world face it? Amnesty would like the views of its supporters, and particularly those of its supporters outside the United Kingdom.

And as soon as possible the law should be adapted to meet this new situation, for the present law is a survival of medieval times made in the wake of war to prevent armed men from creating violent disorder. Reliance on statutes of 1361 and 1839 only aggravates the situation at home and advertises Britain's obsolescence abroad.

There are two respects in which the law requires alteration. First, it is against modern conscience to imprison people in advance for threatening to commit an offence which, if committed, would be largely technical (since the interruption of traffic on a Sunday afternoon would be minimal).

Second, the Parliamentary Sessional Orders, which prohibit public meetings within one mile of Parliament, are anachronistic in an age when legislators are no longer intimidated by demonstrators.

A Commission should be appointed to study the whole question of making special regulations for that part of central London between Trafalgar Square and Parliament where demonstrations have grown in scale. There should be a modern set of rules. It is monstrous that the only instrument for dealing with passive dissent is one forged six hundred years ago to crush a peasants' revolt.
AUSTRALIANS have made a vigorous and encouraging response to aims of Amnesty as a result of a five-minute broadcast on the Wilfred Thomas Show, which goes out on the Australian national network and short-wave service every Thursday.

In his Show of August 24th, Wilfred Thomas broadcast an interview with Peter Benenson on Amnesty’s campaign and aims. Within days the letters began to come in to Amnesty headquarters from Australians who sat down that very evening to write offering help and asking how it could best be given.

Farmers, a doctor, a schoolmaster, a Girl Guide, an ex-soldier, a civil servant wrote. Letters came from all parts of the country. There are 55 so far. One came from the Solomon Islands asking if there was any work they could do “so far off the beaten track.” The schoolmaster explained his deep interest saying that “in the immediate post-war years I was a member of British counter-intelligence organisations in occupied Germany, until the work became too distasteful, concerned as it was with the dubiously legal arrest of people whose political beliefs had been born of conditions of which we, as a people, had no knowledge or understanding...”

Another letter said simply, “Please let me know how best I can help.—Yours faithfully.”

Every inquirer has been given information and guidance. One did not wait to receive it. He is Hans Hammerschmidt, of Paddington, New South Wales.

He said: “I am a pen-pushing clerk in the Public Service. I am 31, bi-lingual (German, English), and I possess a typewriter. I am earning £17 a week, and my needs are few and simple. I am a German Jew and I sincerely detest all politics. Please let me know if I can be of any use to you...” And he put in a cheque for £50.

A few days later Mr. Hammerschmidt wrote giving the names of eleven people in Britain, Australia and Germany to whom he thought copies of AMNESTY should be sent. And with this came a further cheque for £15 “so that you can send AMNESTY to them all without having to dig into the earlier donation.”

It is hoped that most of those who wrote are now busy forming Three Groups in their various localities. Mr. Hammerschmidt is contacting all of them. He himself has been given a larger task. He is going to try to form the first national committee of Amnesty in Australia.

AMNESTY NOTES

THE university vacations in Europe enables Amnesty to make use of some of its younger supporters who are going for trips abroad. Kotya de Goguel, who goes up to Trinity College, Dublin, next term, and speaks French, is in Paris this month to help by working in the office of the French National Section. Audrey Sander, a lawyer, who is holidaying in Greece in September, is having discussions with the organiser of the Greek National Section.

There is much work for few hands. If you are going abroad, tell Amnesty your destination. You may enrich your journey with rewarding work.

HAVE you answered the questionnaire in preparation for the “Frontiers of Freedom” conference to be held in Utrecht from December 27 to December 30? The task of participants will be to attempt to formulate answers to the following five questions:

1. What methods may a citizen legitimately employ to change his Government or its policy?
2. What are the legitimate limits to the free expression of opinion?
3. What are the legitimate limits of civic exemptions or privileges based on conscience?
4. What obligation has the state to admit the citizens of another?
5. Is the state ever entitled to deprive a citizen of his nationality, or to withdraw its protection from him?

