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amnesty international

HANDBOOK

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Contents

Preface	HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK	5
Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	7
Chapter 2	PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE, PRISONS, PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE	9
	Prisoners of Conscience	
	Prison Conditions	
	Torture	
	Death Penalty	
	Trials	
	Conscientious Objectors	
	Refugees	
Chapter 3	HOW AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WORKS	13
	Research	
	Casework	
	Campaigns	
	Campaign for the Abolition of Torture	
	Prisoners of the Month	
	Prisoner of Conscience Week	
	Greetings Cards for Prisoners	
	Specific Country Campaigns	
	Urgent Actions	
	Missions	
	Relief	
	Publications and Publicity	
	International Conferences and the United Nations	
	Representations to National Governments	
	Educational Programs	
Chapter 4	THE MOVEMENT	19
	Members	
	Groups	
	National Sections	
	International Council	
	International Executive Committee	
	International Committees	
	Financial Control Committee	
	Borderline Committee	
	International Secretariat	
Chapter 5	FUNDRAISING AND FINANCES	24
Chapter 6	THE GROUPS	25
	Adoption Groups	
	Coordination Groups	
	Action/Working Groups	
	CAT Groups	
	Professional Groups	
Chapter 7	GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ACTION	28
	Security	
	Coordination of Activities	
	Relations with International Organizations	
	Relations with Exile Organizations	

Chapter 7	GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ACTION (continued)	
	What is Pressure?	
	Letters	
	Appeals	
	Delegations	
	Media Actions	
	Publications	
	Arts Performances	
	Public Actions	
	Commercial Relations	
	Symbolic Actions	
	Working with Social Institutions	
Chapter 8	CASEWORK	39
	Responsibilities of an Adoption Groups	
	International Secretariat Liaison with the Adoption Group	
	Selection of Prisoner Cases	
	Prisoner Dossiers	
	Double and Triple Adoptions	
	Correspondence with Government Authorities	
	Meetings with Government Representatives	
	Publicity and Press Relations	
	Approaches to other Organizations and Institutions	
	Correspondence with Amnesty International Contacts	
	Correspondence with the Prisoner and Family	
	Relief	
	Offers of Asylum	
	Visits to the Prisoner's Country	
	Fundraising	
	Releases	
	Suspension of Group Work	
Chapter 9	REFERENCE MATERIALS	47
	Human Rights in International Law	
	<i>Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</i>	
	Amnesty International Policy Documents:	
	Statute	
	<i>Guidelines for the Acceptance of Financial Contributions and Fundraising by Amnesty International</i>	
	<i>Policy Guidelines Relating to Conscientious Objection</i>	
	<i>Amnesty International and the Use of Violence</i>	
Chapter 10	SAMPLE LETTERS	58
Chapter 11	WORKING RULES	61
Appendix	COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS	65
	INDEX	67

Preface

How to use this Handbook

This **Amnesty International Handbook** is the fifth edition of an Amnesty International (AI) publication previously titled **Handbook for Groups**. Following extensive consultation within the AI movement, it was decided to prepare this revised edition to include much more information about the overall work of the organization, to attach essential reference materials and to incorporate much of the text of the previously-separate publication **How to Free Your Prisoner**.

This present handbook, therefore, is intended to provide a longterm basic reference manual for AI members, particularly those working in adoption groups. It is distributed in English by the International Secretariat or in a local edition by the offices of the AI national sections.

In order to be useful as a reference manual, this handbook is much longer and more detailed than previous editions. New AI members should not feel obliged to read and immediately digest all the information it contains. There is a list of chapter headings and subtitles at the beginning and an index at the end: these give an indication of the kind of information which is available from the handbook.

The material is presented in three sections:

First section. The first six chapters give a general introduction to Amnesty International. Members will find this section useful for an overall survey of the organization. The major concerns of the movement and basic terms of reference, such as Prisoner of Conscience, are defined. A brief summary is given of the AI organization, structure and methods of work on different levels. In addition, the Appendix **Commonly Asked Questions** provides concise answers to questions which are most often asked by members of the general public. New members might find these brief explanations particularly useful when responding to queries from potential supporters, embassy officials, etc.

Second section. Chapters 7 and 8 provide detailed suggestions and guidelines for group activities, both in the specialized field of individual casework and in the field of general campaigning and public actions on behalf of prisoners of conscience, including AI work relating to torture, prison conditions and the death penalty. When groups are planning an action which is recommended in a prisoner dossier or by the International Secretariat or national coordination group, they should consult the relevant chapters in this handbook in order to get general guidelines, for example, about how to approach a trade union or how to organize a vigil or an arts performance. Chapter 7 in particular provides useful and important guidelines for relations with the news media, approaches to other organizations and visits to the prisoner's country. It should be emphasized, however, that the advice given in these chapters, in particular, is of a general nature and that the recommendations contained in each individual prisoner dossier must at all times take precedence over the information provided in the following pages.

Important guidelines for letter-writing are given in Chapter 7. These should be carefully studied: correspondence is an essential and constant factor in the work of every adoption group. The series of **Sample Letters** in Chapter 10, suggesting various formats and approaches to different government authorities, will help groups to formulate their own letters.

Third section. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 give useful reference material, including international legislation on human rights (the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**) and AI policy statements: the Statute, AI and the Use of Violence, etc. The **Working Rules** in Chapter 11, endorsed by the International Council of AI, should be consulted regularly as they refer to the specific responsibilities of adoption groups, coordination groups and national sections and indicate the normal working procedures of the whole organization.

The Index. Located at the end of the handbook, it is cross-referenced to help members locate the specific information they need quickly and easily.

New techniques of AI action and organization are continually being explored and developed. This diversity and flexibility of approach is one of the major strengths of the movement. The result is that an Amnesty International handbook can never be considered a definitive document. It should be treated as a reference manual for general guidelines only: on any specific questions of policy or methods of work, please consult your coordination group, national section or the International Secretariat.

March 1977

Martin Ennals
Secretary General
Amnesty International

Chapter 1 Introduction to Amnesty International

IN recent years, people throughout the world have become more and more aware of the urgent need for effective international protection of fundamental human rights. Reports have steadily documented the increasing imprisonment of large numbers of political prisoners (many detained without trial for more than five years), the escalating use of torture as an instrument of routine government administration, disappearances and summary executions of political "undesirables" carried out by semi-official death squads — taking place in countries of diverse cultures, economies and ideologies.

Despite efforts at the United Nations and in the field of international law, the world is still without efficient machinery to prevent these and other violations of human rights or to protect the victims. Perhaps the only alternative which has proven at all effective has been the force of awakened world opinion which can become a potent instrument of international intervention in human rights crises. This is the fundamental belief and experience upon which the work of Amnesty International (AI) is based.

Within the overall spectrum of human rights work, Amnesty International plays a very specific role. It is a worldwide voluntary human rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction or religious creed. It works for the release of men and women imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, language, ethnic origin or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. These are termed "prisoners of conscience".

Amnesty International opposes torture and the death penalty in all cases and without reservation. It is currently conducting an international Campaign for the Abolition of Torture.

Amnesty International advocates fair and early trials for all political prisoners. It works on behalf of individuals detained without charge or without trial and those detained after expiry of their sentences.

Amnesty International seeks observance throughout the world of the United Nations (UN) **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the **UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**, and the **UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**.

Amnesty International has been one of the leaders in the worldwide effort to have conscientious objection recognized as a fundamental human right. It is also committed to ensuring that the human rights of refugees, including their right to asylum, are respected.

Amnesty International was founded in 1961 following an appeal launched by British lawyer Peter Benenson to organize practical help for people imprisoned for their political and religious beliefs or

because of racial or linguistic prejudice. Within a month of the publication of his appeal, he had received over a thousand offers of support to collect information on cases, to publicize them and approach governments. Within two months, representatives from five countries had established the beginnings of an international movement. The founding chairman of the organization's International Executive Committee (1963-1974) was Sean MacBride, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1974).

Today, Amnesty International remains the only organization of its kind in the world. It has more than 100,000 members in 78 countries, with organized national sections in 33 of them. Its International Secretariat in London has a staff of 85 and handles nearly 5,000 cases of human rights violations each year regardless of the ideology of either the victims or the governments concerned (1976 statistics).

The great attraction of Amnesty International's approach has been to promote the implementation of universal principles not only at the level of governments and international organizations, but through the concerted action of committed individuals working in small local groups. Through the network of members and supporters, Amnesty International mobilizes public opinion, works for the release of prisoners of conscience, protects their families from hardship and seeks improved international standards in the treatment of prisoners and detainees.

Amnesty International's work is based on detailed research into specific cases of individual prisoners as well as mass violations of human rights. To do this, the International Secretariat in London maintains a Research Department comprised of expert staff who study allegations of torture and detention from all parts of the world. The Research Department receives information from many sources including the international press, transcriptions of radio announcements, reports from legal experts, letters from prisoners' colleagues and a wide network of Amnesty International contacts in numerous countries. It also dispatches official fact-finding missions to assess situations on-the-spot, to meet prisoners and interview government authorities. The detailed reports of the Research Department are then sent to the members of the organization with specific requests and instructions for action.

In addition to general activities in defence of human rights Amnesty International is the foremost non-governmental organization handling specific casework in this field. When the detention of a prisoner of conscience has been verified, the International Secretariat assigns the case to one of Amnesty International's adoption groups. It is each of these small groups which then undertakes the vital work of demonstrating inter-

national concern for the protection of the basic human rights violated in each case. The relevant government and prison officials are faced with an insistent, continuous and informed appeal urging a reconsideration of the case and the release of the prisoner. Letters are dispatched not only to government ministers, embassies, leading newspapers and to international organizations, but to the prisoner and to his or her relatives and friends. If possible, money will be raised to meet relief needs. Influential persons are asked to add their names to the petitions and protests. In emergencies, distinguished jurists may be sent to controversial trials or to plead for the life of a sentenced victim.

In many cases, individual prisoners are released after sustained effort by an Amnesty International group. Others may benefit from a general or partial amnesty following a general Amnesty International campaign. At the same time, it is not the policy of Amnesty International to claim credit for the decision of any government to release an imprisoned individual. This is regardless of whether the organization has been investigating the case or seeking the prisoner's release.

Apart from the release of prisoners, Amnesty International is also concerned to provide relief, assistance and protection to them and to their families during the period of detention. Special medical supplies are sent to ailing prisoners, books are supplied for students whose arrest interrupts their education, funds are raised for food, clothing and schooling. On occasion, assistance is provided for legal aid.

To maintain vigilance on the observance of international legal standards in political cases and to make diplomatic representations on behalf of adopted prisoners, Amnesty International undertakes a great number of official missions each year. On the basis of these missions and its research activities, Amnesty International releases authoritative statements to the world press and publishes frequent reports and background papers.

During 1973 Amnesty International launched a

worldwide Campaign for the Abolition of Torture. The International Secretariat now has a department devoted to raising further public awareness of the use of torture and to promoting effective international, regional and national means to stop it, as well as establishing codes of ethics for jurists, doctors, police, military personnel and others who may become involved in the torture process.

Amnesty International's efforts have succeeded in rescuing specific victims of torture (when details are known in time) and have also resulted in the historic **UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** (1975).

Amnesty International is financed by its members throughout the world, by individual subscription and by donations. Members pay membership fees (varying from country to country) and conduct fundraising campaigns in their local communities. Strict guidelines for the acceptance of funds have been established by the International Council of Amnesty International to guarantee that "any funds received by Amnesty International (its secretariat, national sections, committees and groups) must in no way compromise the integrity of the principles for which Amnesty International works, limit the freedom of activity and expression enjoyed by the organization or restrict its areas of concern." The Amnesty International accounts are audited annually and are published in the **Annual Report** of the organization.

Amnesty International has consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC), UNESCO and the Council of Europe, has cooperative relations with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States and has observer status with the Organization of African Unity (Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees).

The international symbol of Amnesty International is a candle surrounded by barbed wire.

Chapter 2

Prisoners of Conscience, Prisons, Punishment and Torture

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Well over ninety governments today are holding their own citizens in prison either on political, religious or racial grounds or else without trial or charge altogether. In dozens of these countries, the torture of political prisoners has become a routine instrument of social control, used to intimidate or liquidate dissenters.

It is almost impossible to calculate how many such victims exist throughout the world — partly because hundreds are held in remote prison camps or have been secretly executed and partly because smuggling information about them to the outside world is a perilous business.

Conservative estimates of the number of political prisoners held in detention throughout the world place the total at hundreds of thousands. Some are well known in the outside world — leaders of political parties or trade unions, or those who have forcefully and outspokenly dissented from official views. But this is only the famous handful. There is a much wider population of unknown men and women who find themselves detained because they formerly belonged to legal political associations which have since been banned; or because they are members of a religious sect which opposes military service on ethical grounds; or because they speak the "wrong language," have the "wrong colour of skin" or have written the "wrong words". "Guilt by association" also goes far in the eyes of the secret police in numerous countries: grandparents, cousins and small children are held hostage in prison — the innocent relatives of people who have been labelled political "undesirables".

In this sense, AI does not choose the prisoners on whose behalf it works. They are created by governments which pay lip-service to internationally-accepted standards of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Out of the many thousands of prisoners, AI works on behalf of a relatively small proportion, a limitation imposed in part by the need for rigorous and painstaking assessment of each case by the research staff of the International Secretariat before it can be allocated to an AI adoption group.

Information about prisoners reaches the International Secretariat in numerous ways. It arrives from the world's press, which is scanned both at the International Secretariat in London and in the offices of the national sections; from prisoners and their families, often at great personal risk; from experts and private contacts, refugees and religious bodies; from national and international organizations with direct knowledge of specific countries; and from AI's own investigative missions. From this mass of information, details are examined, sources cross-checked, biographical and

legal data assembled, and a careful assessment made of each case in relation to the changing political and legal context in each country.

The great majority of cases which are taken up are those of **prisoners of conscience** — men and women who are imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, language or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. Such cases are assigned to AI groups for **ADOPTION**. Since such individuals are detained in violation of the United Nations **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, AI seeks their unconditional release.

If AI believes that a prisoner may be a prisoner of conscience but lacks conclusive information, the case may be allocated to an adoption group for **INVESTIGATION**. The group will then attempt to obtain the information required for determining the prisoner's status. If the government authorities concerned fail to provide adequate information to justify the prisoner's detention, the case may be upgraded to **ADOPTION**. It should be noted that, according to a decision of the International Council, AI is not bound to accept a government's assessment of whether a prisoner has used violence or not.

The Statute of AI also provides that the movement shall "oppose by all appropriate means the detention of prisoners of conscience or any political prisoners without trial within a reasonable time or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to recognized norms to ensure a fair trial." AI takes up for **INVESTIGATION** all such prisoners who have been detained for long periods without trial or who have been sentenced on the basis of unfair trial procedures.

Three unwavering rules safeguard AI's impartiality in its casework:

1. Groups and individual members work simultaneously for three prisoners from contrasting ideological backgrounds or holding different political or religious beliefs. Thus, one may be from a Communist country, another from a capitalist society and the third one from a non-aligned nation.
2. Groups do not work for individual prisoners arrested by their own government. This also reflects the essential emphasis on **international** responsibility for the protection of human rights.
3. No one is adopted as a prisoner of conscience who is believed to have advocated or used violence or to have engaged in espionage. This enforces the distinction between prisoners of conscience and other prisoners and ensures that AI cannot justifiably be accused of supporting terrorism. For a detailed analysis of this question, see Chapter 9, **AI and the**

Use of Violence.

Furthermore, no prisoner's case is taken up if this would in any way jeopardize his or her position.

PRISON CONDITIONS

Many prisoners are held in cramped, overcrowded and otherwise grossly inadequate conditions. In some cases, this is a deliberate means of demoralizing the prisoners; in others, it may be an additional punishment imposed, such as prolonged solitary confinement not by a court, but by the prison authorities. Although AI works primarily to prevent the detention of prisoners of conscience and to secure their immediate release, it is also deeply concerned about the inadequacy of prison conditions.

The international basis for AI's work for the improvement of prison conditions is the United Nations **Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**. This document, adopted by the UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, sets down 94 basic minimal requirements for the proper handling of prisoners. The Rules cover such items as the availability of medical services, regulations for discipline and punishment, use of restraining implements, procedures for prisoner complaints. A special section (Rules 84-93) deals with the privileges of undertrial prisoners.

In the course of its regular casework, AI frequently requests that prisoners be granted access to a doctor or lawyer or to family visits, or that they be allowed to read, study, write letters and take exercise. All these demands fall within the basic guidelines of the Standard Minimum Rules. On occasion, AI publishes reports on prison conditions in a particular country, or makes private representations to governments. It does not seek, however, to duplicate the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the international body primarily concerned with prison inspection.

On an international level, AI continues to make submissions to the five-yearly UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the body responsible for issuing and reviewing the Standard Minimum Rules.

TORTURE

Torture today is a fact of life in almost all parts of the world despite the international agreements that forbid torture and despite the many denials from governments that use it.

Torture knows no geographical boundaries, nor can it be ascribed to a single political ideology or to one economic system. In the last decade AI has substantiated thousands of cases of torture and the unmistakable trend is toward an increase in the frequency and the sophistication of this modern barbarity.

The list of the methods of contemporary torture includes not only the antique devices of whip, club and thumbscrew but also the modern technology of electricity, sophisticated methods of psychological assault, and drugs that can cause dread, hallucinations,

muscle spasms, vomiting and even paralysis.

Modern torture is not merely the occasional lapse of legal restraints in a few isolated incidents; rather it reflects a conscious choice of the highest governmental officials to destroy the legal limitations that would inhibit the excesses of their power. Governments (and some insurgent movements) use torture as a means of gaining information, of forcing confessions, and of terrorizing the general population. Whatever its immediate purpose, torture humiliates the victim and dehumanizes the torturer. Like murder or war, it is one of the ultimate human corruptions.

In 1973, to combat the increasing use of torture, particularly as a political instrument, AI launched a worldwide Campaign for the Abolition of Torture. The work of the campaign is described in detail in Chapter 3 of this handbook.

The basis of the campaign has been to mobilize international action on two major fronts: (i) intervention to rescue specific victims of torture when details are available and (ii) mobilization of international public opinion and organizations to provide long-term protection-machinery against torture.

Those who consciously justify torture rely essentially on the philosophic argument that a lesser evil can be used to combat a greater evil. In the case of torture, however, historical experience leads AI to very different conclusions. Torture, once tolerated, becomes a routine practice and ultimately a semi-clandestine political institution. Like a cancer, it spreads through the body politic and, often, from country to country.

Finally, it is the experience of AI that the act of torture cannot be separated from the rest of society: it degrades those who use it, those who benefit from it and it is the most flagrant contradiction of justice, the very ideal on which the nation state wishes to base its authority. Just as to give in to terrorism is to invite the loss of more lives, so to give in to the use of torture is to invite its spread and the eventual debasement of the whole community.

DEATH PENALTY

Since it was founded, AI has opposed the death penalty on the grounds that it constitutes a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, is irrevocable, is capable of being inflicted on the innocent, does not act as a deterrent to crime and is a violation of the right to life provisions of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and other international covenants. AI is committed by its Statute to "opposing by all appropriate means the imposition of death penalties . . ."

The official position of the UN General Assembly is that it is desirable to abolish the death penalty in all countries, that it should not be introduced for crimes to which it does not already apply, that the crimes to which it applies should be progressively reduced and that it should be employed only for the gravest of crimes.

However, a large number of UN member states have not respected this decision. Only eleven countries have so far abolished the death penalty, and while a few countries have suspended or restricted its use, others are expanding the list of offences punishable by

death. Disturbing departures from international standards have included denials of the right to appeal against a death sentence, or to petition the Head of State for clemency.

Recent years have seen an alarming increase in disappearances and the use of summary execution without benefit of fair trial. This is particularly true of military regimes and of extra-governmental forces acting with or without official sanction. The activities of para-military "death squads" in certain countries have given particular cause for concern, as has the frequent incidence of prisoners reported "killed while trying to escape". Political killings remain a feature of societies in a state of acute internal crisis, where the constituted government is either powerless to intervene or, under this pretext, condones the clandestine elimination of its political opponents.

In response to the prevalence of legal and extra-legal executions, AI has adopted a two-fold approach. It has persistently pressured UN member states to adhere to the principle of abolition. In September 1975, AI backed a resolution prepared by 25 non-governmental organizations for the Fifth UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which called on governments to cease employing capital punishment, as contravening article 5 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, and urged the UN General Assembly to promulgate a declaration that would demand its worldwide abolition. Similar lobbying has been directed at the Council of Europe and efforts are continuing to obtain compliance by member states within the major inter-governmental forums. The 1972 International Council of AI, meeting at Utrecht, recommended that national sections in countries where capital punishment is still imposed should work for its total abolition. It also recommended that the national sections represented in the Council of Europe or other similar organs in other parts of the world should work through these bodies towards the same end.

In 1975 the International Council of AI decided to initiate a major effort to raise public awareness of fundamental principles involved in the complex question of the death penalty. On 10 December 1977, the 29th Anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, AI will publish a major report on the death penalty throughout the world and convene an international conference on this theme in Stockholm, Sweden.

Apart from these general initiatives, AI has developed a variety of techniques in order to maintain a regular program of seeking to intervene on humanitarian grounds in all cases of a political nature whenever there is a likelihood of a death sentence being carried out. Legal observers are frequently dispatched to trials where a capital sentence is expected; appeals for clemency are formally addressed to the Head of State, and efforts made to ensure that full appeal procedures are followed. These measures may be accompanied by a public AI statement deploring the recourse to the death penalty and urging clemency.

Increasingly, AI receives information about the sudden disappearance of individuals in countries where clandestine torture and killings by factional groups have reached almost uncontrollable proportions. In

many cases, the victims may not even be political militants, but lawyers, journalists, unionists or close relatives of wanted suspects. An immediate response to these crimes can be initiated by AI's urgent action structure. In the longer term, governments believed to be giving unofficial sanction to clandestine killings are urged by AI to conduct formal inquiries and to assume their full responsibility for ensuring the life and liberty of citizens in that country.

TRIALS

The Statute of AI commits the movement to "oppose by all appropriate means the detention of prisoners of conscience or any political prisoners without trial within a reasonable time, or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to recognized norms to ensure a fair trial."

AI actively intervenes in cases where there are substantial delays in the administration of justice, and seeks to ensure that political prisoners are given the full right to defend themselves in court. This concern naturally extends to the cases of adopted prisoners of conscience appearing before a court of appeal or who have successfully applied for a retrial.

The principles on which the concept of a "fair trial" are based are defined by internationally accepted standards; for example, the provision of defence lawyers of the prisoner's choosing, full prior consultation with defence counsel, open trial in the presence of outside observers, the testimony of defence witnesses and right of cross-examination, the repudiation of evidence extracted under duress or torture. Thus, for example, AI would oppose the appearance of civilians on political charges before a military tribunal.

These concerns extend beyond those cases which are strictly termed prisoners of conscience. Frequently, investigation cases are compiled by AI relating to individuals who belong to political parties and are accused of criminal offences, such as murder, but are denied trial for a matter of years. Similarly, people who may or may not be members of political parties which advocate or use violence are detained on suspicion of involvement in criminal acts or for suspected membership in outlawed organizations and detained without charge or trial for lengthy periods.

In situations where preventive detention legislation is used freely in this manner, AI will go beyond casework on behalf of individuals and press for a general amnesty for all political detainees, for steps to bring detainees to trial or for repeal of the legislation under which they are held. Situations involving mass detention without trial are often the subject of AI reports.

