a time to keep silence...



... and a time to speak

Within ourselves there lives the Judge who never deceives, and whose voice is of more importance to us than the acclamation of the whole world and all the wisdom of the Egyptians and the Greeks.

MATTHIUS CLAUDIUS 1779

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FOREWORD

This selection of messages from people whose life and thought has added a special distinction to their views is published on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 1962. It is designed to give inspiration to those denied freedom, and encouragement to those who are working to liberate them.

In this short booklet it has not been possible to publish more than a few of the contributions received. Thanks are due to those who have written, to those who read, and, most of all, to those who will act. For the purpose of Human Rights Day is not just to honour a piece of paper, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but to insure that its provisions are respected. It is through no lack of respect to the statesmen and lawvers who have worked devotedly but unrewardingly these last fourteen years to implement the Universal Declaration that the Amnesty movement came into being. We, who have sunk our political, religious and national differences to work together in the cause of human freedom, do not dismiss the role of international law. But we have become convinced that there can be no enforceable. system of universal law until people are prepared to respect each other's opinions, and to admit, on occasions, that they are wrong. The word 'amnesty' connotes an act of overlooking. In the bitterness which disfigures the present world, the tensions which divide ideologies and races are leading towards a climax which could involve destruction of the entire human race. If ever anyone survives to write the history of this period, he will say that no ideology

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was wholly right; no nation, all-virtuous; no race, superior to others. Whether anyone does survive, depends on how quickly people not only admit this principle in theory, but also in practice. The work of AMNESTY has, thus, become more urgent than ever; for, unless the people of this world stop persecuting each other, there will be no people or opinions left to suppress.

On Human Rights Day the AMNESTY movement calls on its supporters to honour, in silence, those who are in prison for their conscience's sake, and to assert, loudly, the basic proposition that man's spirit is holy—and unquenchable! That is why this little book takes its title from a verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

A LITANY FOR THE DAY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

For those who grasp their prison bars helplessly that we may walk free - a thought.

For those who rot in the dark so that we may walk in the sun - a thought.

For those whose ribs have been broken so that we may breathe our fill - a thought.

For those whose back has been broken so that we may walk erect - a thought.

For those whose faces have been slapped so that we may walk in fear of no hand - a thought.

For those whose mouths have been gagged so that we may speak out - a thought.

For those whose pride lies in rags on the slabs of their of their jails so that we may proudly walk - a thought.

For those whose wives live in anguish so that our wives may live happy - a thought.

For those whose country is in chains so that our country may be free - a thought.

And for their jailers and torturers - a thought, the saddest of all, they are the most maimed, and for the day of reckoning is bound to come.

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA
OF SPAIN

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Prisoners of Conscience are of two distinct sorts ... those prepared to suffer persecution because they have the courage of their convictions, and those who are prisoners of their own conscience because they lack the courage of their convictions. When the latter become the former, all of us will be free.

ANONYMOUS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

We have lost the treasure of treasures: our human liberty. We beseech Thee to find it again for us; and to teach us how to appreciate it, to love and defend it. Help us, too, to vanquish servitude in ourselves. That from our midst may depart every kind of meanness: invective, hatred, vengeance, unjust interference in the affairs of any other; that we may never become usurpers of anybody else's liberty.

FROM AN ANONYMOUS LITHUANIAN GIRL
A PRISONER IN SIBERIA

Man's conscience is his greatest asset, his greatest treasure; it is the voice of God; and to protect its free existence is his duty. The old and crude forms of persecution, to suppress its voice by ruthless mutilation of body and crushing of spirit of man, has now been replaced by subtle forms of indoctrination and brain-washing. Those who seek to stunt the growth of man's independence of individuality and free expression of thought and opinion have made their mode of suppression more systematic and thorough.

To combat this tyranny of man upon man, the United Nations and its Agencies remind the world on Human Rights Day what the free-thinking part of it owes to those who suffer for their honest opinions on this or that side of the spheres of different ideologies. The world should become one in upholding man's free-thinking rights which means the upholding of the freedom of his conscience. Efforts to help observance of Human Rights Day are commendable.

RAJENDRA PRASAD FIRST PRESIDENT OF INDIA

HUMAN DIGNITY

The only real test of the value of our civilisation is the worth we set upon human dignity. This the Christian must proclaim without fear and without ceasing; for to him the dignity of man is linked inescapably and eternally with the fact that God himself chose human nature for his own condition. To offend against human dignity is therefore to blaspheme.

HTREVOR HUDDLESTON C.R. BISHOP OF MASASI, TANGANYIKA

FREEDOM AND JUSTICE

Each day at the General Sessions of the Vatican Council 2,600 bishops, together with observers from other denominations, join together to say this prayer: 'Come to us, Holy Spirit, who are weighed by the

infirmities of sin, but gathered in Your name. Teach us what to do, how to proceed, so that in all things, we, by Your help, may execute Your will. Be to us our sole inspirer, and the instrument of all our judgments. Suffer us not to fall from justice, You who are the supreme Lover of equity. Let not ignorance betray us, nor human favour deflect us, nor regard for persons or their gifts. But make us one in You, and hold us unswerving in the path of truth.... So may we cling to justice that our thoughts here below shall be Your own, and fit us in the next life for Your rewards unending.'