You have been asked to say what you think should be the answers in order that an analysis may provide the basis for the conference’s working paper. The full questionnaire will be sent to you on request if you have forgotten or mislaid our last issue.
West, the masses suddenly—often overnight and without any preparation—went to Berlin and secretly made their way through the gradually tightening controls into the Western part of the city.

An important incentive was the fear that the Communists, once the escape route had been blocked, would have no further compunction, and would ruthlessly restrict the freedoms left to the people under their control. As long as the escape route was still open, the refugees had eased the lot of those remaining, because the very exodus forced the Communist régime to go slow. As long as the escape route was open, there was also the possibility of leaving whenever things became quite unbearable, and this was an essential factor in preserving a certain independence of spirit and inner resistance.

When the escape routes were blocked and the wall and barbed wire went up in Berlin on August 13, something more than individual choice was curtailed. For in bringing the refugee exodus to an end the Ulbricht régime created a long-desired basis for extending its repressive power among a people from whom the strongest elements impeding the consolidation of the Communist State in East Germany had been eliminated.

Embassy, Carlos Manzano, replied:

“Dear Sir,—I have been instructed to answer your letter of the 1st of this month, addressed to the Ambassador.

The persons mentioned in your letter were arrested as being suspected of an act of malicious damage, committed on the 18th July last, on the San Sebastian-Bilbao railway, at the exit of the Ayete tunnel. If this attempt had not been discovered in time, it would have caused the death of hundreds of people. The Spanish and international press have reported these facts and that legal proceedings had been instituted against the persons arrested.

The competent judicial authorities are now investigating the responsibility of each of those detained, since malicious damage to persons or property is punishable under Spanish criminal law, as it is under any system of law. It is, of course, entirely false that any person has suffered torture or violence of any kind.”

The Times correspondent in Madrid has since reported that 23 members of the Basque Nationalist Youth Organisation recently arrested in northern Spain were in Carabanchel prison in Madrid and would be tried by a military tribunal there. He understood that they were being closely interrogated by the authorities.

By September 18 no specific charges seemed to have been made against them, but relatives of the 23 had also travelled to Madrid from the Basque provinces and had spoken to The Times correspondent of ruthless methods being employed by the police to extract incriminating statements.

The correspondent also reported that a priest, who had asked his congregation to pray for the innocent in prison, had apparently been reported to the authorities and had received a stern warning.

AMNESTY has thanked the Spanish Embassy for its letter, and welcomed particularly the statement that none of the arrested Basques has suffered physical ill-treatment.

Since, according to Mr. Manzano’s letter, the arrests have been reported in the Spanish and international Press, it is clearly important that the same wide publicity should be given to assurances that the men have received nothing but civilised treatment during the two months they have been held.

AMNESTY has drawn the attention of the Spanish Ambassador to the fact that the way most acceptable to the outside world of achieving this is for his Government to produce the arrested men in court with the least further delay, and to ensure that with proper legal representation they receive there a fair trial.

"The Spectator"

The first and liveliest of the British weeklies

Every Friday, 9d.
Faith and Punishment

THE growing severity of the Soviet anti-religious campaign received additional testimony on August 25, 1961, with the publication in Pravda of an account of the trial of N. P. Goretoi, the head of a Pentecostal community in the town of Nakhodka in the Maritime Territory of the Soviet Far East.

The main crime with which he was charged was "the forcible conversion of children" and to establish his guilt, his ten-year-old daughter, Liza, was forced to go into the witness-box. Her answer in the affirmative to the question "Do you believe in God?" was held to be material evidence for the prosecution.

But it seems clear that in this instance the case did not go by default. In the course of the trial, which lasted several days, "certain supporters of the accused," reported Pravda, "by making use of their rights as witnesses tried to make slanderous anti-Soviet statements."

This, however, had no effect on the result of the case. The head of the Pentecostal community was sentenced to five years' deprivation of freedom, to be followed by deportation for a further five years to the remote areas of the Soviet Union.