Where trial procedures are notoriously unjust, such as military courts being used to try and sentence civilians or where the defendant is denied free access to competent counsel, or where the legislation under which prisoners of conscience are detained is itself in violation of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, AI will also highlight this in its periodic reports as well as in its representation to the governments concerned.

Lastly, where prisoners of conscience or individuals

who are likely to become prisoners of conscience face difficulties in securing the services of a competent lawyer, AI will explore the possibilities of providing legal aid and in countries where this is a problem on a mass scale, AI may discuss the entire question of legal aid with the government and with appropriate bodies in the country, such as bar associations.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

AI has been one of the leaders in the worldwide effort to have conscientious objection recognized as a fundamental human right. The Statute of AI states that "every person has the right freely to hold and to express his convictions and the obligation to extend a like freedom to others". This includes the right of a person to refuse military service on the grounds of conscience or personal conviction, without legal or physical penalty. Anyone who is imprisoned for exercising this right is considered by AI to be a prisoner of conscience. The 1972 International Council meeting at Utrecht endorsed policy guidelines relating to conscientious objection and the adoption of conscientious objectors by AI. These are included in Chapter 9 of this handbook.

REFUGEES

The Statute of AI commits the movement to "provide financial and other relief to Prisoners of Conscience and their dependants and to people who might reasonably be expected to become prisoners of conscience if they were to return to their own countries and to the dependants of such persons." (article 2f).

AI is often approached for assistance in cases of refugees from one country who are detained in another, and for assistance in cases of political refugees who face deportation back to their country of origin. In the former case, AI applies its normal investigation and adoption procedures. In the case of political refugees facing deportation, the AI national section and/or coordination group frequently intervenes in the hope of ensuring that the refugee in question is guaranteed full access to appeal procedures against deportation. A national section, in close consultation with the International Secretariat, may request the government to grant asylum on humanitarian grounds and is prepared, where appropriate, to attest that the refugee in question may expect to be deprived of his or her freedom of movement should he or she be required to return to the home country.

As an organization, AI has observer status with the Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees of the Organization of African Unity and through its consultative status with the UN it is frequently in close touch with the UN's High Commission for Refugees.

Chapter 3 How Amnesty International Works

RESEARCH

RESEARCH activities are central to the entire work of AI. The Research Department of the International Secretariat is responsible for collecting and analyzing information on violations of human rights around the world and in particular for maintaining comprehensive records on prisoners of conscience. The International Secretariat also includes a Documentation Centre responsible for information storage and retrieval and which maintains a special library on political imprisonment.

The Research Department attempts to evaluate information about arrests, trials and detention in the light of political and legal developments in any one country and to provide the fullest possible details about the overall political background and the individual prisoners. This is done on occasion in co-operation with AI coordination groups in the national sections (see Chapter 6).

Information reaches the International Secretariat from many sources: newspapers and periodicals in a variety of languages, consultations with experts in particular fields, visits from exiles and relatives of prisoners, letters from prisoners (sometimes smuggled out of prison) and from their families, churches, lawyers, trade unions, professional organizations, exile organizations and AI's official fact-finding missions. This information is then carefully studied and cross-checked by the Research Department before action is initiated by the organization.

As a result of its years of painstaking and comprehensive research since 1961 into political imprisonment, torture, prison conditions, national and international legislation for the protection of human rights, trials, capital punishment, announcements of amnesties and so forth, AI is now generally recognized as the foremost international resource centre for scholars, journalists, governments and institutions or organizations seeking information on political imprisonment and related violations of human rights.

Research is only the first stage in the work of AI. The information is quickly channelled into action on behalf of individual prisoners of conscience and violations of human rights. Suggestions for action are distributed by the International Secretariat throughout the worldwide network of AI members, groups and supporters.

CASEWORK

AI is unique among human rights organizations because its global impartiality is translated into a rigorously balanced system of casework. Responsibility

for handling the many individual prisoner cases taken up by AI rests with the adoption groups throughout the world. Each group is assigned the cases of three or more prisoners from contrasting political and ideological backgrounds. Great care is exercised when allocating cases to ensure that sufficient overall political contrast is maintained to preclude any suspicion that the individual AI group (or the whole movement) is politically biased. As a further safeguard, and as a method of internationalizing concern for human rights, groups are not assigned individual cases of prisoners of conscience in their own country.

The work of adoption groups involves seeking out further information about the prisoner from the authorities of the country concerned, and pressing for the release of the prisoner of conscience. This includes direct approaches to local and national bodies such as trade unions and churches with a professional or humanitarian interest in the case and petitions and publicity activities to stimulate broader local and national interest and involvement. On the advice of the International Secretariat, the group may also attempt to contact the prisoner and his or her family directly, and raise money to help them with legal fees or medical costs if necessary. Please see the section on Relief, in Chapter 8.

The work on individual cases also involves consideration of the overall situation in which the political imprisonment is taking place. AI is concerned with the observance of legal rights for prisoners awaiting trial, on trial, under sentence, and in prison. According to the nature of the case, the adoption group will press for the right to freedom from torture; access to legal advice and family visits; the right to a fair trial, including a defence counsel of the prisoner's choosing, and procedures conforming to internationally accepted norms for adequate defence and impartial sentencing; the right to appeal; the all important right to life; and while in prison, adequate living conditions, access to legal advice and medical care, facilities to receive visits, to study and to write letters, etc.

In this way, AI adoption groups are of necessity involved in work on a wide range of topics related to the essential fact of imprisonment. They receive guidance and advice from the International Secretariat and in some cases from coordination groups, set up by national sections to coordinate the nationwide activities of groups taking up cases of political prisoners from a particular country or region. The adoption groups study the general features of the political and social life of each country where the prisoners are held in order to understand the context of the specific problems which concern AI. On a few occasions, individual members of a group may even visit the prisoner or his family while in the country on a private visit. (See Chapter 8)

The casework undertaken by AI groups cannot be expected to match the overall dimensions of the problems related to political imprisonment. In many countries where preventive detention of political suspects has taken place on a massive scale, AI's individual casework can only touch on the situation of a small proportion of the prison population — although at the same time this helps to highlight the plight of the many hundreds whose names may never become known. Similarly, where trial procedures are systematically weighted against the defendant (and where this injustice is fully supported by the laws of the country) more wide-ranging techniques have been developed to bring pressure on governments to grant full rights to defendants.

A detailed explanation of the methods and procedures for the casework of AI groups is provided in Chapter 8 of this handbook.

CAMPAIGNS

The public campaigns conducted by AI's groups and national sections are particularly important for focusing public attention on different aspects of political imprisonment or on the human rights situation in a particular country. The wide range of the aims and techniques of campaign work is extremely varied: long-term campaigns — such as those for the abolition of torture and the death penalty — are designed to maintain pressure on subjects which are of permanent concern to AI; other campaigns of limited duration are organized around a central theme to concentrate attention on certain countries or categories of political prisoners.

Major international campaigns are initiated by the International Secretariat. National sections, groups and members are called upon to participate in these efforts. On the national level, adoption groups and coordination groups may combine to launch a campaign on behalf of a particular group of prisoners (in accordance with the **Working Rules**; see Chapter 11). In many countries individual AI groups participate in campaigns coordinated by the national section offices, concentrating their efforts on reaching out to public opinion through the mass communications media and enlisting the participation of public figures and national organizations. In a few national sections, there are large "action groups" concentrating solely on this kind of campaign work. Finally, there is the campaign work conducted by each AI group in support of prisoners of conscience — where publicity is often combined with a fundraising effort for relief assistance to the prisoner and his family. Groups from a number of national sections may also agree on concerted action on a particular issue.

The following seven categories of campaigns take place continuously within the overall work of AI.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

The abolition of torture in all its forms has been one of AI's concerns ever since the movement began. By

the early 1970's, AI's Research Department had amassed overwhelming evidence to indicate that torture was being employed by many governments against political opponents — and that this practice was increasing to such an extent that it could be termed an epidemic.

Accordingly, in 1972, the International Council of AI launched a Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, aimed at mobilizing public opinion and action against torture on an international scale. The year-long effort, conducted at all levels of the organization, culminated in the December 1973 Paris International Conference for the Abolition of Torture and the presentation to the President of the UN General Assembly of an appeal to outlaw torture signed by more than one million people from 90 countries. From this beginning sprang an awareness of the need for a permanent international coordinating body able to sustain and expand the campaign.

During 1974, a separate department was set up within the AI International Secretariat to work solely on the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (CAT). Its immediate task was to establish a clearing-house for information on torture. The evidence from AI's research files had already provided ample material for the 1973 **AI Report on Torture**, which documented the evidence of torture in countries over the previous decade.

The CAT department, now integrated into the Campaign Unit within the Program Department, collects, checks and disseminates incoming data on torture in close consultation with the Research Department. In this way, it is able to monitor all the countries on which AI works, providing an up-to-date indication of the prevalence of torture, and the spread and increasing sophistication of the techniques employed.

The work of consolidating this information is carried out in the International Secretariat and through specially commissioned studies. These studies range from long-term medical research into the effects of electrical torture and papers on the legal implications of psychiatric behaviour modification techniques, to specific studies on torture in a single country.

However, CAT is not primarily concerned with academic study. The vast majority of its work is geared to mobilizing international action to prevent torture and rescue victims. Following the Paris Conference for the Abolition of Torture, AI has worked with sympathetic governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to implement an international strategy which would effectively outlaw and prevent torture. The first major success in this direction was achieved on 9 December 1975 when the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 3452 (XXX) which brought into international law a historic **Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**. The 12-article declaration defines torture and provides guidelines for all states including the stipulation that states shall ensure that acts of torture are offences under their criminal law and that any statement obtained by torture or similar treatment "may not be invoked as evidence against the person concerned or against any other person in any proceedings."

AI is well aware, however, that action on this level alone cannot guarantee the eradication of the cancer of torture. The CAT Department coordinates the overall activities of the national sections of AI and conducts specific programmes which include:

- urgent action campaigns to give instant, global publicity on behalf of victims of torture known to AI by name;
- support for the rehabilitation of torture victims;
- publication of facts about governments that employ torture and exposure of their methods through public reports, regular bulletins, statements to the international news media and special international campaigns aimed at individual countries;
- mobilization of professional, religious, medical, trade union and other similar national, regional and international bodies to support the battle against torture.

A significant proportion of the information which reaches AI is about individual victims of torture. In response to this, a worldwide urgent action network has been set up. Despite the enormous difficulties involved in obtaining the information and pressuring governments to be merciful, AI's work has already been dramatically successful.

For example, in November 1974 AI drew its members' attention to the case of Thieu Thi Tao, a 23-year-old girl who had been detained for five years in South Vietnamese prisons (for "spreading communist propaganda"), including 1½ years in the notorious tiger cages of Con Son. She had been severely tortured as a result of which she was partly paralysed and mentally deranged. Also suffering from tuberculosis and heart trouble, and still a prisoner, she had been transferred in mid-1974 to the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital, opposite Tan Hiep Prison.

One month later, following urgent telegrams and letters from hundreds of AI members all over the world, Thieu Thi Tao was released. Her legs were still very weak, she had difficulty in walking and someone had to support her. But there is no doubt that the worst of her ordeal was over because the world took notice.

AI members receive a special **Campaign for the Abolition of Torture Bulletin** inside the monthly **Newsletter** giving cases of torture. They are asked to send protests and appeals to the appropriate government authorities in the same manner as in the Prisoners of the Month Campaign.

PRISONERS OF THE MONTH

Each month, the Research Department of the International Secretariat selects three cases of prisoners of conscience who are in urgent need of outside help. For example, the prisoners may be facing imminent execution, be in extreme ill-health or have been detained in severe conditions for a prolonged period of time. The details of these critical cases are included in the monthly **Newsletter** and sent to members of AI for immediate action. The three cases are carefully selected to reflect the political impartiality of AI's work.

At present it is estimated that no fewer than 20,000

people participate in this monthly campaign. It is impossible to measure the precise impact of their concerted appeals for release, but during the first ten years of the campaign since 1965, massive appeals have been launched on behalf of more than 360 people. Of these at least 178 prisoners in 45 countries were released, had their sentences reduced or were transferred to better conditions, following the AI campaign.

Details of critical cases are sent to the members of AI along with the addresses for the letters and appeals. Members may prefer to send their appeals to the relevant embassy in their own country. The letters are then forwarded by the embassy to the authorities in the prisoner's country.

Among the actions which can be taken on behalf of the prisoners are:

1. **Individual letters** — as individuals, members send brief letters or notes to the appropriate government authorities appealing for the prisoners' release, commutation of death sentences, etc. They are asked to do this as soon as they receive the **Newsletter** and to avoid expressing themselves in any way which could be construed as aggressive or prejudiced.
2. **Petitions** — members can prepare petitions on behalf of each of the prisoners and have the petition circulated for signature among friends, professional colleagues and other people interested in human rights.
3. **Mass letter-writing** — where possible, members can distribute the details of the cases through kindred institutions or to the general public with a request that all interested people write individual letters on behalf of the prisoners. They attempt to secure the support of prominent citizens in their community, social workers, political leaders etc. and ask them to participate regularly in the campaign.
4. **Press and Publicity** — members encourage their local press to publish a précis of the cases each month so that a wider protest can be generated. They also ask sympathetic institutions to publish the details of the cases in their monthly bulletins or newsletters so that their members can also add their voices.
5. **Public Meetings** — a local AI group, if there is one, can hold a public meeting once a month to publicize the critical cases and to focus attention on the work of the AI movement. A formal resolution can be sent by the meeting to the appropriate authorities on behalf of each of the three prisoners.
6. **Human Rights Awareness** — the monthly campaign provides an excellent way to raise basic issues of human rights in any community. The campaign has been used effectively elsewhere by teachers and social workers to raise the consciousness of people on issues which touch them directly.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE WEEK

No single case of political imprisonment is "typical". Each is an instance of acute personal suffering — of a human being detained unjustly, severed from normal life by the failure of governments to obey universal

standards of decency and human rights.

To illustrate this, each year AI selects a dozen cases of prisoners of conscience for special action during "Prisoner of Conscience Week" (the second week of October) — as symbols of the individual distress of all prisoners being adopted or investigated by AI members throughout the world.

During Prisoner of Conscience Week, AI members are asked to conduct special programmes to awaken popular understanding and outrage. For example, feature articles on the prisoners can be prepared for publication in local press and other publications.

Prisoner of Conscience Week can be used for more active events: an arts concert, a play about freedom or about political imprisonment, a public meeting, a poster display — to attract people to the living work of AI and to raise funds and recruit new members.

GREETINGS CARDS FOR PRISONERS

Greetings cards are intended to remind prisoners that the outside world cares about them, that they are not forgotten. Each year, in connection with Human Rights Day, 10 December, the International Secretariat selects the cases of approximately 36 political prisoners for a special campaign in which all AI members are requested to send — and to encourage others to send — greetings cards to the prisoners. The cards are usually simple ones of greetings for the coming year which do not mention any particular religious festival since the geographical and cultural backgrounds of the prisoners vary widely. Even in cases where the cards themselves do not actually reach the prisoner, the government concerned is reminded that the detained individual is not forgotten: in this way the authorities may be moved to an act of clemency.

SPECIFIC COUNTRY CAMPAIGNS

The problems of political imprisonment, detention without trial, the increased use of torture as an administrative instrument and other related abuses of power with which AI is confronted cannot be solved solely by an individualistic approach which highlights single prisoners. As a result much of the work of the organization at both international and national levels is designed to raise general issues or to draw attention to the overall problems of human rights violations in a particular country or region. The intensive international campaign about torture in Uruguay which took place in the first half of 1976 provides an encouraging example of the potential effectiveness of such a major effort from the whole AI movement.

Campaigns which focus on the human rights situation in a particular country or which press for the release of all adopted prisoners of conscience and political prisoners are initiated either by the International Secretariat or by the national sections and coordination groups (in accordance with the guidelines as set out in the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11). These campaigns are particularly valuable where the scale of imprisonment is excessive and where the issue can only be resolved by the granting of an amnesty or

repeal of legislation such as preventive detention laws under which large numbers of people are held without charge or trial for periods of several years. Such general campaigns may be launched to coincide with a state visit by the head of state of one country to another in which there is an active AI national section.

General campaigns may also be directed to specific objectives within the country of a national section. For example, campaigns to repeal legislation on the death penalty or to encourage the government to ratify the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** are possible.

URGENT ACTIONS

The effectiveness of the urgent action technique for cases of torture (see **Campaign for the Abolition of Torture**, above) has led the International Secretariat to apply this appeal structure to other cases demanding immediate worldwide action.

Since the middle of 1976, urgent action appeals have been issued on behalf of prisoners in need of medical treatment, prisoners on hungerstrike, individuals under sentence of death, in instances of "disappearances", at critical stages in a trial process, and on behalf of victims and potential victims of torture.

Where possible, urgent action appeals are telexed to the coordinators in different countries who channel the action recommendations to the appropriate groups or individuals. The value of the "specialist" approach has become increasingly apparent, and in many cases medical groups or groups of lawyers are asked to take action on a specific case. Participants are asked to send telegrams or express letters to authorities in the country concerned.

MISSIONS

AI frequently sends distinguished international lawyers or leading individuals in the field of human rights on missions to various countries and conferences to represent the organization, conduct negotiations on its behalf or to collect on-the-spot information about prisoners of conscience, legal procedures and other matters of direct concern to Amnesty International. AI missions are also sent to important or controversial trials to act as observers.

All AI missions must be authorized by the International Executive Committee, and a report of the mission subsequently made to the committee. Mission reports are then normally submitted privately to the government in question and, if appropriate, published.

Specific missions concerning an individual prisoner of conscience and visits to prisoners adopted by AI are discussed in detail in Chapter 8 of this handbook.

For specific guidelines for national sections and coordination groups concerning missions, see **Working Rules 1, 2, 3, 29 and 30**.

RELIEF

The prisoner is, of course, not the only one to suffer the effects of imprisonment. To a family whose breadwinner has been unjustly imprisoned, perhaps detained for a number of years without trial, financial necessities such as school fees, rent and travel costs may become an insuperable problem. It is here that relief assistance, provided either directly by the adoption group or from general funds held at the International Secretariat, can be of crucial importance.

In one country, the money may provide the transportation fare necessary for a wife to visit her imprisoned husband in a different city. Elsewhere the funds might provide subsistence for the family of the prisoner. In addition to helping the family, the relief funds may assist the prisoner directly, allowing him or her in some instances to purchase the few small luxuries which prisoners are allowed, and in some cases providing basic necessities such as blankets and winter clothing in harsh climates.

Once the ordeal of imprisonment or torture is over, AI's relief funds may be used to help prisoners rehabilitate themselves and, in the more tragic cases, to pay for the medical assistance which may be necessary in order to help a victim recuperate from torture.

In carrying out this humanitarian work, which is governed by the same principles of impartiality and political balance that guide the overall work of AI, the organization relies heavily on the generosity of its members and on individual donors. The scores of letters received at the International Secretariat from grateful prisoners and their families attest to the importance of AI's continuing worldwide relief operation.

The provision of financial and material relief for prisoners' families varies according to the country in question. For some countries, centralized relief programmes are organized from the International Secretariat; for others, groups send gifts or money directly to the families. In 1975-76, an estimated £80,000 went in relief to prisoners directly from AI groups and national sections; a further £80,000 was channelled through the International Secretariat.

To match the growing scale of relief work, new procedures for speeding up the flow of relief funds to those who are in need of them have been evolved at the International Secretariat and implemented with the cooperation of national sections and coordination groups. The specific procedures to be followed by adoption groups and otherwise in the sending of relief to prisoners of conscience are described in detail in Chapter 8.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Publicity is one of AI's most powerful weapons. In some cases, a vigorous publicity campaign initiated in the local press by an AI group has developed into a national protest and had an identifiable effect on a government's actions. The pressure of public indignation can make a repressive government re-assess its policies: in many countries publicity abroad has contributed to individual or partial amnesties, to improved

prison conditions, to open trials and to the commutation of death sentences.

Part of the publicity effort is the publication of reports on violations of human rights. The International Secretariat is responsible for the preparation and production of all Amnesty International Publications (AIP). These include reports in languages other than English which have been submitted for revision and approval by the International Secretariat.

The national sections and coordination groups of AI also publish reports, which may be translations of documents issued by the International Secretariat. There are important guidelines for the publicity and publications activities of national sections and groups and these should be closely adhered to. See the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11.

Suggestions for the publicity work of AI groups are included in detail in Chapter 7.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

AI is frequently invited to send representatives to meetings of non-governmental organizations (NGO's). At the international level, AI is represented by delegates appointed by the International Executive Committee and by the permanent representatives of AI in centers such as Geneva, Strasbourg and New York.

AI is represented at the United Nations by permanent representatives appointed by the International Executive Committee. AI is accorded consultative status with ECOSOC and in this capacity it makes representations on matters which fall within its mandate in the committees of the Economic and Social Council. In addition to its contribution to the work of the UN Commission on Human Rights, AI is a member of the Sub-Committee on Racism and Decolonization of the Special NGO Committee on Human Rights.

REPRESENTATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

AI national sections have become increasingly aware of the need to make representations to their own governments in a variety of areas in which the organization is involved. These include seeking guarantees of asylum for political refugees wishing to enter the particular country; recommending and attempting to secure diplomatic intervention on behalf of prisoners of conscience in other countries either on a bilateral basis or through intergovernmental forums such as the United Nations; urging support for initiatives in international legislation proposed by AI at the United Nations, Council of Europe and other bodies; raising human rights issues in the context of trade and cultural relations between the home government and other governments; proposing improved domestic supervision of prison conditions to guarantee observation of the United Nations **Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**; seeking implementation of proposals for human rights education within police military and medical training programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

One of the major concerns of AI is to increase awareness of human rights, and in this connection, the involvement of AI members in educational programs has become increasingly important.

Many national sections have already introduced courses on "human rights" in secondary schools, colleges and adult evening classes. Teaching kits on AI, human rights in general, and torture in particular, have been prepared in some cases together with audio-visual material.

The educational material includes general literature and articles about human rights issues to stimulate discussion (such as a course of "Prison Literature") and specific cases of violations of human rights to provide for the practical application of the lessons

learned. School children are asked to participate in letter-writing on behalf of individual prisoners of conscience. In this way they get a practical understanding of a specific situation involving human rights.

In some sections special teachers or educational groups of AI members have been established to explore the possibilities of introducing courses on human rights into school curricula, in cooperation with national institutions, teachers' trade unions and educational associations. Projects of teaching human rights within the community, especially in the rural areas of developing countries, are also being explored by AI members.

Guidelines on working with educational institutions are included in Chapter 7 of this handbook ■

Chapter 4 The Movement

THE unique basis of the AI movement is active participation by volunteer members throughout the world in the struggle for human rights. Work for the implementation of universal principles of human rights is necessary not only on the level of governments and international organizations, but also through the concerted action of committed individuals. These individuals may be organized into formal AI bodies, such as national sections and groups, or they may participate in AI activities as individual members or in their personal capacity.