Working for freedom in search of peace, an ideal dear to AMNESTY, increases the prospects of effective action by the Vatican Council. from ROME

THOMAS ROBERTS S.J. ARCHBISHOP OF SYGDEA

HUMANITY

By humanity (humanitas—the quality or condition of being human) we mean the truly kind demeanour of man towards his fellow-man. With this term we express the fact that we must strive to be kind not only because an ethical commandment demands it of us, but also because it is in harmony with our nature to be so. Humanity requires of us that in matters both great and small we listen to our heart and act upon its dictates. We would willingly abide by what rational reflection tells us is good and feasible. But the commands of the heart are loftier than those of reason. They demand of us to follow the

profoundest impulses of our spiritual being. In the last addresss he delivered in the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus declared that on the Day of Judgement which he, the Son of Man, would usher in, man's entry to the Kingdom of God would be determined by the love he had shown towards man in need. Profound religion and profound thought together have created and proclaimed the ideal of humanity, and have passed it on to us. We profess this ideal and are convinced that it is the ethical corner-stone of true culture. Today the principle of humanity is of world-wide historical relevance.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER LAMBARÉNÉ, GABON

'ALL FREEDOMS DEPEND ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM'

The justification for this statement resides in the belief that man is a child of God and must be free from human compulsions that hinder allegiance to God. He must, therefore, be free in conscience, to serve God, or indeed to deny Him, and a civilized society must always be sensitive to such a conscience and ensure that, even if a penalty has to be imposed in individual cases where the well-being of the community may appear to be affected, it ought to be such that it does not involve persecution or prolonged disability. Freedom of conscience is a basic human right.

HTHOMAS CARLIOL BISHOP OF CARLISLE, ENGLAND

βία γάρ οὐ πρόσεστι τῳ θεῷ

Compulsion is not an attribute of God.

Epistle to Diognetus VII, 4. (3rd century, A.D.)

THE REV. ERNEST PAYNE GENERAL SECRETARY, BAPTIST UNION, VICE-PRESIDENT, WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

CHRISTMAS IN PRISON

Around midnight, I suppose, I was awakened. People-prisoners-were singing 'Minuit Chrétien', which is one of our national carols. The soldiers were not angry as, otherwise, they would have been. Soon, the whole prison, men and women, were singing and communing together, sharing thus their despair. It was most moving. The next morning there was High Mass. On each side of the altar was a Christmas Tree. The organ was accompanied by a violin and a man's choir. We were, of course, not meant to join the choir, but when the verse: 'People, kneel down, sing they liberation', all our voices joined in spite of the guards. It was impossible to stop the flood of hope that burst out of our oppressed chests. It was overwhelming, and I cried a lot, but it gave me courage to face the day; and with the help of a Red Cross parcel I managed by spreading out those poor wealths to give an air of 'fete' to my cell.

HELÈNE JEANTY-RAVEN BELGIUM

THE PERSECUTORS

Those who are most eager to use force against other ideas, the fanatics, are really those who are impotent. They are fundamentally not different from a depressed person, who suffers, not because he is sad, but precisely because he feels nothing, no joy, no sadness, no interest. The fanatic tries to overcome this unbearable situation by constructing idols in which he sees all that he is too empty to experience himself; the idol is goodness, wisdom, courage and strength. The idol can be a man, an idea, a political party, a religion, just as in the past it was often the statue of a god, or a sacred tree. In worshipping the idol, the fanatic gives himself the illusion of having filled his own void; in passionate submission to his idol he obtains an excitement, which he could not experience in any other way.

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, NEW YORK

THE RULERS

It is not enough to rely on the goodwill of those at the top—politicians, religious and cultural leaders. By themselves they do not know and cannot succeed. He who has the greatest burden of responsibility, even when working and striving in the best possible way so that everyone may possess essential values, is in danger of thinking that he knows what he does not know, and of seeing as uniform those things which are not uniform. He is also in danger of constantly

repeating his own point of view and propositions without listening to others, always thinking the other side wrong, always imagining that others are plotting all manner of subterfuges and mean acts. He discounts the fact that in his effort to save truth, justice and peace itself he may be reduced to using violence.

DANILO DOLCI PARTIMICO, SICILY

COMPASSION

It is one of the sad reflections on our Society that, despite the adoption by nearly all the nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the adoption by the European States of the Rome Convention about Human Rights, and by the new States of Africa and Asia of several Declarations about the Rule of Law, there is flagrant persecution, in the old world and the new, of political opponents, and a denial of elementary justice to thousands who are interned and imprisoned on account of their opinions. The quality of mercy is strained, and pity and compassion, which were once the signal virtues of Christian society, are suppressed.

A recent case of the denial of compassion, which stirred the public conscience, was the refusal of asylum to Dr Soblen, an American convicted of espionage in America, and the attempt to deport him, first from Israel and then from England, to the United States, where he would pass the rest of his

life in prison. He was a mortally sick man and tried to put an end to his life in despair of proving his innocence which he protested to the last. The divine order still knows mercy, and at the second attempt he succeeded.

NORMAN BENTWICH
PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL LAW
JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY

Printed in England by Christopher Foss at Sherlock Mews, Baker Street, London w

1963

A collection of original essays on the conflict between conscience and obedience is being published in the spring of 1963. Among many contributors of distinction are Prime Minister Ben Gurion, Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, Mr Kenneth Kaunda, and Earl Russell. The royalties on each edition in every language are being given to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

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