While to the outsider this would seem an inordinately severe sentence even by Soviet standards, Pravda gave a clear indication that even more stringent measures are under consideration to prevent the propagation of religious belief in the Soviet Union. In the concluding paragraph of its report it observed that "many toilers in the town noted that existing legislation punishes too lightly those religious preachers whose activities inflict irreparable harm on the upbringing of the rising generation."

ODYSSEY
This is the new Travel Service

SINCE AMNESTY 1961 concerns itself with the affairs of all nations of the world, it is appropriate that it should associate itself with the physical means of moving around in that world.

In order to operate a cheap and efficient international travel service, a separate agency called ODYSSEY has been set up, and in its turn has appointed a network of travel agencies throughout the world.

The ODYSSEY network, like any other travel bureau, will provide passenger transport on all routes by land, sea and air, and arrange any kind of hotel accommodation, at the minimum regulated charges and the maximum of personal service.

Anyone who supports Amnesty and who wishes to travel abroad—anywhere, and for any purpose, whether or not it has anything to do with Amnesty—is encouraged to make use of this travel network, which is among the most effective in the country.

Anyone who wishes to make use of this service can go, write to, or telephone to any office of CONVOYS, at any of their offices—and if they make it clear that they are applying through the ODYSSEY service they will be assured of an especial kind of attention. And the more who make use of ODYSSEY, the lower will be the overheads.

WHERE IS THE ARCHBISHOP OF PRAGUE?

On July 10 AMNESTY wrote to the Czech Ambassador in London drawing his attention to rumours that Monsignor Beran, Archbishop of Prague, was dead or gravely ill.

AMNESTY pointed out that there had been no reliable news of the Archbishop since November 1958 when he was reported to be unable to exercise his function until he had taken an oath of loyalty to the Communist régime. The Ambassador was asked to state whether in fact Mgr. Beran was ill, whether he was detained or free, and where he is.

AS AMNESTY goes to press there has still been no reply.
Are you helping?

If AMNESTY is to be effective as an instrument for the achievement of greater political liberty it must have a wider circulation—and it must be solvent.

Many of you who are reading this will already have sent in a subscription to the paper. We ask you to help us get AMNESTY more widely read. Mention it to your friends, mention it to strangers if you have the opportunity, circulate it or leave it somewhere where other people will read it. You can do something now by filling up the coupon below with the names of people whom you know would be interested in AMNESTY.

We have ourselves circulated the paper on approval to those we thought might take a subscription. We now ask them to send in a guinea and in return they will receive AMNESTY until the end of the year.

As the weeks pass so the quality of the paper will improve. This fortnight's issue invites your direct participation in at least two important matters—asking how you think a democracy should deal with civil disobedience, and your assistance in providing a working paper for the Frontiers of Freedom conference.

Help us to stay alive and to grow.

This is what AMNESTY is all about

The organisation known as APPEAL FOR AMNESTY 1961, was launched by a group of lawyers, writers and publishers in London, all of different backgrounds, political attitudes and religious views.

It aims for the release of all people, in whatever country, who are held prisoner for their opinions and their conscience, who are physically restrained from expressing genuine non-violent views.

It aims to build up in all countries a publicity campaign which will set a tide of opinion running in favour of all Governments—or whatever shade of opinion, in whatever part of the world—guaranteeing the freedom of men to express their opinions and practice their faiths, however opposed to their nation's Establishment.

Membership of the founding group is reserved to those who are determined to ensure that the conduct of APPEAL FOR AMNESTY 1961 remains wholly impartial—between countries, parties, politics, ideologies, religions. Its aim is not to speak for non-communist prisoners in Communist lands, nor for Communist prisoners in other totalitarian lands, but to agitate for the rights of both—and, indeed, those who are neither.

The Joint Directors are: Eric Baker, former Joint Secretary of the Quaker Centre in Delhi and Secretary of the National Peace Council in London until 1959, and Peter Benenson, who in 1956 took the initiative which led to the formation of "Justice," the all-party body of lawyers to uphold the Rule of Law.

There is a tremendous lot more to be said about APPEAL FOR AMNESTY 1961 that cannot be said in this column. If you want to know more, as we hope you do, write to Mitre Court Buildings or phone London Central 7867/9429.