MEMBERS

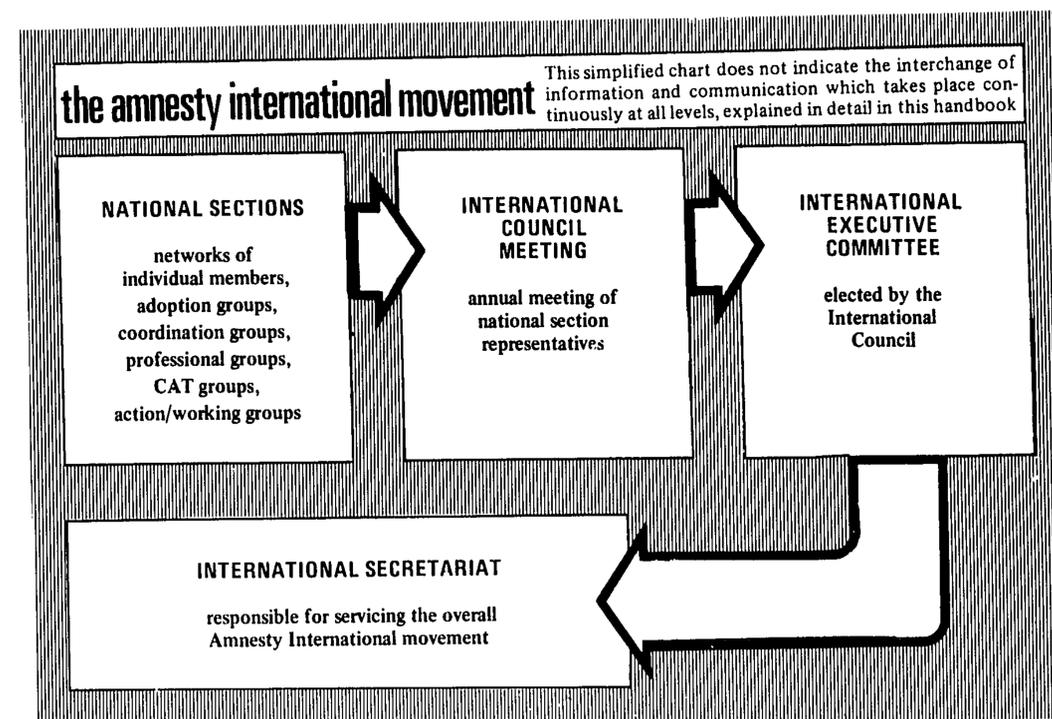
AI has more than 100,000 members in 78 countries (1976 statistics). The majority are in western Europe, North America and Australasia. In recent years, support for Amnesty International has also grown in areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The members themselves come from all walks of life and include social workers, lawyers, teachers, trade

unionists, housewives, students, businessmen, news media personnel, doctors, retired people, artists, clerics, veterans, labourers, parliamentarians, farmers, and so forth. Membership is subject only to the acceptance of the Statute of Amnesty International as approved by the International Council.

Most of AI's active members are organized into small groups (see Chapter 6). From the very beginning, the "adoption group" has been the basic unit for AI action, working for the release of three individual prisoners of conscience. In recent years different kinds of groups have been formed to concentrate on other aspects of action. These include work on general action campaigns, coordination of activities concentrating on particular countries or geographical regions, support for the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture and the mobilization of support from various professions. These groups are usually organized within larger organizational units known as "national sections".

However, in many national sections there are also individual members who are not involved in group activities, but are in direct contact with the national



section office. These individual members send direct personal letters and organize appeals on behalf of the cases of prisoners of conscience which are featured each month in the Prisoners of the Month Campaign. They may also take part in Campaign for the Abolition of Torture activities such as urgent actions, sending letters and telegrams protesting at the use of torture in specific instances. The individual members may also participate in national section membership drives, selling and distributing AI publications, raising money for the work and helping to organize professional groups who will take action on behalf of imprisoned colleagues. They also participate in regular greetings cards campaigns in which all members and supporters are urged to send greetings to a selection of prisoners of conscience from many countries. In certain instances individual members may be asked to intervene personally in a specific case — usually because their own status or knowledge of a particular situation will be effective in bringing pressure for the release of a prisoner of conscience.

Individual members in countries where there is a national section work only in that section and have little direct contact with the International Secretariat.

In Countries where there is no AI section, interested persons can become individual members by registering with the International Secretariat. (Under certain circumstances interested persons may become internationally-registered individual members even if there is a national section in that country, with the permission of the national section concerned.) These individual members receive the monthly **Newsletter** and the **Annual Report**. They participate in both the Prisoners of the Month Campaign and the appeals launched by the **Campaign for the Abolition of Torture Bulletin**. Each member also receives a handbook entitled **Guidelines for Individual Members**.

Individual members pay an annual fee determined by the International Executive Committee.

NATIONAL SECTIONS

In 1976, there were 33 countries in which the membership and activities of AI were organized into formal constituent bodies, known as national sections. These are of key importance in providing a network for campaigns and casework, fundraising and publicity, on a country-wide basis. They vary considerably in size and structure: in some countries, there may be national headquarters with permanent staff, regional offices around the country, several hundred adoption and other kinds of groups, and several thousand members. In other countries, a national section may consist of very few members with limited resources.

A national section is recognized by the International Executive Committee and is responsible for contributing to and implementing international policy. The responsibilities on the national level include organization of membership and fundraising, supervising and the national media, professional groups and trade unions, religious bodies and other national organiza-

improving group work (in conjunction with coordination groups where these exist); developing contacts with tions; and initiating and implementing campaigns on specific issues, such as the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, or on behalf of prisoners in a particular country.

Most national sections have an executive committee or national board which is elected by the members at an annual general meeting. This executive body is responsible, either directly or through a permanent office, for coordinating and administering the activities of the AI members and groups in the country.

All national sections receive weekly mailings from the International Secretariat: campaign material, requests for specific action, situation reports and general information. They also receive copies of all letters sent by the International Secretariat to any AI group in their country, and copies of prisoner dossiers assigned to adoption groups in their country. They often produce their own newsletters for members, incorporating the International Secretariat **Newsletter** material as well as their own national section news.

Guidelines for the specific responsibilities of national sections in the areas of external relations, publicity and publications, security and missions are outlined in the **Working Rules** in Chapter 12 of this handbook.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The International Council is the main governing body of AI. Every year representatives of all national sections are delegated to attend the International Council, in proportion to the number of groups in that section. (The exact voting rights are set out in the Statute.)

The International Council decides on long term policy for the movement, discusses priorities for the coming year and reviews the activities of the International Executive Committee, International Secretariat and national sections. The Council elects an International Executive Committee and International Treasurer. It approves the overall budget for the organization and agrees on the annual financial contributions to be made by the national sections in accordance with the size and funding capacity of each section.

The International Council usually lasts 2½ days and is a meeting of about 200 persons: national section representatives — delegates and observers, observers from non-governmental organizations and members of the International Secretariat staff. Prior to the opening of the Council, several meetings are held on the preceding day to discuss such topics as press and publications, the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture and finance. A special meeting is held for the representatives of non-governmental organizations.

The Plenary Session and the working parties discuss resolutions put to the International Council by national sections and the International Executive Committee. Any suggested amendment to the Statute which is supported by at least five national sections is considered,

and any amendments to the Statute must be finally approved by the Council.

The proceedings of the meetings are subsequently set forth in a published report.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Each year the International Council of AI elects an International Executive Committee to implement the policy established by the council. The International Executive Committee consists of nine members — chairperson, vice-chairperson, international treasurer, International Secretariat staff representative and five others, each from a different national section or country. All members serve a term of two years (renewable) except for the staff representative who is elected annually. The members of the committee themselves elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson for a one-year term of office (renewable).

The International Executive Committee meets as often as it deems necessary which is at present about five times a year. Each of the members has a particular area of responsibility; at the same time all International Executive Committee members share collective responsibility for all decisions of the committee. The International Executive Committee gives the International Secretariat guidance and supervises the implementation of International Council decisions. It discusses and approves AI missions, publications, participation in international conferences, initiatives at the United Nations, approaches to governments by the International Secretariat, budget proposals and administrative matters. The agendas and reports of the meetings are circulated to all national sections, the International Secretariat and AI representatives.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES

1. **Financial Control Committee** was set up by the International Council meeting at Vienna in September 1973. It consists of three members of AI elected by the council as a permanent instrument within the administrative structure of the movement to regularly review the financial administration of the International Secretariat and to ensure that all financial procedures are being adhered to. It submits its reports to the International Executive Committee and to the International Council.

2. **Borderline Committee** is composed of three persons appointed by the International Executive Committee from three different national sections or countries. It is a permanent body of AI which is responsible for reviewing any case referred to it by the International Secretariat for advice on whether the case fulfils the statutory requirements for adoption or investigation as a prisoner of conscience. The committee reports on each case to the International Executive Committee.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

For historical reasons, the International Secretariat of AI is based in London which is a convenient centre for information-gathering, press contacts, and diplomatic activity. The secretariat is made up of a permanent staff of 85 persons assisted by volunteers, representing at least 15 different nationalities. There are several departments, which carry out a variety of specific tasks, in close consultation and coordination with one another.

Research Department. The largest department of the International Secretariat (IS) is the Research Department which undertakes the central function of collecting and analysing information on violations of human rights around the world. It consists of five geographical divisions for work on Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East with a Head of Research responsible for the overall planning and coordination of research and action. No staff member is allowed to work on the country of his/her origin in order to avoid potential accusations of bias and to guarantee the objectivity of the work.

Qualified researchers are responsible for preparing background information and strategy and briefing papers on which AI's policy-making and initiatives are based — both with regard to top level diplomatic approaches as well as membership activities. To do this, the Research Department must maintain a wide network of private and official contacts, prepare and participate in research missions, monitor news reports on each region and keep a close watch on developments within the particular countries with which they are concerned.

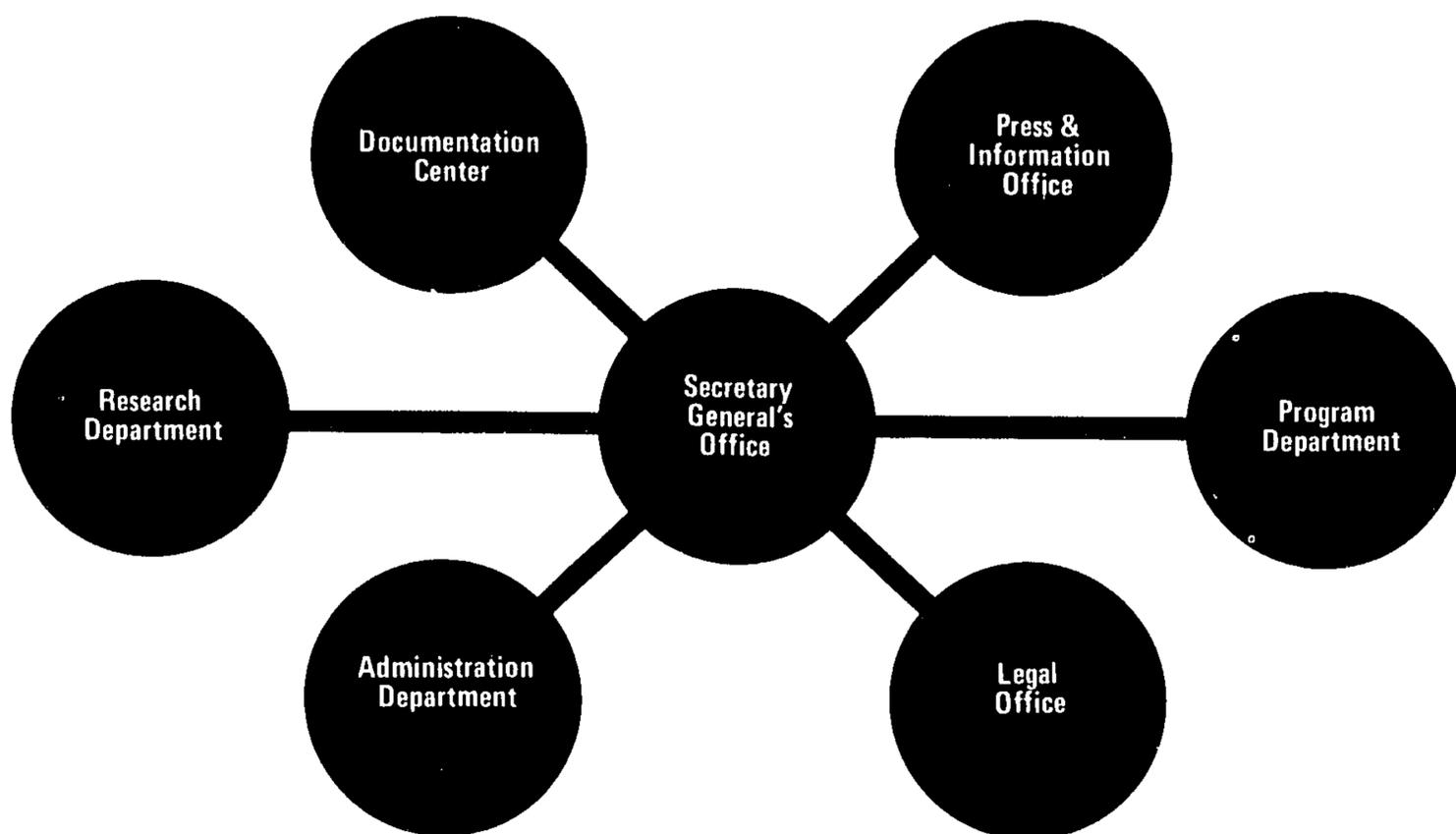
The researchers are assisted by executive assistants, who, in close cooperation with the Program Department, are responsible for giving advice and guidance to the AI membership for work on cases of individual prisoners and on general campaigns.

Program Department. In late 1976, the International Executive Committee restructured the IS to provide for a new department known as the Program Department. This department is made up of four units covering different aspects of "program".

The **Coordination Unit** is responsible for liaison with national sections, adoption groups and individual members. The Executive Secretary and three assistants allocate cases of prisoners of conscience in cooperation with the Research Department, provide the secretariat for the International Council and other international AI meetings and maintain liaison with the field secretaries.

The **Campaign Unit** is responsible for the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture and the Campaign for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, as well as all country and topic related campaigns. It works closely with the Research Department in preparing publicity and other action initiatives on behalf of victims of violations of human rights, in particular the urgent action appeals. This unit is also concerned with longterm research projects, such as medical research, and continuing liaison with non-governmental organizations, in close consultation with the Secretary General and Legal Office.

The **Publications Unit** is responsible for scheduling, preparation and coordination of AI's publica-



THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT Consultation between the various departments of the International Secretariat is coordinated through the Secretary General's Office.

tions program. It consists of a Publications Editor and other staff who assist in the designing, production and distribution of those publications which are published from the IS.

The Multilingualism Unit: This component of the Program Department has been established in response to the decisions of the International Council which emphasize the need for AI to make its major reports and working documents available in many languages. Initially, English, French and Spanish have been chosen as the working languages of the movement, and it is the responsibility of the language coordinators within the Multilingualism Unit to work with the Publications Unit and other departments of the IS to ensure the fullest possible implementation of this policy.

The field secretaries work outside the IS in areas where AI has little or no established membership. Their main task is to explore the possibilities for more effective support in these areas and to act as a link between them and the IS.

Secretary General's Office (SGO). The Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General are responsible to the International Executive Committee for the day to day running and servicing of the organization. This office coordinates the work of the whole IS and organizes regular planning and administration meetings. The Secretary General (or his deputy) is consulted by the IS staff on all important diplomatic initiatives and also undertakes high-level missions to countries.

The SGO also includes a Committee Assistant who is responsible for servicing the IEC: drawing up the agendas, finalizing the reports and coordinating communication with all members of the IEC from the IS.

Legal Office. The Legal Adviser prepares legal submissions to inter-governmental agencies and often represents AI at international meetings of these agencies and of NGOs. Assisted by a jurisprudence lawyer, he is responsible for advising other IS departments (in particular the Research Department) on points of international law and for helping in the preparation of missions to observe trials. The Legal Office also coordinates submissions to the Borderline Committee.

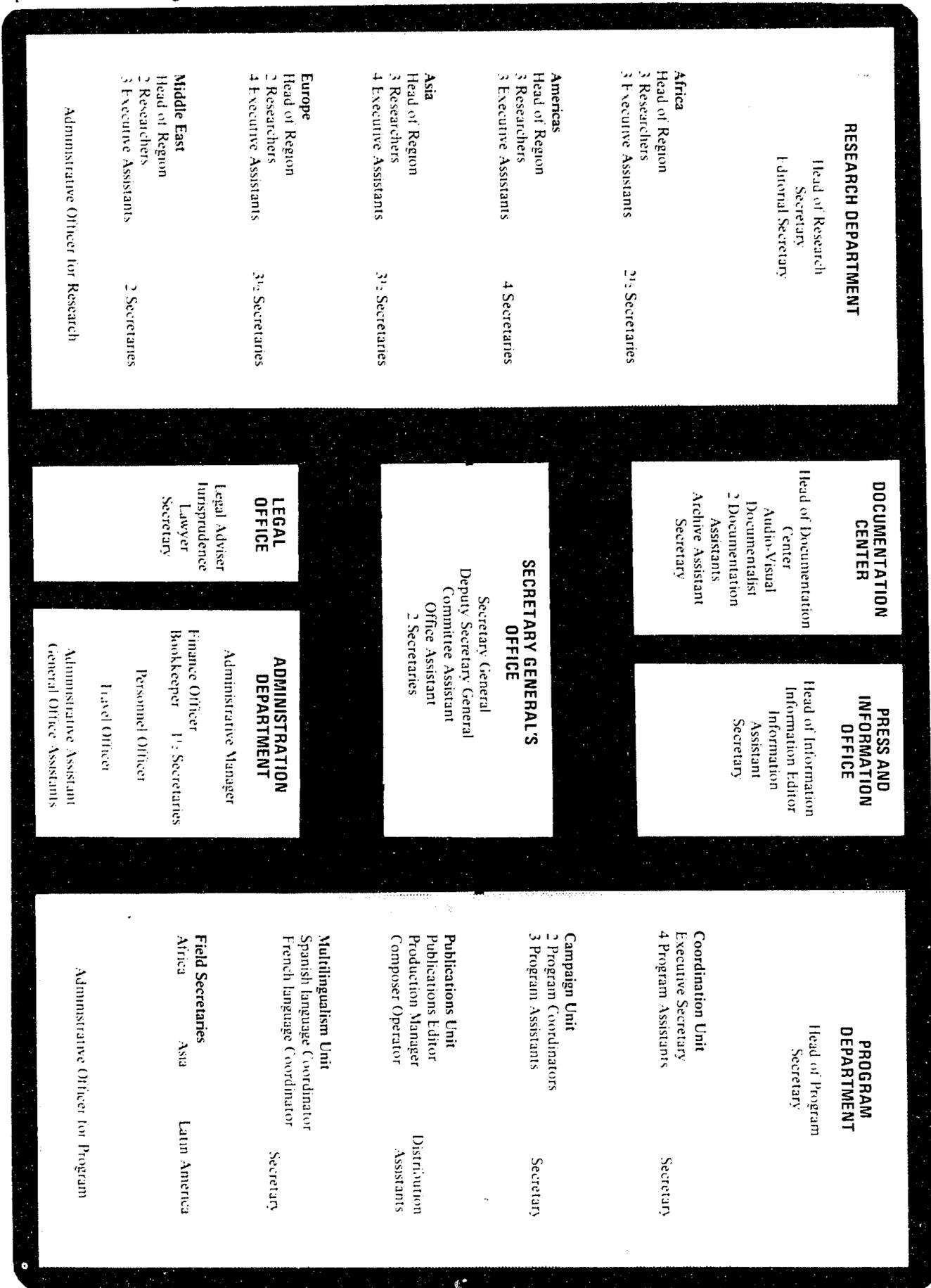
Press and Information Office. This department is responsible for all relations with the international news media, for news releases, the production of the monthly **Newsletter** and the production and distribution of other publicity material.

Documentation Center. The Documentation Center is responsible for maintaining a library of books and published documents of relevance to AI's work and for a centralized system of circulation, retrieval and storage of information on human rights and prisoners of conscience throughout the movement. This department is also responsible for indexing all outgoing documents and publications produced by the IS and for advising national sections on the storage and retrieval of information. Copies of all documents and publications produced by national sections are kept in the Documentation Center, as well as a library of audio-visual materials.

Administration Department. The Administration Department is responsible for all office operations and financial procedures of the IS, including personnel, travel arrangements and the accounts. It prepares the international budget each year for submission to the International Council, and national section contributions are channelled through this office.

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

This chart is based on the decision of the International Executive Committee taken at its meeting of November 1976. It includes a number of posts which will not be filled, if at all, until after 1978. Although it is subject to change in its details, it represents the overall agreed structure of the International Secretariat.



Chapter 5 Fundraising and Finances

THE International Treasurer of AI, who is elected annually to the International Executive Committee by the International Council, is responsible for preparing the international budget and for supervising its expenditure and the financial administration of AI's international activities. Annual finance meetings, attended by representatives of national sections, review the international budget and establish the contributions which national sections are asked to make.

These funds and any contributions for special projects are raised by the AI groups and national sections under very specific conditions. To maintain its independence and integrity, AI depends almost entirely for financial support from its membership. Strict guidelines have been laid down (see **Guidelines for the Acceptance of Financial Contributions and Fundraising**, Chapter 10) to ensure that the organization does not become dependent on any external source. Under no circumstances can a group or national section seek or receive funds from any governmental or other agency for the purpose of establishing AI's work or contributing to any special project in which they might have a partisan interest. Money from such sources may be acceptable for other purposes, such as relief, but only on condition that their allocation is the sole responsibility of AI. The source of all large donations to national sections, amounting to more than 5% of

their annual income, must be notified to the Secretary General and the International Treasurer who will provide guidance on the acceptability in accordance with these principles.

The funds are spent on maintaining the services of the International Secretariat and on international activities such as missions, international conferences, United Nations representation and publications; a substantial portion of the budget is spent on maintaining communication throughout the organization and on the coordination of international activities on behalf of prisoners.

The "fair share" which each national section is expected to make to the international budget is based on a "group fee" which is set each year by the International Council. As of 1978-79, the basis for assessment of the "fair share" will be a "group-fee" and an "income-related fee" which is a fixed percentage of the national section's total income as agreed by the International Council.

A Financial Control Committee of representatives from three national sections or countries is elected by the International Council to supervise and undertake regular reviews of the financial administration of the International Secretariat to ensure that all necessary financial procedures are being followed.

Chapter 6 The Groups

THE vast majority of AI's active members work together in groups. There are now nearly two thousand AI groups in 30 countries (1976 statistics). While there is a fairly high turnover in group membership, the number of groups is steadily growing. In response to this growth, a number of national sections have expanded the areas covered by group activity beyond the traditional adoption techniques. Groups may now choose to work on general action campaigns, coordination of activities concentrating on particular countries, support for CAT, and the mobilization of support from various professions.

ADOPTION GROUPS

From the beginning, the adoption group has been the basic unit of AI's structure and work.

There are over 1,600 AI adoption groups (1976 statistics). These groups normally consist of between three and 15 members (although some have more). Their main task is to "adopt" three Prisoners of Conscience — one each from three contrasting geopolitical backgrounds or holding different political or religious beliefs, to ensure the political "balance" of their work. The adoption group works for the release of each of the prisoners through direct approaches to the authorities of the country concerned, and indirectly through local publicity and the mobilizing of public and professional interest in the case. The group members may send relief to the prisoners and their families where this is required. They also seek publicity for AI's objectives and participate in campaigns launched by the national section in their country. In addition, adoption groups contribute towards the overall financing of the work of AI as well as conduct fundraising activities to cover their routine operating expenses and relief projects.

The initiative for forming an adoption group always comes from a number of individuals who are interested in actively participating in the work of AI. They may each have heard individually about AI from a friend or through a newspaper or may have attended a public meeting. They either contact the national section office in their country or the International Secretariat and receive further information about the movement and, on request, the names of other people in their locality who are interested in AI work. If the individuals come together and decide to apply for membership as an adoption group, the application is handled by the office of the national section concerned.

The national section usually sends an experienced AI member to visit the potential adoption group. After the section is assured of the ability of the group

to carry the responsibility involved, it approves the new adoption group and informs the International Secretariat.

While there is no bar to membership, some national sections have established certain prerequisites for group membership, such as the need for at least one person in the group to read and write English.

At the International Secretariat, the Coordination Unit assigns the new adoption group a number and issues the group its first prisoner cases. All new adoption groups receive — either from the Coordination Unit or from the appropriate national section — a copy of the **Amnesty International Handbook** and the international Statute. Many sections have translated these basic documents; they may also supply the adoption groups with additional materials such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and explanatory leaflets.

It is up to adoption groups to organize themselves in the most effective way for their work. The number of people in a group varies but is not usually less than three. Most groups have a maximum of 15, but some may have as many as 50. Most groups appoint a chairperson, treasurer and secretary and may allocate other specific responsibilities, e.g. press relations. If the group is over-organized, however, its members may feel inhibited in participating as freely as they would like. Some groups find it useful to have one member take particular responsibility for the work on behalf of each prisoner case — in order to have someone always available to deal with urgent correspondence between group meetings.

Continuity in the work of the adoption group is perhaps the most essential factor to safeguard when organizing the group and its work. Provision must be made for the training of new members, proper handling of documents and correspondence and the transfer of tasks and responsibilities if members of the group are on holiday or have to leave the group.

The casework of adoption groups is explained in detail in Chapter 8 of this handbook.

COORDINATION GROUPS

Coordination groups function as a special link between the Research Department of the International Secretariat and the adoption groups within their own national section. They are responsible for advising the national section office and for coordinating and planning nationwide work by adoption groups and individual members on behalf of prisoners detained in a specific country or geographical area. They act as information-gathering centres within their country, and in this way they contribute to the formulation of inter-

national policy-making through their direct contacts with the International Secretariat.

The work of coordination groups falls into three main categories:

- **coordination** of the work done by groups on behalf of prisoners detained in any one country;
- **actions:** campaign work and publicity concerning a particular country and carried out with the approval of the national section;
- **research** into particular countries, regions or issues, undertaken in close cooperation with and at the request of the Research Department of the International Secretariat.

One of the main functions of a coordination group is to deal with routine inquiries from adoption groups that would otherwise have to be handled by the International Secretariat.

The International Council and meetings of representatives of coordination groups have agreed the guidelines for the work of these groups. The tasks of each coordination group are to:

1. monitor groups' activities by receiving copies of all correspondence between adoption groups and the International Secretariat as well as case sheets; encourage and re-activate those lagging; report to the national section any groups that seem not to be working for their case;
2. supply groups with any subsequent information (on the prisoner or the country concerned) that may come to the attention of the coordination group in the course of its work;
3. supply groups with information obtained from a monitoring of the press at home and abroad;
4. answer routine group inquiries that would otherwise have to be directed to the researcher; help with translations;
5. circularize groups with news of successful initiatives or techniques used by other groups with prisoners in the same country (or other countries) — where useful, arrange regional and national seminars, meetings, etc. in conjunction with the national section office;
6. inform groups about links between their home country and the prisoner's country;
7. provide the national section with expertise on the relevant country or area, so as to allow for nationally organized lobbying machinery, better publicity coverage, well-planned general campaigns, a locally-based group ready to answer outsiders' queries about the country and AI's concerns there etc.;
8. develop contacts with institutions, organizations and individuals in the home country (economists, politicians, development aid personnel, etc.) who specialize in the country concerned; use such contacts as information sources, compile lists of potential observers to trials with their help, encourage them to work with AI in publicizing the human rights situation etc.;
9. undertake research into specific problems or areas in consultation with the International Secretariat;
10. collect information on the area concerned; however, when collecting information the group should not approach institutions or individuals outside

their own country unless they have first discussed this with the International Secretariat;

11. assist the International Secretariat and the national section with the planning and implementation of action campaigns as well as with the distribution of Secretariat material etc. to groups;
12. coordinate relief activities in conjunction with the International Secretariat;
13. inform itself as to developments within the AI movement generally;
14. maintain liaison within AI not only with the adoption groups, the national section and the International Secretariat, but also with the relevant coordination groups working in other sections so that experiences can be shared and duplication of effort avoided;
15. in consultation with and after prior approval by the board of the section, cooperate in activities on behalf of refugees.

Notes:

A. Coordination groups are not pressure groups and accordingly it is an important principle that prominent members should not be nationals of the country involved.

B. Coordination groups are kept fully informed of work being done by the International Secretariat on a particular country or area (both present and future work) and in return are expected to keep the International Secretariat fully informed of their activities.

C. It is a standing rule that no International Secretariat staff member may travel to the country on which he/she works without authorization. It is recommended that similar personal restrictions be accepted by coordination group members.

D. Recognizing the value of personal contacts, coordination groups are strongly urged to make every effort to meet from time to time with the researcher working on the area.

ACTION/WORKING GROUPS

A relatively new feature of AI's organization is the "action group" or "working group". Consisting of up to 50 people, the main function of an action group is to participate in national campaign work and fundraising, and to organize local campaigns or actions to raise public awareness of issues with which AI is concerned. There is usually only one action group in any one city or town, whereas there may be several adoption groups. Their work is coordinated by the national section and there is no direct contact with the International Secretariat.

In many national sections, there are no separate action groups and the work of campaigning, fundraising and publicity is carried out by the adoption groups themselves. However, more national sections are setting up action groups, since these enable the national sections to work more effectively on cam-

paings which fall outside the main concern of adoption groups (such as topic-related campaigns) leaving adoption groups free to concentrate on their work for individual prisoners. Action groups have the special advantage of involving people who might not normally be attracted by traditional adoption techniques and they provide an additional instrument with which to expand AI's effectiveness in raising national awareness of human rights issues.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE (CAT) GROUPS

Following the launching of AI's Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, many national sections have set up special groups designed to deal with torture and its related issues. Only one CAT group in each national section is normally in contact with the International Secretariat, coordinating the activities of other such groups and of adoption groups participating in the Campaign. All CAT groups are expected to work closely with coordination groups within the same section when taking action on specific countries.

CAT groups take part in all urgent action cases originating from the International Secretariat; they will intervene directly, or through interested contacts such as churches or professional groups, and may establish

"telegram trees" for quick action in emergencies. They are also concerned with contacting their home governments on specific inter-governmental or United Nations initiatives, such as the anti-torture resolutions; enlisting the active support of professional associations and similar bodies; participating in drawing up national codes of ethics for doctors, police and prison personnel; and exploiting other possibilities for exposing and halting the practice of torture.

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

These consist entirely of members of a single profession, such as parliamentarians, doctors, or teachers. Each group varies in the organization and focus of its work. For example, some may function as adoption groups to carry out casework; others may act on the cases of imprisoned or tortured members of their own profession. One group may concentrate on using its own expertise, for instance, by preparing an educational kit on AI and human rights; another, on getting its national association to raise funds, publish AI-related material, and pass resolutions on issues of common concern. While some professional groups meet and report regularly to their national sections, others work separately, coordinating their efforts through a single link-person.

Chapter 7

General Guidelines for Action

THE general guidelines and suggestions for action which are presented in this part of the handbook are applicable to most areas of AI work. The particular problems of case work and adoption groups are discussed more fully in Chapter 8. However, the following items are of relevance for all AI members:

- security;
- coordination of activities;
- relations with international organizations;
- relations with exile organizations.

The subsequent items include practical suggestions previously outlined in the AI publication *How to Free Your Prisoner* and which have been adapted for more general use. Many of the suggestions are more applicable to coordination groups, action groups or national sections and, wherever necessary, directions have been given as to the need to consult the national sections or the International Secretariat. As the internal organization of national sections differs considerably, reference has been made only to the particular organizational responsibilities involved in carrying out the activities. See the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11.

It should be clear that no single AI group is expected to undertake all the actions suggested in the following pages. The selection of activities and the priorities given to them are the responsibility of each group in the context of the overall work of each national section. Chapter 8 outlines the particular responsibilities which each adoption group is expected to fulfil in addition to those outlined in this chapter.

SECURITY

AI is an organization whose membership is entrusted with extremely sensitive material and is expected to treat all such information with discretion. Human beings may be placed at risk if this information is not handled responsibly. A number of steps are taken at all levels of the organization to protect information from indiscreet use.

All circulars issued by the International Secretariat to national sections, coordination groups or adoption groups are clearly marked either

INTERNAL (for AI members only)

or

EXTERNAL (for general distribution).

INTERNAL documents are for the use of AI members only. They must be carefully stored. They may contain confidential information which will be clearly marked. Under no circumstances can INTERNAL documents be given to the press, government officials or other organizations, sent to contacts within the

country concerned or in any way circulated outside the membership.

EXTERNAL documents are for use by any person or organization. They contain important information for national sections and groups and they can be reproduced, translated, circulated for use by press, government officials and other organizations.

Every prisoner dossier issued by the International Secretariat includes detailed security advice in the general instructions. This advice is also contained in Chapter 8 of this handbook and should be observed by all AI members who handle information at any time about specific prisoner cases. See **Working Rules 27, 28, 44, 45, 65 and 66.**

COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

The basis of all AI activity is teamwork. No one at any level of the movement works in isolation; continuous communication and feedback are essential to everyone. The extremely sensitive nature of the work makes proper coordination even more important.

The responsibilities of national sections and groups include reporting on activities to the International Secretariat. The particular reporting requirements for adoption groups are indicated in Chapter 8. The **Working Rules** for the entire movement, adopted by the 9th International Council in 1976, are included in full in Chapter 11 of this Handbook. It will be noticed that the majority of the Working Rules are designed to ensure proper communication and coordination of activities between the various groups, national sections and the International Secretariat.

As a general principle, therefore, all AI members and workers are encouraged to consult fully with their immediate colleagues when planning and undertaking all activities and to ensure that the proper responsible people (at the national and international levels) are informed of new projects well in advance of final implementation. This helps to build a broad basis of consensus throughout the movement to avoid unnecessary last-minute confusion and, most important, to ensure the responsible handling of all information entrusted to AI.

RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In the course of group work, AI members sometimes wish to enlist the support of or seek advice from other international organizations. In this respect, it is important to note that all correspondence to any international organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Commis-

sion of Jurists, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Confederation of Labour, International Labour Office, the International Federation of Journalists, the International Press Institute and any of the United Nations agencies, **must** go through the International Secretariat. Organizations such as these work closely with AI; to avoid confusion, groups should not write to them directly. All replies and inquiries will be forwarded by the International Secretariat. See **Working Rule 20.**

RELATIONS WITH EXILE ORGANIZATIONS

Exile organizations or individual exiles and refugees often provide important information to AI and support the activities of AI in defence of human rights. Groups and national sections are often in close touch with such organizations and individuals or may be contacted by them for assistance or for formal support of demonstrations, appeals and so forth. However caution must always be exercised when cooperating with such groups in any public or formal manner.

On this subject the International Council of AI, meeting in Luxembourg in 1971, passed a resolution. This has been incorporated into the **Working Rules** (Chapter 11) in the following form:

No public action such as press conferences, demonstrations, public meetings, may be undertaken jointly with exile, refugee, political or any other organization without the prior approval of the national section executive. It should be emphasized to these organizations that the refusal of Amnesty International to cooperate publicly is in order to protect the independent nature of Amnesty International and does not reflect either approval or disapproval of the aims and judgement of any organization.

No resolution may be signed on behalf of Amnesty International jointly with any other person, group of persons or organization without the consent of the national section executive.

Similar caution must be exercised when cooperating with such groups informally due to the presence of hostile informers frequently infiltrated into such groups. The **bona fides** of each such contact should be carefully established. See **Working Rules 23, 39 and 64.**

WHAT IS PRESSURE?

AI protects and frees prisoners of conscience by continuous action on their behalf. The force of these actions is generated by the truthful information upon which they are based and the moral vision that inspires them.

But this **alone** is not pressure.

Pressure comes from the fact that these actions never stop and that the influence of these actions continues to grow.

One letter to a Minister of Justice is not pressure.

A second letter is.

Two letters from one person every single week is a little more pressure and two letters from a few people every single day is a little more still.

This may be enough to solve a simple difficulty. But it is not enough pressure to free prisoners of conscience.

Pressure to free prisoners of conscience can mean all of the following:

- thousands of postcards and letters to the foreign government;
- distributing leaflets at trade fairs;
- special appeals signed by prominent individuals;
- trade union embargoes against goods from the foreign government;
- continuous international news reports on the human rights violations by the governments concerned.

It is the responsibility of each group and national section to build this volume of pressure on behalf of each of the prisoners and groups of prisoners on whose behalf they are working. Every possible means of reminding governments of their obligation to protect human rights must be used.

Pressure is not only a matter of quantity. One statement by an Archbishop can have a greater effect than a petition signed by several thousand individuals. On the other hand a delegation of schoolchildren to an Embassy may receive greater publicity. Each form of action has a particular effect; the combined result is pressure.

But remember: one action may be influential, but it is never pressure. The same action repeated a thousand times by people from all parts of the community is pressure.

The experience of AI members is that this pressure may have to be sustained for years. To do this requires great determination and imagination.

Pressure, of course, has also to be considered and well-directed — it cannot be applied indiscriminately. For example, it might be inappropriate simply to inundate the authorities with correspondence, putting quantity before quality. Many governments do not answer group letters; others will do so only if the correspondence is reasoned and tactful. Groups should initially try this approach and then, should this fail, they may have to resort to pressure by quantity.

LETTERS

The most basic of all the activities undertaken by AI members is the writing of letters to government authorities. A detailed discussion of correspondence techniques is to be found in Chapter 8 of this handbook. A number of points should always be borne in mind whenever letters are addressed to detaining authorities:

- letters to government authorities should always be formal and courteous. An abusive or sarcastic tone may damage not only AI's reputation but the prisoner's chances as well;
- remember that the correct form of address, the style of the letter, and even the language in which it is written may determine whether it is attended to or ignored (see **Sample Letters** in Chapter 10);
- take care to avoid any comments in letters which might be regarded as political. Many governments are over-sensitive to what they consider to be "interference in the internal affairs of the state", and may be only too ready to view AI as a political conspiracy;

- emphasize humanitarian concern and the importance of the case for the country's reputation in the world. Stress positive aspects — respect for the constitution and judicial process, understanding of the government's current difficulties — in such a way as to encourage a response to the letter;
- it is helpful to refer to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** or, for instance, the **European Convention on Human Rights**, when writing to the relevant countries;
- where it is safe to mention AI, give a brief outline of the organization's humanitarian aims, its independence and political "balance". But **always make sure that it is safe to mention AI**; the recommended actions indicate if it is not. See **Working Rule 48**.

APPEALS

In many cases, an **appeal** is a strong supplement to individual letters. There are at least five forms of appeal which can be used. As a general rule, such activities should be carried out only after consultation with the national section office.

General Petitions. A brief, well-worded statement addressed to the Head of a foreign government can be signed by thousands of people (giving name, address and profession where appropriate) and formally presented to the Ambassador for forwarding to the Head of State. Both the International Secretariat and the national section office should be consulted before undertaking such an appeal.

Appeals by Professional Category or Grouping. A petition signed **only** by people from the same profession, age group, religion or other category, may in some instances prove more effective than a general petition, especially when the prisoner in question is readily identifiable with that group — for example, a prominent mathematician or anthropologist.

Appeals by Prominent People. Approaches to prominent public figures are always worth undertaking. Full documentation should be presented and explained to them, along with an appeal form for signature. A statement calling for releases, or for an end to torture, signed by a number of outstanding people around the world or even in a single country can have a significant impact on public opinion. The statement and the signature can, with the signatories' permission, be sent by telegram to the authorities, and simultaneously released to press agencies in your country (through the national press officer). Appeals from individuals who are respected by, or ostensibly sympathetic to, the government in question may be especially influential.

Appeals and Resolutions by Institutions. Official statements by the governing bodies of universities, medical associations, and similar institutions can have an important effect both inside the country and as a means of putting pressure on foreign governments. Groups may approach several similar institutions in a number of countries to make concerted appeals on their prisoner's behalf, for example, a statement calling for an independent, impartial investigation of specific torture allegations. Again, consultation with the national section is necessary before any such action is undertaken, to avoid duplication of effort. See also the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11.

Public Declarations. A strong statement in defence of certain prisoners, calling for action to secure their release, might be prepared for signature by community leaders for publication in the national press (remember to consult the national section press officer beforehand). Such a public declaration may — with the signatories' permission — be used as a basis for extensive follow-up campaigns directed at the imprisoning government.

DELEGATIONS

The immediate force of direct personal action on behalf of prisoners is much greater than that of a letter or appeal. However, these actions (such as visits to embassies, etc.) do not have the sustained power of letters, petitions, etc. **BOTH MUST BE USED.**

Many groups visit the embassy of the foreign country on a regular basis, or arrange for other people to do so, on the prisoner's behalf. This is always done in consultation with the national section and appropriate coordination group. The delegations should be small — about three people — and each person should be fully briefed on the case. It is also useful if each person is made responsible for a specific area of inquiry. For example, if the delegation is concerned with the case of an individual prisoner, one person asks about the prisoner's health, one person about mail restrictions, one person about legal difficulties, etc. It is important to have a **request** to make of the ambassador: Will he forward a letter to his government? Will he make inquiries about a prisoner etc? This request can be made at the end of the interview and will provide a basis for continuing discussion.

If the ambassador contradicts AI information, request that he give evidence — are there official reports available? Be firm about obtaining the facts.

Always consult the national section office before planning such a delegation in order to avoid the possibility of bad timing or confusion. It might even be harmful for the prisoner if action is taken without due consultation with the national section office (who will in turn contact the International Secretariat should the need arise). A full report on each visit to an embassy should be sent to the International Secretariat.

A short manual giving advice on approaches to embassies has been circulated by the International Secretariat to all national sections (NS 138/76) and may be consulted by AI groups in each country. See **Working Rule 62**.

Delegations to Visiting Officials. When representatives of the foreign country travel abroad, make arrangements to meet with them. This can be done through the embassy or trade commission. Prior consultation with the national section office is essential in order to ensure the necessary coordination. A small group of AI members (together with a distinguished person sympathetic to AI work) can meet with the visitor, ask questions about his or her government's policy on human rights, treatment of prisoners, or failure to reply to registered letters. The visiting official may prove to be more helpful than the resident ambassador. Any failure on his or her part to keep a promise made to the delegation should be formally brought to the attention of the foreign government and, if appropriate, the press. See **Working Rules 56 and 62**.

Representation to the Home Government. A very valuable activity is the organized visiting of one's own elected representatives. After consulting with the national section office a group might, for example, agree to send a number of people to their parliament or congress to spend two days meeting elected representatives. Appointments are made in advance and the group goes in pairs to talk with elected representatives about the stand of their government on trade, human rights, admission of refugees, relief etc. Take along any relevant AI publications or reports. The group should present a specific action for support in the interviews and make a determined effort to obtain a "yes" or "no" response. For example, will the representative sponsor a proposal to grant the right of asylum to political prisoners? Will he or she raise human rights as an issue when trade agreements are under discussion?

In addition to consulting the national section office in advance of any planned representations, records of these visits should be kept for future reference and copies sent to the national section office and International Secretariat for their information. Follow-up letters or visits should definitely be planned. Your national section office should always be informed of the results of your talks. See **Working Rule 21**.

MEDIA ACTIONS

Getting publicity for the work of AI groups and, in particular, for action on behalf of prisoners, is always difficult. But as AI becomes more widely known, and its credentials and methods established in the public's mind, media coverage is improving.

Most national sections have someone responsible for relations with the press, and it is the responsibility of the national section to deal with the national newspapers. See the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11. If a group wants to write to a national newspaper on a particular subject, it should check first with the national section office. On a local level, however, groups should actively try to get AI related topics into print. The following ideas may be of help:

- Each group should have one person responsible for relations with the news media. This person's telephone number(s) and address should be on all correspondence or news releases to the media. These people should familiarize themselves fully with the scope and limitations of the local press. They should devote time to studying local newspapers so that they can write articles geared to the kind of reader buying these papers; thought should also be given to what readers can be asked to do (e.g. write to an embassy). Thought must also be given to the kind of paper to approach with a particular story: it is easier to approach a smaller newspaper, and church papers are often sympathetic and even willing to raise funds for the group's work.
- Each group can keep a file of all news stories on AI and a card index or address file on all local journalists who have prepared news items on topics of AI concern.
- Each group can keep a card index or file on journalists, news editors etc of all local press, radio, TV

and magazines. These people should receive all regular mailings and any special news releases.

- The press secretary of each group can make appointments to meet with each of the news editors and journalists to discuss coverage of AI, ask for advice and maintain good personal contact.
- Remember that group news is local news: it is the news that **each group** creates through its activities. Some public activities, such as vigils or street theatre, are more "newsworthy": make sure that the press is informed, and that a photographer is present. The local press is often more interested in the fact that an AI group is active locally than in the reason for its activity. Try to expand on this initial interest by explaining those reasons in a feature article or appeal.

An AI group should **under no circumstances** make major policy news releases, but it may send news releases on local activities, group activities, reports on progress, prisoners' letters etc, to the news media. The presentation of these news releases is very important:

- a neat bold letterhead saying **News Release** is advisable, marked with the name and number of the group, a small description of AI and the phone number(s) and address of the press secretary;
- an **embargo** is an instruction to the news media which indicates the time and date the information should be released. It is used when sending out the information before it is to be used;
- the embargo date and time should appear at the top and bottom of the right-hand side of the page:
Embargoed for 20.00
Tuesday, 10 May 1975
- paragraphs should be one sentence long, or two if the sentences are very short. Paragraphs should not normally be longer than 50-60 words;
- the first paragraph should give the news "A Greek Prisoner of Conscience has thanked (give name or number of group) for moral support" or "Taiwan Trade Commissioner (name) has promised (name and number of group) to 'investigate violations of human rights'", etc;
- the details of the news (names, date, immediate circumstances etc) should be given in the next paragraph. Follow these with a brief résumé of the general background, using relevant quotations from letters, local officials or group spokesperson;
- whenever possible, include a relevant photograph or indicate that photographs are available;
- the news release should be followed by phone calls the day before the embargo is lifted. The phone call should be just to check that the press release has arrived;
- each group can keep a small photo-library of past activities, guest speakers, and, if possible, the prisoners who have been adopted and who have been released. These photographs may be useful in subsequent feature articles on the group's work;
- arrange to have as many people as possible scan newspapers and send cuttings on political repression, etc, to the embassy of the relevant country. This involves many people in looking out for such news items and ensures that the embassy is aware of the general public's concern for this aspect of their country's affairs;
- prepare a "human interest" story of a thousand

words on adopted prisoners. Who are they? What about their families? Have the group had any contact with them? What is the political context of their arrest? A feature article which stresses the prisoners as **human beings** will be of interest to magazines and some newspapers: unexpected details always improve the news value. Discuss it with a sympathetic

journalist for advice on style, presentation, etc:

- try to get a sympathetic journalist to join the group or to help advise on press relations and provide direct contacts with editors and other journalists.
- For further useful guidelines on working with the press, groups should ask their national section office for copies of the **Press Manual for Groups**.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  GROUP 76

NEWS RELEASE

embargoed for 20.00 gmt
Sunday, 10 May 1975

**AI GROUP CLAIMS SOVIET PRISONER
UNDERGOING NEW INTERROGATION**

The well-known Soviet prisoner of conscience, Yury Petrov, has been transferred from Perm camp 36 to Vladimir Prison in Moscow where he is being interrogated about his camp activities, apparently with a view to a possible prosecution under Article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code. This was announced here today by Francesca de Silva, secretary of the Amnesty International (AI) Group 76, which is working to secure his release.

Mr Petrov's interrogation apparently follows the publication of an appeal smuggled out of camp 36 earlier this year by political prisoners on hunger strike.

According to Miss de Silva, AI Group 76 has been trying to raise international concern about Mr Petrov's case since 1972. "During this time the Soviet authorities have consistently refused to reply to our many letters of inquiry and appeal on Mr Petrov's behalf," she said. "We have just received this latest news from the International Secretariat in London. We are particularly disturbed about this report that Yury Petrov may be threatened with a further term of imprisonment since he has nearly completed serving his sentence in the labour camp where we know his health has deteriorated considerably."

Yury Petrov, 36, an engineer and former university teacher, was first arrested in March 1970 and charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" under Article 170 of the RSFSR Criminal Code. At that time it was alleged that Mr Petrov had participated in the preparation of the Chronicle of Current Events, an unofficial human rights journal, and had sent numerous appeals to western governments on behalf of Soviet prisoners of conscience. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a strict regime labour camp and three years' internal exile.

AI Group 76 is also working for the release of, a former trade union leader in Indonesia, and is investigating the case of, a young petrochemical engineer in Brazil.

embargoed for 20.00 gmt
Sunday, 10 May 1975

For further information contact: Olivier Martin, Press Officer
AI Group 76 Tel: 07-23-55

Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights movement which works impartially for the release of prisoners of conscience: men and women detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, religion or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. Amnesty International opposes torture and the death penalty in all cases without reservation and advocates fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners. Amnesty International is independent of all governments, political factions, ideologies, economic interests and religious creeds. It is financed by its membership and by subscriptions from all parts of the world. Amnesty International has consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC), UNESCO and the Council of Europe, has cooperative relations with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, and has observer status with the Organization of African Unity (Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees).

PUBLICATIONS

Publication is a field of communications which can have impressive long-term effects. If a group or national section can produce well-designed, illustrated literature that presents facts accurately while appealing to humanitarian feelings, the impact of AI upon the local community will grow steadily. The style and tone of these publications are important. Careful thought should also be given to their local "marketing" — efficient mailing and invoicing, the planning of advertising and circulation of material to schools, churches and public libraries. Please see the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11, for guidelines on the preparation and distribution of publications by groups and national sections.

Most groups already have general leaflets on the overall work of AI prepared either by the group, the national section, or the International Secretariat. These can be used to attract new members, or to enclose with correspondence.

The International Secretariat prepares detailed reports on political imprisonment in critical areas. These can be purchased by groups from the national section office and distributed through local bookstores or sold to schools and libraries.

Small pamphlets, booklets or kits can be printed to awaken local public opinion on human rights issues or to arouse public concern and commitment on specific cases of prisoners. These may be addressed to particular sections of the community — for instance, schoolchildren, medical personnel, etc.

Posters can be of great value. Public relations agencies are often willing to advise groups on poster design, and may even help to produce them.

ARTS PERFORMANCES

As a means of expressing powerful protests and giving AI wide publicity, as well as raising funds for AI, performances of plays and concerts can be highly successful.

The following ideas may be helpful:

Write to a performer who lives in the area and ask if he or she would contribute a concert to AI. Can the group invite him or her to a group meeting to discuss the possibility?

Approach the manager of a local cinema — what is the schedule of films for the coming season? who is the distributor? Contact the distributor — can there be an AI benefit performance on opening night?

Contact the directors of the local theatre — will they perform a play by an imprisoned writer or a play about political imprisonment? Will they have a special performance in honour of adopted prisoners of conscience?

Many people are interested in "street theatre". Would a local student group be interested in using AI material to perform a mime at street corners or in parks? Prepare leaflets to distribute to passers-by explaining the context — highlighting the case of adopted prisoners of conscience. Take photographs of the event and write a short feature article on it for local magazines.

If a play or concert is coming that is sponsored by

the foreign government holding prisoners of conscience, leaflet and picket the performances. Ask the manager of the theatre for "equal time" in the next season to stage a play about freedom.

PUBLIC ACTIONS

AI groups must act **outwards into the community** to build support for the protection of human rights and the release of prisoners of conscience and to widen the front of pressure. All the actions suggested in this handbook are directed to this goal; the following are specifically aimed at arousing the conscience of the public at large. They can be carried out by local adoption groups, or, depending on the structure of the individual national section, they may be the responsibility of action groups, coordination groups or the national section office.

Public actions of the type outlined below all require careful preparation. Some members of your group may already be familiar with these methods. The national section office and experienced groups in the locality will also be able to offer advice and assistance.

As a general rule, it is advisable to allocate responsibility for organizing the action to a committee of members, some of whom are made responsible for relations with distinguished individuals or speakers and for coordinating the work of the committee. Other committee members may have individual responsibility for making the legal arrangements (when police permission is required), dealing with the press (press officer), liaison with any other organizations taking part. Others may be responsible for placards and leaflets, or with fundraising during the actions.

The committee as a whole would be responsible for political decisions, such as the wording of slogans, policy towards authorities, decisions to disband, and so on. Advance planning of any such action is vital. One point is especially important: if the committee anticipates any difficulties with police, crowds, or hecklers, it should establish its reactions and basic negotiating positions beforehand. This prevents petty arguments developing in the committee at a time when unity is crucial.

Always bear in mind that it is **not** advisable to use the name of AI as sponsor or organizer of a march, demonstration or public meeting which is under the control of another organization. Many national sections will not allow AI's name to be used in conjunction with any other organization; therefore consultation with the national section office beforehand is essential. If in doubt, caution is always the best policy. See also the section on Relations with Exile Organizations (page 28) and **Working Rules 23, 24, 39, 64**.

Films. Organize a showing of films on political imprisonment. Follow with a short talk outlining what AI is doing in the fight against repression. Allow a lot of time for discussion and do not forget to take a money collection. Suggest action of some kind to continue involvement. This simple, but effective, action can be carried out in schools, churches, public meeting places or private homes. It is one of the very best ways to raise funds, attract new members and stir up public concern.

Public Meetings. Invite several prominent, sympathetic individuals (journalists, writers, professors, Members of Parliament) to address a public meeting on either a specific problem (torture, adopted prisoners,) or a general issue (human rights, freedom and oppression). Seek advance press coverage and follow-up. It may be possible to hold a public debate on a human rights issue (e.g. "Freedom of Speech is not an Absolute Freedom" etc). The better known the speakers, the more successful the meeting. Particularly good speeches may be reproduced or quoted in leaflets, thus keeping the meeting "alive" long after it is over.

Marches. Obtain permission from the police for a march to particular foreign embassies or public squares. To mobilize support, contact other sympathetic groups and organizations. This will usually require negotiation over slogans, to maintain AI's non-partisan image. If there are any difficulties or the possibility of confusion, it is always better to act alone.

If there is any doubt about the wisdom of participating in a certain march, always consult with the national section in advance. At an embassy, various delegations can deliver appeals or messages to the ambassador or, by appointment, discuss prisoner cases with him. Often AI groups with adopted prisoners in the same country join together to present a collective protest on behalf of all adopted prisoners in that country.

Always think of the mass media effect of public actions: set up a mock prison camp, recite the names of the prisoners aloud — bear in mind possible audio-visual effects to meet the needs of radio and TV.

Marches can be a good way of attracting attention to the plight of prisoners. However, some groups do not act in this way because they feel that this might antagonize the community or hurt AI's image as a non-partisan organization. Common-sense must be used here as in all actions. When in doubt, always consult the national section. In particular, please see **Working Rules 23, 24, 39, 42, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62 and 64.**

SAMPLE STATEMENT FOR A VIGIL

(text based on the AI news release, 10 November 1972, sent to all national sections)

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO WILL NEVER RETURN



SILENT VIGIL

before the Embassy of the
Republic of Guatemala

24/25 October 1972

Since 1970, over 200 individuals have disappeared in Guatemala. One month ago, on 26 September, eight prominent Guatemalans disappeared, kidnapped by the government police. They are among the hundreds of workers, union leaders, students and professionals who will never be seen again.

Amnesty International has issued an Appeal to the Government of Guatemala, a signatory of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, to ensure the fundamental human rights for its citizens:

- the right to life
- the right to protection from arbitrary arrest
- the right to a fair trial
- the right to a proper defence

We call upon the Government of Guatemala to guarantee these rights for its citizens and to take concrete steps to find those who have been kidnapped and either release them or bring them to trial.

We are mounting a twenty-four hour vigil of mourning before the Embassy of the Republic of Guatemala as an act of witness, to mourn the disappearance of these victims and to call upon the Guatemalan Government to respect the fundamental dignity and right to life of every individual.

Amnesty International Group

Amnesty International Group is actively working for the release of three prisoners of conscience: an anarchist-pacifist in Italy, a dissident Baptist in the Soviet Union, and, a student in Nepal. Amnesty International is an independent and non-partisan movement which intervenes in defence of human rights around the world. For further information contact:

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

Groups can explore the possibilities for action and publicity related to the industrial and commercial links between their country and states employing imprisonment and torture as a means of political control. By examining trade and investment links, groups can plan concerted action to put pressure on the government concerned. In the process, this work may serve to focus the debate on the responsibilities of one's own communities for the state of political and religious freedoms in other countries.

All activities in the area of commercial pressure involve national issues; consultation and coordination with your national section office are therefore essential. Some national sections and coordination groups may already be undertaking research into trade and aid agreements with governments which systematically violate human rights.

Some suggestions:

- Plan a small-scale research project into government aid-giving policies and the trading activities of companies towards the country in question. For example, investigate the possible use of prison labour by such companies, and on the sale of security equipment which might be used in prison camps and detention centres. Advice and information can be sought from sympathetic economists and journalists, and from politicians known to be active in such investigations. Such projects might result in the national section executive setting-up a permanent study-group on the particular country in question.
- Invite politicians, businessmen, trade unionists, economists, journalists and others sympathetic to the cause of human rights to a local meeting, asking for their impressions about your country's economic links with countries of concern to AI. Meetings should be given wide publicity in the local community so as to awaken interest in the humanitarian implications of such economic ties.
- Approach your parliamentary contacts, asking them to put questions to the government on its aid policies to such countries.
- Either directly, or through your national section, try to persuade corporations and aid-giving authorities to raise human rights issues with the foreign government in question.
- Invite members of local business or trade organizations to a special luncheon, raise these questions with them, and ask for their advice as to ways in which AI can become more effective. Useful contacts should be maintained through follow-up letters and by inclusion on the group's regular mailing list.
- Inform trade commissioners as well as ambassadors about AI activities on behalf of prisoners of conscience held in their countries; distribute leaflets at the next trade fair held by a state employing torture or political imprisonment, and create publicity around it.

SYMBOLIC ACTIONS

The problems of individual prisoners of conscience are symbolic as well as actual. The prisoner represents the force of free opinion, the freedom of belief and

often the fundamental right to live. The jailing authorities represent the unlimited power of the state, of physical brutality and of the shadow of repression.

These large forces of current history are often represented by symbols and by symbolic actions — many times this "living poetry" can succeed in rousing the spirit of people when other, more conventional, efforts have failed.

Symbolic actions should always be chosen for their relevance to the situation. With proper press coverage and the release of an eloquent public statement, symbolic actions can be extremely effective, even if they last for only a short time.

The wearing of symbols, the displaying of banners, the donations of statues and works of art, minutes of silence, symbolic funerals or parades, collective prayers, etc, are all ways of mobilizing public determination to protect human rights and free prisoners of conscience.

Other symbolic actions like these which may seem pointless to cynics, can have a deep emotional impact. The planting of trees as a symbol of hope and the continuing growth of life-forces over the forces of death is a commonly understood example.

WORKING WITH SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The following areas for AI action (trade unions, religious bodies, educational institutions, political parties) are examples of ways in which groups can use existing social structures to build pressure for the release of an adopted prisoner. There are, of course, many other institutions, such as medical associations, public affairs institutes, etc which can become deeply involved in actions to free prisoners of conscience, combat torture and work for increased international respect for human rights.

IT IS VITAL THAT ALL SUCH APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES BE PROPERLY COORDINATED —

- if you are contacting a local organization, ask if their executive is already in touch with the national section of AI in your country;
- inform the national section office of all contacts established;
- inform other AI groups in your own city or town. See also the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11.

Trade Unions

The pressure of a trade union is tremendous. Many trade unions have supported AI by financial contributions, by circulating petitions, by passing official resolutions, by inviting AI representatives to speak at Union meetings and congresses.

AI regularly documents the cases of imprisoned trade unionists, which run into hundreds throughout the world. Many are adopted by AI groups. There is thus a strong mutual interest in continued cooperation.

Asking trade unions for help is usually a simple matter. If the group can find a sympathetic member of a local trade union council, invite him/her to a group

meeting or visit him/her. If you cannot find a suitable person like this, write to the general secretary of the local trade union council. **If you are responsible for the adoption of a trade unionist prisoner, this is essential.**

AI groups can ask a trade union for:

Action Assistance: the union can publish an appeal or circulate a petition on behalf of particular prisoners, or send members to support public actions or speak at meetings organized by groups. Remember if you are a group in a small section it is even more important to coordinate activities so as to have a successful campaign. In such circumstances, it would be better to try to get trade union support on a whole group of cases rather than simply for one individual case.

Advice: the union could advise groups on the situation in various countries with regard to the right to trade union activities. The union could give advice on the trade union structures in your country and in others which would help in your efforts on behalf of imprisoned trade unionists.

Diplomatic intervention: the union may be willing to make diplomatic representations on behalf of individual prisoners with the ambassador of the country concerned. It might urge the home government to use its good offices in such cases. And it might ask fellow unions in other countries for similar interventions. Remember to coordinate all activities at this level through liaison with the national section office or coordination group.

Finance: the union may be prepared to supply money for relief, for telegrams or for special projects such as missions. If you do approach unions on these lines, make sure that you are well briefed and that your request is specific.

Even if your group is not concerned with any particular cases of imprisoned trade unionists, it is worthwhile exploring forms of local cooperation — by addressing trade union meetings, circulating AI materials, making approaches for financial support or material assistance. Many unions, for example, operate their own low-cost printing presses and may be prepared to print AI literature; many will be prepared to distribute AI material to their members. For a wide range of activities, support from local and national unions would be of immense help.

Religious Bodies

Many religious bodies support the efforts of AI. The International Secretariat has close working relations with the World Council of Churches and has been in direct contact with: Anglican Consultative Council, World Muslim Congress, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, World Jewish Congress, Lutheran World Federation, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace.

At the local level, many religious leaders are willing to help AI by giving sermons on "freedom of conscience", making church facilities available to AI, publishing articles on AI, joining in public actions.

The resources and strength of a well-organized religious community is of great help in campaigns to protect and free prisoners of conscience. Groups should

make every effort to obtain the support of local priests and ministers. Usually it is sufficient to make an appointment through the church office and it is best if a person from that particular congregation can meet with the minister or priest. If your group is responsible for the adoption of a religious leader accused of political activity, or of a victim of religious persecution, this is essential.

Ask the church for help with:

Action assistance: to set aside special services to mobilize support for prisoners of conscience; to circulate petitions; to send delegates to public meetings organized by your group.

Relief: the church can sponsor or contribute to special fundraising programs to provide relief for adopted prisoners.

Diplomatic assistance: the church can send delegations to meet with the ambassadors of foreign countries; the church can put pressure on the home government; the church can ask its corresponding bodies in foreign countries to act on behalf of prisoners. Equally, a well-known personality sharing the faith of certain prisoners could be particularly influential on their behalf.

Information: missionaries and church workers in the prisoner's country, whether or not they subscribe to the same religious beliefs, may help contact the prisoner or his/her family. But please consult with the Coordination Group or International Secretariat beforehand — such approaches may conflict with the work of other AI contacts.

Publicity: local churches often circulate or reprint AI material for their congregations. It may be worthwhile preparing special materials suitable for church sermons or religious publications. Church workers may be willing to let you use their own duplicating equipment, as well as other church facilities.

Educational Institutions

Schools, universities and institutions of higher education are valuable both for the short-term pressure their members can generate and for the continuing work of publicizing AI's activities and broadening awareness of human rights issues. The possibilities for action are almost limitless. Some of the following ideas may prove useful:

Organization and Publicity: You can:

- encourage AI membership in the local university — many have their own AI groups as a result of such activities;
- include student representatives on the regional AI executive, and attract student members into AI groups;
- send members of your group to speak at student societies or university meetings;
- include university students, staff members, staff associations and student societies on the group mailing list;
- invite university personalities to speak at meetings organized by your group;
- ask if you can use the student printing press to reduce costs for leaflets and publications.

Pressure: If you are based in a local university or

school, an AI group can:

- circulate a letter to the foreign government to be signed by distinguished members of the university; or such signatures can be gathered for letters urging action by the home government on human rights issues;
- circulate mass petitions on behalf of adopted prisoners of conscience for signature by staff and students;
- publicize the cases of Prisoners of the Month in the student newspapers;
- organize "teach-ins" on human rights issues or on specific cases;
- organize demonstrations, public meetings and symbolic public actions on behalf of prisoners, perhaps on the anniversary of the independence of those countries;
- stage a "Human Rights Week";
- undertake small-scale research projects into trade agreements or cultural exchanges between your own government and the foreign government, as the basis for a limited campaign;
- give AI briefings to delegations from your university visiting foreign countries, asking them to enquire on behalf of particular prisoners.

Human Rights Education: In some countries, AI prepares material for use by teachers in secondary and primary schools. These teachers' kits outline the particular difficulties of political imprisonment and ways in which people can help to prevent persecution and ease suffering.

Your group might, for example:

- contact sympathetic teachers, teachers' unions or educational leaders known for their political awareness to discuss the need for human rights education among young people: to foster a spirit of internationalism, increase respect for fundamental freedoms and to help individuals in other countries. A small kit could be prepared, to be sponsored or distributed by the educational authorities;
- contact producers of TV educational programs in your area, suggesting a series of programs on human rights and the work of AI;
- contact schools or educational authorities to discuss the circulation of leaflets and information in local schools, or informal talks with students in class about AI;
- encourage younger schoolchildren to work for AI by painting Christmas cards, or sending notes to the children of prisoners.

Political Parties

AI groups often need to seek support from political parties. Many adopted prisoners are members of political parties having connections with other political groups around the world. Governments often share the political views expounded by political parties in your own country. It is therefore important to encourage appeals from political groups or personalities in sympathy with the prisoner and from those sympathetic to the political views of the imprisoning government.

An appeal from the latter on humanitarian grounds would obviously carry a great deal of weight with the government concerned.

Equally, the support of political parties for AI's work is of immense value to AI's diplomatic initiatives — whether at national or international level.

Some suggestions:

Action: Delegates from political parties may be prepared to present appeals and petitions on behalf of prisoners at an embassy. An appeal from a well-respected member of a political party often carries weight — particularly, of course, in the local news media. Political congresses and conferences can be used to publicize prisoners' cases and to ask for resolutions in support of general campaigns.

Diplomatic assistance: Political parties sometimes send high-level missions to other countries for talks with the government. Ask them whether they can raise the cases of adopted prisoners on their visit. Similarly, when diplomats from the country in question visit your own country, try to brief those politicians likely to meet them on relevant questions of human rights and the situation of prisoners. You could also try to ensure that similar pertinent questions are raised with the home government before any visit of foreign diplomats to your country. Encourage sympathetic politicians to ask how much of your country's budget goes on aid to the foreign country, the safeguards against such money being spent on internal policing operations or the training of personnel in torture techniques, and so on.

Information: Politicians are well placed to keep you informed of trade and cultural agreements between your country and others; they can keep you informed about forthcoming visits and exchanges; they may know some of the personalities involved, and provide advice and insight on the countries with which you are concerned.

Lobbying: Contact your national section office to find out what lobbying machinery it has, and whether there is someone on the board responsible for relations with the government. He or she may have developed links with government and opposition parties, as well as with politicians sympathetic to AI who are prepared to help on individual cases or specific issues. In some national sections there are also groups of parliamentarians who could give advice.

And locally:

- Local members of the different political parties might be asked to give a talk to AI groups on their attitude to human rights issues. They may be prepared to support AI initiatives on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Keep track of the activities of such groups and political personalities, and keep them informed of AI activities in the area. Encourage local political groups to keep you informed of meetings where matters of AI concern might arise. (Human rights issues could usefully be raised at the time of local elections);
- members of your group could ask to speak to the local branch of a political party. Membership could be encouraged from among the different political associations in your locality, and their local offices asked to subscribe to the AI Newsletter and publications.

Since AI's work is intimately concerned with problems of interest to politicians, whatever their political leanings, AI members should be able to find a sympathetic audience with them. It should be borne in mind, however, that certain political groups may seek to use AI for their own political ends. AI groups should therefore take care that they are seen to be non-partisan and emphasize that the only way that AI can be

effective is by carefully guarding its impartiality. Membership should be encouraged from a variety of political groups, to avoid the risk of appearing partisan. A broad base of support for AI's objectives from political parties of all persuasions can be of crucial importance in securing public acceptance of AI's work both within and outside the country.

Chapter 8 Casework

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ADOPTION GROUP

Each adoption group accepts various responsibilities once it is formed and officially recognized. Apart from the responsibility it accepts for constant work on behalf of the prisoner cases assigned to it and the related activities, the group must ensure that it takes no action or makes any statement which can in any way hurt or jeopardize the situation of the prisoners or their families or which can damage the reputation or work of AI.

Security. Each group is entrusted with the responsible handling of information which is given to it and of persons with whom they are in contact. Each prisoner dossier contains the following advice:

1. Please keep all information about prisoner cases in a secure place such as a lockable filing cabinet.
2. If any prisoner dossier or its contents is lost or stolen, **immediately** inform both the national section headquarters and the International Secretariat. Please explain in detail the circumstances under which the information was lost or stolen.
3. Please do not give any prisoner dossier or its contents to any person who is not a member of the adoption group.
4. Please do not photocopy the information contained in the prisoner dossier. Any information which is to be given to other persons, organizations or journalists should be prepared separately and strict care taken to prevent the misuse of confidential material.
5. Please observe closely the distinction between confidential and non-confidential material. Normally all confidential information is noted on the specific sheet for this purpose in the prisoner dossier. In general, confidential information should not be revealed to any person outside the adoption group.
6. Please do not give out more information about the prisoner case than is necessary in each instance.
7. Please take care when cooperating with and giving or receiving information from political refugees or exile organizations. It can be assumed that such groups may be infiltrated by hostile intelligence agents.

Reporting. The International Secretariat asks each adoption group to send in a report on its activities at least once every six months. The work of each adoption group is part of a team effort and it is evident that all parts of the organization have to coordinate their activities and information. Even if the adoption group has had no success at all or very limited success, the Research Department at the International Secretariat needs to know this to be able to suggest further activities or possibly to evolve new strategy with regard to a certain case or country. The reports of adoption groups

thus help the Research Department to make an overall assessment of AI strategy and techniques on a specific country.

In addition to the general report, adoption groups should keep the Research Department informed of any new developments in the cases as they arise. Please send original documents or photocopies of any replies received to letters to the International Secretariat.

The International Secretariat is also anxious to obtain copies of all letters received from prisoners and their families and always needs photographs of prisoners and prisons. The Secretariat is constantly receiving requests from national sections and the press for material illustrating AI work. Copies of prisoners' letters and photographs are especially useful for exhibitions, publications and publicity. Coordination groups are also interested in obtaining such materials.

When reporting please remember to always include the group number or name and the name and country of the prisoner concerned.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT LIAISON WITH THE ADOPTION GROUP

Adoption groups are in touch with the International Secretariat through the Coordination Unit and the Executive Assistants who work closely with the Researchers on specific countries or areas. The Coordination Unit is responsible for allocation of prisoner cases and records of prisoner releases.

The reports which adoption groups send in every six months are checked by the Executive Assistants. The Coordination Unit maintains close contact with the national sections and coordination groups in order to monitor the overall work of the organization.

Groups who wish additional information about cases, about particular countries or about AI policy are normally advised to contact the relevant coordination group or their national section headquarters **first**. If the information cannot be obtained from either of these sources then contact the International Secretariat. Urgent correspondence is handled as quickly as possible. Other requests may take several weeks for adequate processing.

Copies of all correspondence from the International Secretariat to any adoption group are automatically sent to the relevant national section and coordination group.

Groups which require replacement cases must contact the Coordination Unit as no action will be taken unless a specific request is received.

Groups will occasionally request additional cases. An extra case will sometimes be provided where a group is endeavouring to find out if their prisoner has

been released or if one of their cases is particularly "difficult". Groups who wish to adopt additional cases as a result of increased membership will be requested to consider the formation of a second group. The group fee is based on an assessment of approximately three prisoners per group so the second group would be expected to pay a separate group fee.

When a group transfers one of its prisoners to another group within the section, the International Secretariat must be notified, so that all subsequent information is sent to the correct group.

When a group changes address, it must inform the International Secretariat, the national section office, relevant coordination groups and any co-adopting groups in other national sections.

SELECTION OF PRISONER CASES

The Research Department in the International Secretariat is responsible for obtaining information about prisoners and for preparing prisoner dossiers which are issued to adoption groups. The Research Department seeks to ensure that all information is properly verified before any decision is taken about action by AI. Although general guidelines are used, such as the statutory requirements in defining the term "prisoner of conscience", each case is decided on its own merits and evaluated on the basis of knowledge of the country concerned. The prisoner dossier explains in each instance why AI is taking action in the specific case. The prisoner dossier indicates the "status" of the case which will be one of the following:

ADOPTION cases:

AI adopts detained individuals when the Research Department believes that the persons concerned are genuine PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE — men and women detained for their beliefs, colour, language, ethnic origin or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. The reasons for adoption by AI are included in the prisoner dossier. Since a prisoner of conscience is detained in violation of the United Nations **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, AI works for the prisoner's unconditional release.

INVESTIGATION cases:

AI investigates the cases of detained individuals when the Research Department believes that the prisoner is a likely PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE, but where more information is necessary to be sure of this fact. Each adoption group, in all inquiries to governments and other correspondence, should make it clear that they are not appealing for the release of the prisoner but are seeking further information. When the case sheet recommends that publicity be given to the case, all public statements should indicate that AI is investigating the case only.

At a later stage, if no satisfactory information can be obtained from the government concerned, the Research Department may decide to up-grade the case to a full adoption Case. This decision is made on the basis of all available information about the context of the particular case and the political situation in the country. The responsibility for this decision to

adopt a prisoner rests with the Research Department at the International Secretariat. It should be noted that in accordance with the decision of the 5th International Council of AI in Utrecht in 1972, "the assertion by a government that a political prisoner has used or advocated violence should not be binding on AI. Such an assertion should be considered valid only if it has been proved in a fair and public trial."

AI also investigates the cases of political prisoners (who may not be eligible for adoption) because they have been detained for long periods without trial or because they have been sentenced on the basis of unfair trial procedures. This action is based on the fact that AI opposes, by all appropriate means, the detention of any prisoner of conscience or any political prisoner without trial within a reasonable time and any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to recognized norms to ensure a fair trial. Each prisoner dossier will explain clearly what steps should be taken on behalf of such investigation cases.

GROUP cases:

AI may take up the cases of several prisoners at the same time and consider this group of prisoners a single case. This is normally done if it is believed unsafe to adopt or investigate individual prisoners in the group or if it is believed that this will be a more effective technique to secure the protection or release of all of them. AI might, for example, decide to adopt a whole prison, known as a "prison adoption". Full details on such group cases and the work to be undertaken on their behalf is included in the prisoner dossier.

PRISONER DOSSIERS

Each adoption group receives a prisoner dossier for each prisoner case assigned to it. This is a printed file which normally contains the following documents:

- case sheet
- confidential information sheet
- status of case sheet
- general instructions
- recommended case action
- relief action
- list of government authorities
- background materials

The **case sheet** contains — so far as they are available — personal details of the prisoner (age, profession, family details, state of health); details of arrest, charge, trial, sentence; the place and conditions of imprisonment. It provides basic background to the arrest of the prisoner and the details of the immediate political circumstances or organization to which the prisoner belongs.

The **confidential information sheet** provides information which may guide the efforts of the group in handling the case. **The information is not for publication or circulation.** It is not to be used in letters to government officials or released to the press. It may only be used if specifically indicated.

The **status of case** provides a brief indication of the distinction between an adoption and investigation case and the action to be taken in each. It also defines the category of group cases.

The **general instructions** provide a brief summary of the kinds of action which groups can undertake on behalf of prisoners as well as advice on security, co-ordination and reporting.

The **recommended case action** sheet gives specific instructions for action on the particular case. **The instructions on this sheet take precedence over the general instructions and may prohibit groups from undertaking actions suggested either in this handbook or the general instructions booklet.**

The **relief action** sheet may not always be included in the prisoner dossier as it is quite usual for the relief needs of the prisoner and the family to become known only after the group has started making its inquiries.

All prisoner dossiers provide a brief account of the political situation in the country concerned and of the laws under which the prisoner is detained. In many cases, the International Secretariat will provide a more detailed background paper on the country or on a particular group of prisoners. Books for further reading are often suggested and group members should make every effort to familiarise themselves not only with the information provided by the International Secretariat and by any coordination group which may be involved but also with the literature of the countries concerned. Such two-fold information helps groups to write informed — and therefore more effective — letters.

The volume of information reaching the International Secretariat about individual prisoners varies considerably. In some cases, such as when the prisoner is a well known politician or writer, full biographical details will be available. In other cases an AI mission may have been able to investigate prison conditions or an AI observer may have attended a trial. But often very little is known about the prisoner; she or he may be held incommunicado in a military prison. In these instances, the adoption groups must endeavour to obtain the required information from the contacts suggested in the prisoner dossier.

The International Secretariat will inform groups if further information about their prisoner cases comes to light. It is equally essential that the groups themselves pass on immediately any news they receive from other sources. Such information may affect not only the prisoners they are working for but others held in the same circumstances.

DOUBLE AND TRIPLE ADOPTIONS

In certain adoption cases, two or even three adoption groups are asked to work on behalf of one prisoner. This is called **DOUBLE ADOPTION** or **TRIPLE ADOPTION**. When more than one adoption group is involved the names and addresses of all groups working on the particular case will be included in the prisoner dossier to enable adoption groups to contact each other. If the case is a double or triple adoption, each adoption group should keep the other adoption groups informed of their activities so that efforts can be coordinated. When writing to the prisoner, the prisoner's family or to contacts, please make it clear that the adoption group is one of several working on behalf of the prisoner. This will help to avoid confusion.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Every letter written on behalf of a prisoner is a direct intervention on his or her behalf. Letter-writing is one of the basic instruments of every adoption group in seeking to obtain the release of prisoners of conscience. Care should be taken, therefore, to ensure that letters reach the most influential or responsive authorities, and that their style, language and content are the most effective possible.

Instructions are provided in the prisoner dossier with a list of the names and addresses of individuals or government authorities to whom adoption groups should write. Unless otherwise instructed, letters should be written on AI letterhead stationery.

Every single government official is responsible in some way for the human rights situation in the country. Letters should therefore be written to a wide spectrum of officials. In the course of this, groups may discover someone in the government who is particularly sympathetic to AI's objectives.

Every government publishes year books and public documents to which adoption groups should refer for information, addresses and names of officials. Every senior government official has a staff, to whom groups can always write. If a group cannot obtain the name of the official, use the title of the office — "Prime Minister's Office", "Secretary to the Attorney-General", and so on. Letters can also be addressed to Trade Commissioners and Ambassadors responsible for building and maintaining good relations with the country concerned. These are often a group's means of keeping up constant correspondence, and can be supported with visits in person. Ask them to make inquiries if group letters to Government Ministers remain unanswered.

Letters should be sent to governments regularly to sustain the pressure: when a group receives a new case, on receiving further news of the prisoner, when a partial amnesty has been announced, on Human Rights Day (10 December), during AI's Prisoner of Conscience Week in October every year, on national holidays and religious festivals, on the President's birthday, and so on. Some groups write as often as once a week, and encourage other people to help increase the volume. In some cases, the correspondence will be normal and groups can expect replies from the authorities in question. Do not hesitate to write again if replies are slow, requesting the courtesy of a reply; but allow due time for postal delay.

Many groups do not receive replies to their letters — either from the foreign government or from the prisoner. Of course this is very discouraging and frustrating for a group, but it should not deter them from keeping up this routine activity: it is an essential part of the constant collective pressure. The important point is that it is a regular and continuous activity, so that governments receive regular reminders that the prisoners are not forgotten.

However frustrated a group may feel, it is not wise to abuse the foreign government in letters or to use political jargon. The tone of letters should always be modest and reasonable; if the language is at all offensive, it might affect the attitude of the government to the prisoner in a negative way. It is better to write well-informed letters which refer to sensitive areas of

foreign relations, such as trade, or which play upon the public image which the government seeks to project internally and internationally. Experience has shown that even the most repressive governments may be anxious to foster a belief that they are fair and reasonable. It is important where possible to stress a country's reputation for moderation and justice, to show respect for its constitution and judicial procedures, and an understanding of current difficulties. This will give more scope to point out ways in which the human rights situation can be improved.

There have been striking examples of the cumulative effect of letter campaigns in securing the release of prisoners even though the writers may never have received any acknowledgement for their letters.

Points to remember:

- Letters should be brief, factual, and — most important — polite. They should be written clearly and neatly, to give a good impression of AI's seriousness and stature. Abusive language and rhetoric should be avoided at all costs;
- always use the correct form of address, and the most appropriate language. The prisoner dossier gives advice on which language to use: as a general rule, write in the language of the country, or, if this is not possible, in English or French;
- where AI can be mentioned, stress the strict political balance that AI maintains in its work. Mention the other prisoners for whom the group is working, to show that AI is not merely criticizing the actions of one government;
- letters should be written on the assumption that the authorities are open to discussion. An attempt should be made to find basic points of agreement. Where relevant, refer to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the UN Standard Minimum Rules, or other international standards. Refer to relevant parts of the country's constitution, laws and prison regulations; many constitutions guarantee freedom of speech and opinion, and any irregularities should be pointed out clearly. In a similar way, it may be possible to cite official public statements by government members, or any useful information and promises contained in letters written to the group officials. As always, try to draw out some commitment or comment regarding the prisoner's case on which to base further initiatives;
- end each letter with a specific question designed to elicit a response and thus ensure continuation of the correspondence. For instance, the group can request the correct title and address of prison officials, or the exact whereabouts of the individual prisoner if this is not known.
- It may be useful in a limited number of cases to write more personal letters to the head of state or government ministers pointing out their individual responsibility for the situation in their country. These letters must be respectful and carefully worded. Experience shows that groups seldom receive a reply to only one letter of this kind, but that repeated attempts may bring results in time.
- Registered letters tend to receive quicker attention than those sent by ordinary mail. A group can enclose a receipt form (*avis de reception*) in the letter (obtainable from the Post Office). This means that

the recipient will have to sign for the letter, and the certificate of registration is then returned to the sender. This procedure is particularly advisable where the prisoner's exact whereabouts are not known.

A series of sample letters is contained in Chapter 10 of this handbook.

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Contact should be made by the adoption group with the particular government representatives stationed in their country. General guidelines for this have been outlined in Chapter 7. By contacting the representatives of a foreign government located in the group's country, special emphasis can be placed on trading, cultural and diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Groups are more likely to receive a reply from an embassy than from its government and should, therefore, be persistent in writing letters and attempting to obtain an interview with the Ambassador, *Chargé d'Affaires* or First Secretary.

Some of the occasions mentioned above provide a useful opportunity for trying to arrange an AI deputation to an embassy. Groups should always consult with the national section office before initiating contact with an embassy (see the **Working Rules**, Chapter 11). Such deputations are often most effective when they are organized on a national scale, involving a number of AI groups with prisoners in the same country. Groups should consult their national sections and coordination groups for material to support their case.

In addition to the occasions mentioned above, letters should be sent to embassies on the occasion of visits from trade delegations, sporting teams and government representatives, and to coincide with international cultural events.

PUBLICITY AND PRESS RELATIONS

In general, whether the group is responsible for investigation or adoption cases, it should seek publicity for them. Publicity is important to make the general public aware of the problems of political imprisonment and torture and to involve more people in AI work. But groups **must** remember that there are also cases where more is accomplished by discreet negotiations than by rash publicity, and that premature publicity may antagonize a government which is actually trying to improve matters. Sometimes, the prisoner dossier will carry a warning not to engage in publicity for a prisoner: it may be that publicity would endanger him/her; it may be that the International Secretariat is engaged in negotiation with the government concerned. But if publicity is advised, groups should make every effort to carry out a sustained campaign on a prisoner's behalf.

The methods of conducting such campaigns start with letters to local newspapers and may develop into

campaigns in the national press, television and radio. Groups should try to persuade people of influence to support their campaigns, remembering that the most effective criticism often comes from people known to be in general sympathy with the government rather than those whose positions are fundamentally opposed. It is important that publicity campaigns should be sustained, with follow-up letters reporting progress or a government's recalcitrance.

In order to maximize the effects of publicity, ensure that copies of all relevant publicity which you obtain in the media reach the authorities of the countries in which the prisoners are detained. Either send copies of the media coverage to the ambassadors for their comment and for forwarding to the government or send them directly to the appropriate officials of the country concerned.

A handbook for press relations has been circulated by the International Secretariat to all national sections and may be helpful to adoption group work. Write a number of letters to the editors of influential local newspapers. Prepare a short article on the work of the adoption group and highlight the prisoner cases. Try to suggest specific constructive actions in all publicity efforts — such as giving readers an address to which appeals can be sent or giving the adoption group's telephone number where sympathizers can learn more about activities on behalf of this prisoner. Many areas now have local radio and television stations which are willing to report on activities taking place in the locality. Invite them to a public event which the adoption group is organizing and talk about the specific prisoner cases.

Use all the events in the AI calendar and the national calendar — national days, official birthdays, religious festivals, as well as the prisoner's birthday, the anniversary of the trial — as occasions for obtaining publicity. This is a systematic way in which to build up the cumulative pressure of publicity on the prisoner's behalf.

Please see also the **Working Rules**, in Chapter 11, for general guidelines on publicity activity.

APPROACHES TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The general guidelines for approaching other organizations and institutions have been outlined in Chapter 7. Most prisoners have a trade or profession and often these are represented by national or international organizations concerned with protecting the interest of its members (e.g. steelworkers, schoolteachers, journalists, agricultural workers, etc.). Groups should contact the appropriate national body in their own countries and try to associate it with protesting against the imprisonment of the individuals concerned. Names and addresses will frequently be provided in the prisoner dossier. In some cases, an international organization will be able to put the group in touch with its branch in the prisoner's country or make inquiries on the prisoner's behalf.

It is important to make these approaches in consultation with the relevant coordination groups and the

national section office. Very specific guidelines concerning relations with international organizations and relations with exile organizations have been outlined in Chapter 7, and each adoption group is requested to follow these guidelines carefully. See also the **Working Rules** in Chapter 11.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

Names of contacts in the country who may be able to help the group by providing information about the prisoner, the trial or the family, will be given in the prisoner dossier. The contact may be a defending lawyer, a politician actively concerned with human rights, or a worker with a religious body or relief agency, for example.

Groups must bear in mind that letters to such individuals may be opened by the police, and security precautions must be observed. The prisoner dossier will sometimes specify that, contrary to the general suggestions, AI letterhead paper should not be used nor AI's name mentioned.

Letters must always be tactfully phrased: it is best to be cautious in an initial approach and to ask for limited information only.

Groups should not be disappointed if they do not receive an immediate reply from the contact; it is advisable to enclose an international reply coupon with letters to encourage a response. If further letters remain unanswered, do not press the contact for a reply: he or she may have good reason for remaining silent. Try another approach through a different contact. Any information received from contacts should be sent immediately to the International Secretariat: it may concern other prisoners even if these are not specified. It is best to send a photocopy of the letter and envelope. If this is not possible, the group should send the original and request the International Secretariat to copy and return it as soon as possible.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PRISONER AND FAMILY

Prisoners usually welcome letters from groups, but the conditions under which prisoners are allowed to receive letters vary considerably. In some countries prisoners are not allowed to receive letters at all; in others, they are rationed to, perhaps, one letter every three months.

The prisoner dossier will inform the group whether it is safe to write to the prisoner; in case of doubt, contact the national coordination group or the International Secretariat. In view of the attitudes of different government authorities, the most effective way of reaching the prisoner may be to send an open postcard. The prisoner dossier will specify the language to use: English or French are usually suggested as alternatives to the prisoner's own language. It is important to stress that you are a group of well-wishers. Make it clear that you are not exiles. Be careful to explain

your own nationality, and write only the most general inquiries about the prisoner's well-being. There are exceptional countries where prisoners are allowed to correspond freely with AI groups, and you will be informed if the prisoner falls into this category.

The prisoner dossier will also give the name and address of the prisoner's family where these are known, with advice as to how and whether to contact them.

Always remember that a prisoner's family is likely to be under surveillance and possibly in danger of arrest. Make sure that any letter you write cannot be open to misinterpretation. Picture postcards containing greetings are likely to escape censorship altogether, and would be welcomed by families in need of moral support.

Never press a family with letters if you do not receive a reply; it may not be safe for them to write or receive letters.

RELIEF

While pressure on governments and the psychological support provided to the prisoner and his family by the traditional adoption process remain the principal weapons used by AI in its fight against political persecution, the concrete benefit of financial relief is also of great importance. Relief assistance gives moral as well as material support to the family. It may provide for children's school fees, help to subsidise an inadequate prison diet, pay fares to visit a prisoner, or buy medicines.

After the prisoner has been released, relief funds may be used to help his or her rehabilitation.

It is up to the discretion of each adoption group how long they wish to continue sending relief to a prisoner after his or her release.

Relief sent by the **International Secretariat** is normally intended for specific, large-scale relief or legal aid projects, or for distribution to individual prisoners and families. In most cases, the money is sent to the prisoners and families through a person or organization in the recipient country, who acts as a distributor for AI relief funds. These distributors are usually in direct touch with the AI researcher about the use to which the funds are to be put.

The International Secretariat does its best to ensure that relief funds sent through a distributor are given to specific prisoners and families in accordance with the wishes of the adoption groups which have donated the money. However, as a matter of practicality the distributing agencies themselves have the ultimate power to decide on the precise destination of the relief funds. This is because they are in the best position to judge the actual needs of prisoners and families. It is obviously unsatisfactory if a relatively "wealthy" prisoner's family should receive more relief money simply because the prisoner happens to be adopted by a "rich" or active group, while a "poor" family might at the same time receive nothing because the group concerned is unable to raise relief money.

Occasionally, due to the possible sudden closure of relief channels, or other factors beyond the control of the International Secretariat, it becomes impossible for the International Secretariat to forward relief funds to the specific family, prisoner, or country for which they were originally intended. In these circumstances the International Secretariat reserves the right to re-allocate such funds for general relief use six months after the date of their arrival at the International Secretariat, if they cannot be used for the purpose originally intended. In the case of relief donations in excess of £100, the International Secretariat will consult the donors before making such re-allocation, which will be decided on by the International Secretariat Relief Committee. Groups should note these restrictions when raising funds for general relief purposes.

The prisoner dossier advises **adoption groups** whether there are established procedures in operation and what appropriate action groups should take. Groups should not attempt relief operations other than those recommended in the prisoner dossier.

In general it is far better to send money than parcels, unless the group receives a specific request from the family. The best way to send money is by banker's draft or international postal order. Groups will be advised on this by their national section office, co-ordination group or the International Secretariat. If relief money is to be channelled through the International Secretariat, please be sure to indicate along with each transfer of funds: name, address and number of adoption group and the name and country of the prisoner or project for whom it is destined.

When a group decides to send a parcel, please make sure that it is not liable to customs dues or import quotas. Bear in mind that there are many countries where gift-parcels are not allowed, or can be brought in to the prisoner only by relatives. Usually the best way to help is by sending money to a relative who can buy something the prisoner really needs. This also saves heavy postage costs and possible customs dues. Bear in mind that different cultures have different concepts of what gifts mean, and that large sums of money may be an embarrassment to families in poor neighbourhoods: try to assess need and acceptability of each item of relief beforehand.

Where indicated in the prisoner dossier, it is possible to write to the Director of Prisons (c/o the Minister of the Interior), the Prison Governor, the Prison Chaplain or Chief Postmaster, asking whether they can deliver or accept parcels for the prisoner; and, if not, whether they can recommend any alternative means of sending them. The same procedure may be followed in attempting to send letters. Even though the group may not receive a reply, the letters will still have an important effect in making the authorities aware of outside interest.

Many prisoners feel the lack of reading matter very keenly, and welcome gifts of books. If the group is able to send books, make sure that they are non-political and in a language understood by the recipient; poetry, philosophy, history, classics and non-political magazines may all get through the prison censor.

OFFERS OF ASYLUM

The offer of sanctuary for a prisoner is a technique only rarely applied. It means an attempt by an AI group to arrange for the prisoner to be released, to be able to leave his or her country and to apply for the right of asylum in another.

It must be stressed that **it is absolutely essential to have the prisoner's express approval before initiating such a move.** Political exile is increasingly used as a form of punishment by imprisoning regimes, and may be viewed as such by the prisoner. Many prisoners prefer detention to exile even when this route is legally open to them.

At the same time, thought has to be given to the feasibility of asylum.

Policies for granting asylum vary from country to country, and may be highly complex; placement agencies may be overworked, or may not exist; considerable funds may be necessary. It would be cruel and thoughtless to raise the prisoner's expectations before making a thorough and realistic assessment of the possibilities for asylum.

Possible strategies for obtaining asylum for a prisoner might include:

1. *Raise the possibility of release and asylum with your own government.*

Write to a sympathetic Parliamentary representative seeking advice about whom to contact to discuss the prisoner's case. If the government does not respond, try raising the question with the ambassadors of other countries, who might be willing to help. If the group is able to obtain even a conditional statement from a government official suggesting that the prisoner could emigrate to that country or receive asylum there, it can approach the ambassador and other authorities of the prisoner's country, such as the Minister of Justice, explaining this and trying to elicit a response. Well-worded formal letters will serve to indicate the seriousness and determination of AI's efforts. Even if this approach fails, direct negotiations with the government at this level will be of immense value in drawing its attention to the case. But always make sure of the prisoner's wishes before proceeding.

2. *Approach universities and institutes in countries willing to accept political prisoners as teachers or students.*

Many scholarship programs provide funds for overseas study, and groups may try to persuade education authorities to offer the prisoner a place at college or university, as a preliminary to helping to get him or her out of the country.

Prominent prisoners might be nominated for an honorary degree, which they might be invited to come and receive; this may embarrass the imprisoning government if it attempts to block such a move.

3. *Offer medical treatment for the prisoner.*

If the prisoner requires medical attention, the group might raise funds for this and persuade a doctor or medical association to treat the prisoner and act on his or her behalf in negotiations with the imprisoning regime and the home government.

VISITS TO THE PRISONER'S COUNTRY

Group members who in the course of business or pleasure travel to countries where they have adopted prisoners may be able to meet prisoner's relatives and sometimes even visit prisoners. **Members on these visits are not permitted to speak or negotiate on behalf of AI.** Such visits are quite separate from official AI missions which are authorized by the International Executive Committee only.

Group members anxious to conduct such visits must consult fully with the International Secretariat for briefing. No family should be visited without their express consent in advance. A sudden visit from a foreigner may attract unwelcome attention. See **Working Rules 3, 30 and 53.**

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising activities are essential to maintain the routine work of each adoption group, to raise money for relief assistance to the prisoners and their families, and to contribute to the international budget of AI.

On occasions, a major fundraising effort will be necessary. This may involve generating a relatively large volume of press attention, advertising, and publicity, holding benefit performances, lectures, dinners, approaching wealthy individuals willing to support the work of the group, and other fundraising functions. There are many possibilities depending on the local situation. Ask the national section office for advice and for information about successful projects undertaken by other groups.

Apart from these major initiatives, many groups prefer to maintain a constant presence in their community by smaller actions focusing on the idea that protection of human rights is something for which every member of the community should feel responsible, irrespective of their status or wealth. Many small-scale actions have proved immensely effective: market stalls for second-hand clothes or books, the sale of AI greetings cards or roses, art exhibitions and displays of folk-dancing, and so on . . . It is always a good idea to link fundraising with the work of AI: with specific issues such as the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture or with individual cases of prisoners of conscience.

RELEASES

The International Secretariat should be informed immediately if a group hears that a prisoner has been released. In certain circumstances — such as a summary denial of the prisoner's detention by an unco-operative government — the news will require confirmation and the Research Department may ask the group to make further inquiries. When the release of a prisoner is confirmed, it is important for the group to inform the International Secretariat if it wishes to receive a replacement case, as some groups do not want to take on a new case immediately. For some time after a prisoner's release, until he or she finds

employment, a group may assist in various ways, including financial aid or advice regarding education or employment. Such action may continue at the discretion of the adoption group unless it is felt that it would harm the released prisoner.

After the release of a prisoner, all materials on the case should either be stored in a safe place or destroyed or returned to the office of the national section. Care should be taken to ensure that the International Secretariat has been sent copies of any additional information or material which the group has acquired during its work on this case.

SUSPENSION OF GROUP WORK

It sometimes happens that a group is either temporarily or permanently unable to continue working on behalf of its adopted prisoners. If this happens, it is vital to notify the International Secretariat **immediately**. Otherwise it will be assumed that the work on behalf of the prisoners and their families is continuing. If the International Secretariat is notified that a group has closed down, it will be possible to arrange for the adoption of the prisoners by other groups.

If, in exceptional circumstances, a case is transferred to another adoption group within the same national section, the International Secretariat must be notified immediately so that advice and updated information can be given to the correct group.

Chapter 9 Reference Materials

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

The term "human rights" covers a wide range of concerns which are open to considerable debate and interpretation. However, the most commonly accepted international statement is that of the United Nations' **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) on 10 December 1948 as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" in preserving the dignity and worth of the human person.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The 30 articles of the declaration provide that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person, to equality before the law without discrimination, to a fair and public trial, to be presumed innocent before proven guilty, to freedom of movement, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to freedom of opinion and expression, and to freedom of peaceful assembly. It declares that no one shall be held in slavery, no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. The declaration also establishes that everyone has the right to a nationality, to marry, to own property, to take part in the government of his or her country, to work, to receive equal pay for equal work, to receive just and favourable remuneration, to enjoy rest and leisure, and to have an adequate standard of living and education. The declaration further stipulates that everyone has the right to form and join trade unions and the right to seek asylum from persecution.

Of particular concern to Amnesty International are the following four articles of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**:

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

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.

Although many nations have incorporated the different articles of the declaration into their national legislation, **the declaration itself is not a legally binding**

document. It is a statement of principles with an appeal to "every individual and every social organization" to promote and guarantee respect for the freedom and rights it defines. It was never the intention that member states of the United Nations should formally ratify the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, although membership in the United Nations is often considered to be an implicit acceptance of the principles of the declaration. However, it should be noted that under the Charter of the United Nations, member states are pledged to take joint and separate action to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is a legal obligation. The declaration is an authoritative statement of what those human rights and fundamental freedoms are.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** is only one of a number of important international human rights documents. Between 1951 and 1968, the General Assembly of the United Nations alone adopted 15 international conventions, two international covenants, two protocols and one optional protocol in the field of human rights in addition to the declaration. All except the declaration are legally binding upon the states which ratify them. As well as these United Nations' documents, there have also been two regional human rights conventions drawn up: the **European Convention on Human Rights** and the **American Convention on Human Rights**.

Terms and Definitions. For persons who are not familiar with the terminology of international law, it may be helpful to explain these common terms:

- Convention & Covenant — both are formal, legally-binding agreements or treaties between sovereign states. The difference in name does not imply any legal difference.
- Protocol — a formal, legally-binding agreement between sovereign states which is normally a supplement to another treaty or agreement.
- Declaration — a general statement of intent or of principle which may not necessarily be legally binding.
- Ratification — a decision by a sovereign state to confirm an agreement (as in **ratification** of a treaty).
- Signature — indication of the provisional intent of a sovereign state to be bound by the terms of the treaty or agreement.

AI, as is well known, does not rely only upon the machinery of international law for its work. In fact, direct international pressure by individuals and non-

governmental organizations has frequently proven far more effective in protecting victims of human rights violations than any of the available international legal institutions. AI members are **not** expected to be experts on the technicalities of international law, but it is useful to be familiar with the most important aspects which are related to the work of the organization.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Even before the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, work had begun in the United Nations to create more legally binding legislation for the international protection of human rights. After 18 years of work and debate, two covenants were adopted in 1966, namely the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**.

The first of the two covenants (on economic, social and cultural rights) deals in considerable detail with the right to work, protection of the family and the right to social security, education and health care. The states which ratify this covenant undertake to implement these rights on a **progressive** basis and to submit compulsory reports on the implementation of these rights in their respective countries. The reports are submitted to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations which may send them to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. Significantly, the second article of the covenant includes the following:

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised **without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.** (emphasis added).

The twin covenant (on civil and political rights) is largely devoted to the other traditional civil and political rights which are set down in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The covenant affords protection to the right to life; prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; prohibits slavery and compulsory labour; prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; and provides that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity. It provides in considerable detail for equality before the courts and tribunals and for guarantees in criminal and civil procedures; prohibits retroactive criminal legislation; stipulates the rights of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, and prohibits arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence. The covenant stipulates the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and provides that the law shall guarantee protection from discrimination.

In particular, the covenant defines the acceptable limitations which states may place upon these rights. In time of public emergency, states may "derogate from" (be exempt from) the obligations of the covenant provided this does not involve discrimina-

tion solely on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin and provided certain other conditions are present. Certain rights are considered so essential that **no** derogation from them may be made even in time of public emergency. These are the rights to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the prohibition of slavery and servitude, the principle of no penalty without trial, the right of everyone to recognition as a person before the law and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** establishes an 18-member Human Rights Committee which is empowered to consider reports on compliance that parties to the covenant are obliged to provide. Unless a state party has made a specific declaration recognizing the right of the committee to hear complaints against it by another state party — so far very few have done so — then the committee has no power to hear such complaints. Complaints from individuals are dealt with in the following paragraph.

Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This protocol, attached to the covenant, provides a potentially very important method for protecting civil and political rights. A state which is party to this protocol recognizes the competence of the Human Rights Committee to consider communications from **individuals** who claim to be victims of a violation by that state of any rights included in the covenant.

European Convention on Human Rights. The Council of Europe has adopted several "instruments" on human rights, among which are the **European Convention on Human Rights** with its five protocols, the **European Social Charter** and the **European Agreement relating to persons participating in proceedings of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights**.

The rights contained in the **European Convention on Human Rights** are based in part on the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The convention also contains elaborate implementation procedures, which are referred to below. Under the terms of the convention, a Commission and Court of Human Rights have been set up which, together with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a political body, are responsible for the implementation of the convention.

American Convention on Human Rights. The Organization of American States has adopted several important "instruments" on human rights: the **Bogota Charter** which established the structure of the Organization, the **American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man** which proclaims a number of individual rights and obligations, and the **Inter-American Charter of Social Guarantees** which sets forth labour and social rights.

The **American Convention on Human Rights**, the most important legal document for the protection of human rights, was adopted in 1969 but as of the end of 1975 was not yet in force, pending ratification of the convention by the required minimum of 11 member states of the Organization of American States.

Bringing complaints of human rights violations. AI is frequently involved in various international legal actions which involve complaints of human rights violations. This usually involves submitting factual reports of situations to one of the international bodies which is competent to consider the question. It is an activity which is **strictly** the responsibility of the International Secretariat.

For your information, however, it may be helpful to know some basic facts about the following international bodies:

International Court of Justice — This body consists of 15 judges elected by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. It hears legal disputes brought to it by governments. Approximately 40 states have accepted that the jurisdiction of the court is compulsory in legal disputes concerning interpretations of treaties and "breaches of international obligations" and so forth. The Court does not hear cases involving individual violations of human rights.

United Nations Commission on Human Rights — This body consists of 32 members appointed by governments selected by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It has the authority to examine "particular situations which appear to reveal a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights". Communications about human rights violations can be submitted by non-governmental organizations and must show that all possible remedies on the national level have been resorted to or would be ineffective. A communication, if accepted, passes through a Working Group to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The matter is then referred to the Commission itself which may decide to make further investigations and submit a report to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It must be noted that there are still no effective sanctions however to enforce any recommendations, but the publicity which accompanies the case can be an effective form of pressure on the government which is at fault. Complaints made by individuals or private groups are acknowledged and sent to the government in

question. This is generally the last the complainant hears, even if the government sends a response to the United Nations.

European Commission on Human Rights — This body consists of 15 members representing each state which is party to the **European Convention on Human Rights**. Petitions may be submitted by individuals, non-governmental organizations or groups of individuals who claim to be victims of violations of the rights guaranteed by the convention, although petitions brought by one government concerning alleged violations of human rights by another government have been perceived to be more effective. A situation will be brought before either the Court of Human Rights or the Committee of Ministers following investigation by the Commission. The Committee of Ministers can prescribe certain measures to be taken by the state concerned. The decisions of the Committee are binding.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights — This body consists of seven members who are representatives of countries belonging to the Organization of American States. It has a relatively less-developed procedure for the examination of communications submitted to it and the findings of the Commission are not binding upon any government. Communications may be submitted by individuals and non-governmental organizations. The Commission examines evidence submitted to it and refers a draft report to the government concerned. If the government does not respond, the Commission may prepare a study on the situation of human rights in that country and, where violations are proved, may make recommendations to both the state concerned and the General Assembly of the Organization of American States.

Human Rights Protection in other Regions. Attempts have been made in Africa and the Middle East to evolve similar machinery for the protection of human rights but, to date, no substantial progress has been achieved. Therefore, petitions from areas without such regional structures are normally addressed to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

**DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION
OF ALL PERSONS FROM TORTURE AND
OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING
TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT**

The United Nations General Assembly adopted on 9 December 1975 a Declaration condemning any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as "an offence to human dignity". Under its terms, no State may permit or tolerate torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment, and each State is requested to take effective measures to prevent such treatment from being practised within its jurisdiction.

The Declaration was first adopted and referred to the Assembly by the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, held in Geneva in September 1975. In adopting the Declaration without a vote, the Assembly noted that the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** provide that no one may be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Assembly has recommended that the Declaration serve as a guideline for all States and other entities exercising effective power.

The text of the Declaration follows:

Article 1

1. For the purpose of this Declaration, torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or other persons. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions to the extent consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

2. Torture constitutes an aggravated and deliberate form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 2

Any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 3

No State may permit or tolerate torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Exceptional circumstances such as a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 4

Each State shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Declaration, take effective measures to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment from being practised within its jurisdiction.

Article 5

The training of law enforcement personnel and of other public officials who may be responsible for persons deprived of their liberty shall ensure that full account is taken of the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This prohibition shall also, where appropriate, be included in such general rules or instructions as are issued in regard to the duties and functions of anyone who may be involved in the custody or treatment of such persons.

Article 6

Each State shall keep under systematic review interrogation methods and practices as well as arrangements for the custody and treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in its territory, with a view to preventing any cases of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 7

Each State shall ensure that all acts of torture as defined in article 1 are offences under its criminal law. The same shall apply in regard to acts which constitute participation in, complicity in, incitement to or an attempt to commit torture.

Article 8

Any person who alleges that he has been subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by or at the instigation of a public official shall have the right to complain to, and to have his case impartially examined by, the competent authorities of the State concerned.

Article 9

Wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture as defined in article 1 has been committed, the competent authorities of the State concerned shall promptly proceed to an impartial investigation even if there has been no formal complaint.

Article 10

If an investigation under article 8 or article 9 establishes that an act of torture as defined in article 1 appears to have been committed, criminal proceedings shall be instituted against the alleged offender or offenders in accordance with national law. If an allegation of other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is considered to be well founded, the alleged offender or offenders shall be subject to criminal, disciplinary or other appropriate proceedings.

Article 11

Where it is proved that an act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has been committed by or at the instigation of a public official, the victim shall be afforded redress and compensation in accordance with national law.

Article 12

Any statement which is established to have been made as a result of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment may not be invoked as evidence against the person concerned or against any other person in any proceedings.

STATUTE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

*As amended by the
Ninth International Council meeting
in Strasbourg, France, 24-26 September 1976.*

OBJECTS

1. **CONSIDERING** that every person has the right freely to hold and to express his convictions and the obligation to extend a like freedom to others, the objects of **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** shall be to secure throughout the world the observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by:

(a) irrespective of political consideration working towards the release of and providing assistance to persons who in violation of the aforesaid provisions are imprisoned, detained, restricted or otherwise subjected to physical coercion or restriction by reason of their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origin, colour or language, provided that they have not used or advocated violence (hereinafter referred to as "Prisoners of Conscience");

(b) opposing by all appropriate means the detention of any Prisoners of Conscience or any political prisoners without trial within a reasonable time or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to recognized norms to ensure a fair trial.

(c) opposing by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence.

METHODS

2. In order to achieve the aforesaid objects, **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** shall:

(a) at all times maintain an overall balance between its activities in relation to countries adhering to the different world political ideologies and groupings;

(b) promote as appears appropriate the adoption of constitutions, conventions, treaties and other measures which guarantee the rights contained in the provisions referred to in article 1 hereof;

(c) support and publicize the activities of and cooperate with international organizations and agencies which work for the implementation of the aforesaid provisions;

(d) take all necessary steps to establish an effective organization of national sections, affiliated groups and individual members;

(e) secure the adoption by groups of members or supporters of individual Prisoners of Conscience or entrust to such groups other tasks in support of the objects set out in article 1;

(f) provide financial and other relief to Prisoners of Conscience and their dependants and to persons who have lately been Prisoners of Conscience or who might reasonably be expected to become Prisoners of Conscience if they were to return to their own countries and to the dependants of such persons;

(g) work for the improvement of conditions for Prisoners of Conscience and political prisoners;

(h) provide legal aid, where necessary and possible to Prisoners of Conscience and to persons who, if convicted, might reasonably be considered likely to become Prisoners of Conscience and, where desirable, send observers to attend the trial of such persons;

(i) publicize the cases of Prisoners of Conscience or persons who have otherwise been subjected to disabilities in violation of the aforesaid provisions;

(j) send investigators, where appropriate, to investigate allegations that the rights of individuals under the aforesaid provisions have been violated or threatened;

(k) make representations to international organizations and to governments whenever it appears that an individual is a Prisoner of Conscience or has otherwise been subjected to disabilities in violation of the aforesaid provisions;

(l) promote and support the granting of general amnesties of which the beneficiaries will include Prisoners of Conscience;

(m) adopt any other appropriate methods for the securing of its objects.

ORGANIZATION

3. **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** shall consist of national sections, affiliated groups, individual members and corporate members.

4. The directive authority for the conduct of the affairs of **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** is vested in the International Council.

5. Between meetings of the International Council, the International Executive Committee shall be responsible for the conduct of the affairs of **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** and for the implementation of the decisions of the International Council.

6. The day to day affairs of **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** shall be conducted by the International Secretariat headed by a Secretary General under the direction of the International Executive Committee.

7. The office of the International Secretariat shall be in London or such other place as the International Executive Committee shall decide and which is ratified by at least one-half of national sections.

NATIONAL SECTIONS

8. A national section of **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** may be established in any country, state or territory with the consent of the International Executive Committee. In order to be recognized as such, a national section shall

(a) consist of not less than two groups or 10 members (b) submit its statute to the International Executive Committee for approval (c) pay such annual fee as may be determined by the International Council (d) be registered as such with the International Secretariat on the decision of the International Executive Committee. National

sections shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated objects of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of national sections.

9. Groups of not less than three members or supporters may, on payment of an annual fee determined by the International Council, become affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL or a national section thereof. Any dispute as to whether a group should be or remain affiliated shall be decided by the International Executive Committee. An affiliated adoption group shall accept for adoption such prisoners as may from time to time be allotted to it by the International Secretariat, and shall adopt no others as long as it remains affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. No group shall be allotted a Prisoner of Conscience detained in its own country. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of affiliated adoption groups. Groups shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated objects of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

10. Individuals residing in countries where there is no national section may, on payment to the International Secretariat of an annual subscription fee determined by the International Executive Committee, become members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. In countries where a national section exists, individuals may become members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL with the consent of the national section. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of such members.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

11. Organisations may, at the discretion of the International Executive Committee and on payment of an annual subscription fee determined by the International Executive Committee, become corporate members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of corporate members.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

12. The International Council shall consist of the members of the International Executive Committee and of representatives of national sections and shall meet at intervals of approximately one year but in any event of not more than two years on a date fixed by the International Executive Committee. Only representatives of national sections and members of the International Executive Committee elected by the International Council shall have the right to vote on the International Council.
13. All national sections shall have the right to appoint one representative to the International Council and in addition may appoint representatives as follows:
- | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|
| 10 — 49 groups | : | 1 representative |
| 50 — 99 groups | : | 2 representatives |
| 100 — 199 groups | : | 3 representatives |
| 200 — 399 groups | : | 4 representatives |
| 400 groups or over | : | 5 representatives |
- National sections consisting primarily of indivi-

dual members rather than groups may in alternative appoint additional representatives as follows:

500 — 2,499	:	1 representative
2,500 and over	:	2 representatives

Only sections having paid in full their annual fee as assessed by the International Council for the previous financial year shall vote at the International Council. This requirement may be waived in whole or in part by the International Executive Committee.

14. Representatives of groups not forming part of a national section may with the permission of the Secretary General attend a meeting of the International Council as observers and may speak thereat but shall not be entitled to vote.
15. A national section unable to participate in an International Council may appoint a proxy or proxies to vote on its behalf and a national section represented by a lesser number of persons than its entitlement under article 13 hereof may authorize its representative or representatives to cast votes up to its maximum entitlement under article 13 hereof.
16. Notice of the number of representatives proposing to attend an International Council, and of the appointment of proxies, shall be given to the International Secretariat not later than one month before the meeting of the International Council. This requirement may be waived by the International Executive Committee.
17. A quorum shall consist of the representatives of proxies of not less than one quarter of the national sections entitled to be represented.
18. The Chairman of the International Executive Committee, or such other person as the International Executive Committee may appoint, shall open the proceedings of the International Council, which shall elect a chairman. Thereafter the elected Chairman, or such other person as he may appoint, shall preside at the International Council.
19. Except as otherwise provided in this statute, the International Council shall make its decisions by a simple majority of the votes cast. In case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the International Council shall have a casting vote.
20. The International Council shall be convened by the International Secretariat by notice to all national sections and affiliated groups not later than 90 days before the date thereof.
21. The Chairman of the International Executive Committee shall at the request of the Committee or of not less than one-third of the national sections call an extraordinary meeting of the International Council by giving not less than 21 days notice in writing to all national sections.
22. The International Council shall elect a Treasurer, who shall be a member of the International Executive Committee.
23. The International Council may appoint one or more Honorary Presidents of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL to hold office for a period not exceeding three years.
24. The agenda for meetings of the International Council shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairman of the International Executive Committee.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

25. (a) The International Executive Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, one representative of the staff of the International Secretariat and seven regular members, who shall be members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, or of a national section, or of an affiliated group, elected by the International Council by proportional representation by the method of the single transferable vote in accordance with the regulations published by the Electoral Reform Society. Not more than one member of any national section or affiliated group may be elected as a regular member to the Committee, and once one member of any national section or affiliated group has received sufficient votes to be elected, any votes cast for other members of that national section or affiliated group shall be disregarded.
- (b) Members of the permanent staff, paid and unpaid, shall have the right to elect one representative among the staff who has completed not less than two years' service to be a voting member of the International Executive Committee. Such member shall hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election. The method of voting shall be subject to approval by the International Executive Committee on the proposal of the staff members.
26. The International Executive Committee shall meet not less than twice a year at a place to be decided by itself.
27. Members of the International Executive Committee, other than the representative of the staff, shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election. Except in the case of elections to fill vacancies resulting from unexpired terms of office, the members of the Committee, other than the representative of the staff, shall be subject to election in equal proportions on alternate years.
28. The Committee may co-opt not more than four additional members who shall hold office for a period of one year; they shall be eligible to be re-co-opted. Co-opted members shall not have the right to vote.
29. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Committee, it may co-opt a further member to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the International Council, which shall elect such members as are necessary to replace retiring members and to fill the vacancy.
30. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a meeting, he may appoint an alternate.
31. The Committee shall each year appoint one of its members to act as Chairman.
32. The Chairman may, and at the request of the majority of the Committee shall, summon meetings of the Committee.
33. A quorum shall consist of not less than five members of the Committee or their alternates.
34. The agenda for meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairman.
35. The Committee may make regulations for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTER-

NATIONAL, and for the procedure to be followed at the International Council.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

36. The International Executive Committee may appoint a Secretary General who shall be responsible under its direction for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and for the implementation of the decisions of the International Council.
37. The Secretary General may, after consultation with the Chairman of the International Executive Committee, and subject to confirmation by that Committee, appoint such executive and professional staff as appear to him to be necessary for the proper conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, and may appoint such other staff as appear to him to be necessary.
38. In the case of the absence or illness of the Secretary General, or of a vacancy in the post of Secretary General, the Chairman of the International Executive Committee shall, after consultation with the members of that Committee, appoint an acting Secretary General to act until the next meeting of the Committee.
39. The Secretary General or Acting Secretary General, and such members of the International Secretariat as may appear to the Chairman of the International Executive Committee to be necessary shall attend meetings of the International Council and of the International Executive Committee and may speak thereat but shall not be entitled to vote.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

40. Membership of or affiliation to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be terminated at any time by resignation in writing.
41. The International Council may, upon the proposal of the International Executive Committee or of a national section, by a three-fourths majority of the votes cast deprive a national section, an affiliated group or a member of membership of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL if in its opinion that national section, affiliated group or member does not act within the spirit of the objects and methods set out in articles 1 and 2 or does not observe any of the provisions of this statute. Before taking such action, all national sections shall be informed and the Secretary General shall also inform the national section, affiliated group or member of the grounds on which it is proposed to deprive it or him of membership, and such national section, affiliated group or member shall be provided with an opportunity of presenting its or his case to the International Council.
42. A national section, affiliated group or member who fails to pay the annual fee fixed in accordance with this statute within six months after the close of the financial year shall cease to be affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL unless the International Executive Committee decides otherwise.

FINANCE

43. An auditor appointed by the International Council shall annually audit the accounts of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, which shall be prepared by the International Secretariat and presented to the International Executive Committee and the International Council.
44. No part of the income or property of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall directly or indirectly be paid or transferred otherwise than for valuable and sufficient consideration to any of its members by way of dividend, gift, division, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit.

AMENDMENTS TO STATUTE

45. The statute may be amended by the International Council by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes cast. Amendments may be submitted by the International Executive Committee or by a national section. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the International Secretariat not less than two months before the International Council meets, and presentation to the International Council shall be supported in writing by at least five national sections. Proposed amendments shall be communicated by the International Secretariat to all national sections and to members of the International Executive Committee.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ACCEPTANCE
OF FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUNDRAISING
BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

*(Adopted by the Ninth International Council meeting in Strasbourg, France, 24-26 September 1976.
These guidelines are a revised version of the Vienna guidelines as mandated by the International Council meeting in St Gallen in 1975 and as such supercede all previous regulations.)*

1. Statement of Purpose

This document offers guidelines for the raising and receiving of funds by Amnesty International. Their purpose is to safeguard the integrity and independence of the organization by setting forth general principles and regularly safeguards to guide the decisions of members and the responsible organs of Amnesty International in concrete actualities.

2. General Principles

- (i) *Amnesty International is a humanitarian organization dedicated to the defence of specific human rights as defined by its Statute.* Hence, funds sought and given to Amnesty International must be in consonance with the objectives of the Statute.
- (ii) *Amnesty International is and must remain a broadly based and self-supporting organization.* Hence, funds raised and received by Amnesty International must neither narrow nor diminish its volunteer and popular support.
- (iii) *Amnesty International is and must remain, and be seen to remain, an independent and impartial organization.* Hence, funds requested and accepted by Amnesty International must in no way incur financial dependence, real or apparent, upon any political or interest group singly or in combination, nor limit the freedom of activity and expression enjoyed by the organization, nor direct its areas of concern.

3. Regulatory Safeguards

- (i) No donation with conditions attached that are inconsonant with the Statute is to be accepted by

any constituent body of Amnesty International (group, national section, International Secretariat, etc.).

(ii) Should a constituent body of Amnesty International be offered or receive a donation (or donations) from any single source during a budgetary year which amounts to 5% or more of that body's expected income for that year (and is not less than £100) before final acceptance notification of the gift identifying its source, amount and purpose is to be made as follows:

(a) for a group or other constituent body of a national section, notification is to the governing organ of the national section which is to judge the acceptability of the gift in the light of the above general principles (2. i) and (ii).

(b) for a national section or constituent body of Amnesty International which is not part of a national section, notification is to the Secretary General and the International Treasurer, who are to judge the acceptability of the gift in the light of the above general principles (2. i) and (ii). They may if necessary transmit the question to the International Executive Committee for determination.

(iii) Annual financial reports are to be prepared by the constituent bodies of Amnesty International to serve as a public record of income and expenditures. These are to be available on request for public inspection at any time at international, national and local level.

Should a constituent body of Amnesty International be offered or receive a donation which amounts to less than 5% of that body's expected income for the budgetary year but whose source, intent or consequence is questionable, notification should be given as prescribed above (3. ii).

4. Other Precautions

(i) Funds are not to be accepted from individuals, institutions, or special interest groups for projects in which they have a special stake or when such a contribution can be construed as influencing the means or the ends of the project. Any proposed exception to this rule is subject to the notification rule prescribed above (3.ii).

(ii) Funds are to be neither sought nor accepted from any individual, agency or institution for the purpose of establishing or maintaining a constituent body of Amnesty International (group, national section, etc.). Any proposed exception to this rule is subject to the notification rule prescribed above (3.ii).

(iii) Funds for relief work, as is customary with humanitarian and charitable organizations, may be sought and received by Amnesty International from the broadest possible spectrum, including governments and government agencies. However, the use of such relief funds is to be administered directly by Amnesty International and should be sought or received only on this basis. Any proposal to distribute relief through outside individuals or organizations should have the consent of the relief officer of the International Secretariat.

(iv) Anonymous donations where so desired can be made to Amnesty International in accordance with generally accepted practices of charitable organizations. Within the jurisdiction of a national section they are to be received at the discretion of the governing organ of the section, and in all other cases at the discretion of the International Executive Committee. In each instance judgement must be made in accordance with the principles (2. i), (ii) and (iii) and regulations (3. i), (ii) and (iii) set forth in these guidelines.

**POLICY GUIDELINES
RELATING TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION**
Endorsed by the International Council at its 5th meeting in 1972.

1. Consultative Assembly Resolution 337 (1967) of the Council of Europe

Persons liable to conscription for military service who, for reasons of conscience or profound conviction arising from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical, or similar motives, refuse to perform armed service, shall enjoy a personal right to be released from the obligation to perform such service.

2. Draft Universal Charter on Conscientious Objection of the International Peace Bureau

This charter affirms for all people the right to the legal recognition of conscientious objection to military service and training on the grounds of conscience or profound conviction arising from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical, or similar motives, and calls upon all governments to accord to all citizens the right to refuse military service of any kind, in peacetime and war, including provision for those who, on grounds of conscience or profound conviction, feel the obligation to refuse any type of alternative service.

3. Committee on Society, Development and Peace, SODEPAX Report of the Baden Consultation 3-9 April 1970, IV. Rights and World Peace paras 29-32

The rights of conscientious objectors:
The consultation considers that the exercise of conscientious judgement is inherent in the dignity of human beings and that, accordingly, each person should be assured the right, on grounds of conscience or profound conviction, to refuse military service, or any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts.

The right of conscientious objection also extends to those who are unwilling to serve in a particular war because they consider it unjust or because they refuse to participate in a war or conflict in which weapons of mass destruction are likely to be used. The consultation also considers that members of armed forces have the right, and even the duty, to refuse to obey military orders which may involve the commission of criminal offences, or of war crimes or of crimes against humanity.

It is urged that the Churches should use their best endeavour to secure the recognition of the right of conscientious objection as herein before defined under national and international law. Governments should extend the right of asylum to those refusing to serve in their country for reasons of conscience.

4. World Conference on Religion and Peace, Kyoto, Japan, 16-21 October 1970

The rights of conscientious objectors:
We consider that the exercise of conscientious judgement is inherent in the dignity of human beings and that, accordingly, each person should be assured the right, on grounds of conscience or profound conviction, to refuse military service or any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts. The right of conscientious objection also extends to those who are unwilling to serve in a particular war because they consider it unjust or because they refuse to participate in a war or conflict in which weapons of mass destruction are likely to be used. This Conference also considers that members of armed forces have the right,

and even the duty, to refuse to obey military orders which may involve the commission of criminal offences, or of war crimes, or of crimes against humanity.

5. *Decision taken at the 3rd meeting of the International Council of Amnesty International, Oslo, 1970*

Where a man or woman is detained/imprisoned because he claims that on grounds of conscience he objects to military service he is to be regarded by Amnesty International as, prima facie, a Prisoner of Conscience if his detention/imprisonment is the consequence of one or more of the following:

- (a) the failure of the legal code of his/her country to make provision for the recognition of conscientious objection and for a man/woman to register his/her objection at a specific point in time
- (b) refusal of the man/woman to register — as a matter of principle — although the opportunity for so doing exists
- (c) recognition of conscientious objection being so restricted that only some and not all of the following are acceptable: ethical, humanitarian, political, religious or similar grounds
- (d) restriction of the valid claim to exemption only for the period before induction (call-up). It should be possible to make such a claim at any point during military service. No one should be imprisoned or detained after making an application for exemption (after being called up) and before his/her application has been decided upon
- (e) restriction of the valid claim only to comprehensive objection and the exclusion of selective objection. The possibility should be recognized of a valid objection either to some wars (or to some

- operations within wars) or to all war as such
 - (f) if denied the right to non-combatant service
 - (g) if denied the right to alternative civilian service.
6. *Decision taken at the 4th meeting of the International Council of Amnesty International, Luxembourg, 1971*

Whilst recognizing that, owing to staff and financial limitations, Amnesty International is able only to adopt, at a given time, a proportion of prisoners of conscience, the Council notes with concern the decision taken by the International Council in Oslo, 1970, to exclude automatically from consideration for adoption whole groups of conscientious objectors. In particular, it notes the following categories are excluded:

- (a) the "unconditionalists" — thus Amnesty International in the two World Wars would not have recognized many lifelong and dedicated pacifists who were imprisoned for this reason
- (b) those who are prepared to accept a conditional exemption but who have a conscientious objection to the alternative offered, e.g., those who were given Civil Defence but who regarded this service as being part of the War Machine
- (c) those who, whilst not liable for military service, are required as civilians to register for, and to be directed into activities contrary to their conscience, e.g. working in an armaments factory, firewatching, etc.

The International Council, believing that where the use or advocacy of violence is not involved it is contrary to the principles of Amnesty International to make such blanket judgements and to exclude prisoners of conscience, resolves to re-consider its definition of conscientious objection and to widen it so as to include those categories that are at present omitted.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE USE OF VIOLENCE

Amnesty International's work now has three aspects:

1. The release of prisoners of conscience (i.e. non-violent prisoners);
2. A fair trial within a reasonable time for all political prisoners;
3. The humane treatment of all prisoners.

These last two aspects of its work have assumed growing importance as the movement has expanded. Thus, Amnesty International intervenes through a variety of techniques to prevent the imposition of the death penalty on, or the torture or ill-treatment of, all prisoners, whether involved in violence or not.

Furthermore, Amnesty International will not necessarily consider a prisoner excluded from its definition of prisoner of conscience unless he or she has been convicted of offences involving the use of advocacy of violence after a fair trial in a court of law. In the case of prisoners, whether accused or suspected of violence

or not, who have been detained for a long period without trial, it may intervene to seek to ensure their trial or release. Also, a prisoner will be adopted if he or she is kept in detention after completing his or her sentence for an act of violence. All that the "violence clause" means in practice is that Amnesty International will not ask a government to release a prisoner while he or she is serving a sentence imposed after a fair trial for activities involving violence. For the reasons which will be set out below, this restriction seems essential for the effectiveness of the organization.

Amnesty International takes no moral stand on the issue of violence

It sometimes seems to be thought that Amnesty International, as an organization, is opposed to the use of violence in any circumstances. This is not so. Amnesty International's position is entirely impartial.

Amnesty International was not founded to work for general economic, social and political justice in the various countries of the world — however much its individual members may wish to do so, and are free to do so through other bodies — but to bring relief to individual victims of injustice. It has been built up to do this, and is uniquely equipped to do it. The question of whether resort to violence is justified or not is extraneous to this central task.

It is, however, clear that the extension of Amnesty International's work to action for the release of prisoners convicted of violence would compromise the effectiveness of its work both for prisoners of conscience and for prisoners involved in violence. This, and not a moral stand, is the reason for the "non-violence clause".

A question of effectiveness

Amnesty International's work is based on the support of a mass membership and involves interventions with governments of all political persuasions, and collaboration with and action through international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. It is therefore essential that Amnesty International should command the confidence and respect of all these categories and should not only be, but be seen by them to be, impartial.

Amnesty International now has more than 100,000 active members of all political affiliations, pacifists as well as people convinced that in some or many parts of the world violence is the only means of overcoming the even greater violence now being practised by those in power. From this point of view the clause is basically a necessary limitation to enable people of all political colours to work together.

Although most members would probably consider as individuals that there are some situations where violent action is the only solution, the membership would not agree on what those situations are. Amnesty International's membership must be universal, and include members of the right willing to intervene in countries with a government of the right and members of the left willing to intervene in countries with a government of the left. Interventions of this kind are clearly more effective than those by the prisoner's political sympathizers.

With regard to governments, Amnesty International's influence depends on the fact that governments accept it as an independent organization, politically impartial in relation both to it and to its opposition. If Amnesty International began to demand the release of those who have been involved in violent opposition to the government, it would become identified with the opposition in the government's mind and lose its credit and its influence. Not only would such demands for release be ineffective, but its work for non-violent prisoners and for the humane treatment of those who have used violence would suffer.

Similarly, Amnesty International's standing with international organizations with which it has consultative or other cooperative status — such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States and the Council of Europe — would be endangered, and its initiatives (for example, in relation to the status of conscientious objectors in the Council of Europe and in relation to torture with the United Nations) would lose the authority which comes from its independence and impartiality.

Finally, if Amnesty International became identified in governments' minds with certain opposition groups, its value to those very opposition groups would be diminished. At the present time, they are able to and do refer to Amnesty International pronouncements as those of an outside, impartial body to whose views the government will attach more weight than to their own. Further, members of such groups have, when Amnesty International's position is explained to them, fully accepted it, and recognize that it is a condition of Amnesty International's effectiveness in the fields in which it does seek to help them.

A practical problem

While it is a secondary consideration, it is certain that the problems of delineating violent political actions as against violent criminal actions would be almost insuperable and subject to all manner of subjective political preconceptions. Would all kinds of violent actions be covered? Hijacking, kidnappings, the killing of hostages, bombing causing the deaths of innocent persons? Who would draw the distinctions? And who would decide, and on what criteria, that resort to violence was justifiable? The introduction of such concepts would inevitably lead to dissensions on the basis of the political beliefs of the membership which, under the present system, can remain irrelevant to the individual's action as a member of Amnesty International.

An argument of principle

It must be remembered that one aspect of Amnesty International's work is to ensure humane (i.e. non-violent) treatment for political prisoners. Amnesty International would be applying a double standard if it insisted that the police and prison authorities abstain from any act of violence or brutality yet maintained that those on the other side should be allowed to commit such acts and yet be unpunished. It can and does insist that punishment should be humanely carried out, but it would discredit itself if it maintained that the very violence which it is seeking to eliminate from police practices is justified when used by the opposition. ■

Chapter 10

Sample Letters

It is strongly emphasized that the following letters are only reproduced to give some idea of possible approaches to be made by groups. It would obviously be ridiculous if 1500 groups started following the format of these letters too closely and would destroy the spontaneity of correspondence with the authorities or the prisoner. Please use discretion in your use of this material.

DRAFT LETTER A

Your group is beginning work on a new adoption case. You are making your first presentation of your position to the government. The prisoner dossier recommends that you use the name of AI. You decide to stress the aspect of the case in relation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Your Excellency,

In my capacity as Chairperson of Group 35 of theSection of Amnesty International, I have the honour to address you on the subject of the recent arrest of Mr..... who is, I understand, at present in detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act.

In view of the information available to Amnesty International concerning this case, Mr..... has been adopted by our Group as a Prisoner of Conscience. These prisoners are defined in Article 1(a) of the international Statute of Amnesty International as: persons who in violation of the provisions (of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) are imprisoned, detained, restricted or otherwise subjected to physical coercion or restriction by reason of their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origin, colour or language, provided that they have neither used nor advocated violence.

As will be evident from the preceding, Your Excellency, any person considered a prisoner of conscience is, by definition, an individual deprived of freedom in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. May I take the liberty, therefore, of drawing to your attention the specific violations of the Declaration which it would appear are specifically involved in the case of Mr.....

His arrest under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act since which time he has been held without charge (at least as far as is publicly known) or without trial appears to constitute a violation of Articles 9 and 10 of the Declaration. In view of the fact that the only grounds which have been publicly announced for the arrest of Mr..... and those arrested with him is his role in the legal and legitimate political opposition in the public life of

your country (not only as a Parliamentarian, but as a political worker conducting actions guaranteed the full protection of your constitution) it further appears that the rights proclaimed in Articles 18 and 19 of the Declaration have also been violated.

In the light of the seriousness with which we view this situation, we would appreciate from you a clarification of the legal grounds for the continuing detention of Mr..... We would also appreciate confirmation from you as to the present place of detention in which Mr..... is detained.

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

DRAFT LETTER B

Your adoption group is beginning work on a new investigation case. You decide to contact the appropriate Ministry of Justice for further information. You arrange to have the letter translated into the necessary foreign language, which is always advisable when dealing with officials other than the Head of State and the Foreign Minister.

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you at this time to seek your assistance in establishing certain legal and personal details in the case of Ms..... a citizen of at present believed to be detained under the Regulations for the Suppression of Rebellion. I am making inquiries into this case on behalf of Amnesty International. This organization is an independent non-governmental body in consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and UNESCO. It acts in defence of men and women who are imprisoned in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In view of this mandate, Amnesty International would be failing in its duty if it did not make persistent efforts to investigate any case which might fall within its purview. It may interest you to know that the Amnesty International Group to which I belong is currently working for the release of Mr..... who has been held without trial for seven years in and Mr..... who has been sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in the for practising his religion.

In the case of Ms..... I should be grateful if you would inform me of the following details, etc.

Yours respectfully and sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTERS

DRAFT LETTER C

Your group has received a new case. AI is known to the government and the group are allowed to write on official stationery. The group has written several times to the Minister of Justice and received no reply. The group decided to write to the Ministers of Defence, Agriculture and Communications. The proper forms of address and the names of the Ministers are obtained from prisoner dossier and checked with the local embassy by telephone.

Your Excellency,

We are taking the liberty of writing to you at this time on a matter which we regard with deep concern. The friendship between the people of and is, we are happy to say, being strengthened by the many trade and cultural links between our two countries. We were, therefore, considerably surprised when your colleague (the Hon.), Minister of Justice, did not respond to our recent letter.

We are enclosing a copy of this letter to him, dated in the hope that you will take the earliest possible opportunity to discuss this matter with him and persuade him to send us a reply to our inquiry.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remark that in the many years Amnesty International has worked in defence of Human Rights throughout the world, we have come to believe ever more deeply that the health of each nation depends on a fundamental respect for the freedom of its citizens. We hope that you and your distinguished colleagues share this vision and that you will do everything in your power to see this ideal carried out in practice.

We remain, Your Excellency, Yours respectfully,

DRAFT LETTER D

Your group has been working on a case for two years. No reply has ever been received from the government or from the prisoner. You are writing as an official AI group. In a recent government publication, you have read a speech by a leading economist in that country. Your group drafts the following letter for a leading economist in your local university to send to the foreign economist, perhaps with copies to the leading newspaper in the foreign country or in your own country.

Dear

I send you greetings from As an economist myself, currently at the University of, I read with great interest your recent article ".....", published in

The general trends to which you point indicate the remarkable progress which your government has made in the sphere of heavy industrial manufacturing. These developments have received considerable attention in our country, and I think you will agree that the recent influx of investment from our private and public sectors is the best proof of that.

However, at the same time that this material progress is taking place, there has been an increasing dismay in this country about certain violations of fundamental human rights in In particular, a lot of attention has been given in the press and through

public meetings to the plight of This woman, who has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, has now been held without trial by your government since 1969. It is known that she is detained in appalling conditions, and, furthermore, that she has been denied the right to contact a lawyer or defend herself.

I appeal to you as a fellow human being to do whatever you can to intervene on this woman's behalf. Surely a country emerging at the rate of which you speak in economic terms can have the courage and foresight to deal with its citizens fairly, in accordance with its own constitution and the rule of law.

I remain, in anticipation of your reply,

DRAFT LETTER E

Your group has received a case of a prisoner imprisoned for more than 10 years. Three AI groups have worked on his behalf without success. No reply has ever been received to any letter. You cannot be certain of the prisoner's current place of detention. You decide to put pressure on the new Trade Commissioner who has recently arrived in your capital.

Dear Sir,

We should like to take this opportunity of welcoming you to our country. As you will quickly discover during your stay here, there is a widespread awareness throughout our community concerning the systematic violations of human rights in You must be aware that our country has a long tradition of respect for the integrity and civil liberties of every human being. This tradition has led many of our people to be equally concerned when the health and freedom of individuals in other nations with whom we trade are threatened. We are equally aware, at the same time, that human rights is an international responsibility incumbent upon all of us.

We should, therefore, like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss matters of mutual concern. Could we suggest a meeting sometime next month at your office with a small group of four individuals:—

The Right Reverend Bishop of

Mr....., Member of Parliament for

Ms....., of the Women's Institute,

Mr....., Chairperson, Amnesty International,

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

DRAFT LETTER F

Your group has been working for six months on a difficult case. Your country has no diplomatic ties with the prisoner's government. You cannot use the name of AI. You have arranged to publish an article about his case in a national trade union newspaper in your country. For the next month, every member of your group, and their friends, write letters every week, along these lines, to the leader of the major religious organizations in the foreign country, a total of 40 letters. If it is

possible, get religious leaders to participate in this campaign. Translate the letters.

Dear Sir,

The enclosed article appeared in a national newspaper in our country. I hope you will permit me to express myself. Our two governments do not officially recognize each other, but I believe there are matters of conscience and human suffering which transcend national boundaries.

As a respected religious leader, I think you must realise that questions of human rights concern all people everywhere and cannot ever be left to politicians alone.

Can you tell me, sir, whether people like are treated in this way in your country? If they are, I appeal to you as a compassionate and influential servant of God to speak out and do everything possible to end such evil practices. If the information contained here is wrong, please let me know, and I will send your reply to this newspaper.

Yours faithfully,

DRAFT LETTER G

Your group is working for the release of a prisoner in a country which has a great deal of trade with your government. You have raised this question with your own External Affairs Department and you decide to write to every member of the cabinet of the foreign country:

Your Excellency,

I, along with other fellow citizens, have recently drawn to the attention of the Department of External Affairs, matters regarding

the human rights situation in your country and in particular the plight of the prisoner who, as you will know, has been adopted by Amnesty International as a Prisoner of Conscience.

We put it to the Department that it was unsuitable for our country to trade with without consideration of the prevailing human rights situation. The extent to which human rights should be a factor in determining trade policy is, of course, a matter for discussion. It is clear, however, that the case of offers a disturbing example of serious infringements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we expressed our concern that toleration of these infringements by our government should not be allowed to continue.

While we are pursuing this discussion, may I ask you to do everything in your power to investigate the conditions of detention of For your information, I have enclosed a brief dossier on his case. In particular, I am concerned about the welfare of his family, who, I understand, are facing severe financial difficulties.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Note: Often groups send copies of their correspondence with the foreign government to the family of the prisoner or to important individuals in the foreign country (such as an Archbishop) — with a covering letter to the family or specific individuals. This would, of course, depend on the safety of such a procedure, and groups should at all times be guided by the prisoner dossier directions.

Chapter 11 Working Rules

THE Working Rules were adopted by the 9th International Council meeting at Strasbourg in September 1976. Those rules which are not based on specific Council decisions are to be considered as guidelines only for the work of national sections and groups.

I. NATIONAL SECTIONS AND COMMITTEES

Missions

1. All Amnesty International official missions regardless of whether they are proposed or funded by the International Secretariat or by a national section must be approved by the International Executive Committee.

2. The briefing of Amnesty International missions is the responsibility of the International Secretariat. Particular requests, proposals or information supplied by any national section will be reviewed and included as appropriate in the briefing supplied by the International Secretariat to the mission.¹

3. Prominent and well known members of AI national sections who participate in missions sponsored by other organizations or who undertake similar missions purely in their private capacity are required to make this fact clear when necessary and as far as possible to avoid reference to their role in Amnesty International.

Publicity and publications

4. The term "publications" refers to news releases, newsletters, articles, films, sound or video tapes, leaflets and posters intended for public use.

5. All publications issued by a national section must be submitted to the national section executive for approval before making publishing arrangements.

6. National sections are required to clearly indicate the national source of the publication (e.g. AI Mexican Section).

7. National sections are required to consult the International Secretariat when publications for public use are to be prepared from materials other than informa-

¹ Resolution of the 6th International Assembly at Riksdagshuset, Stockholm, in September 1968: "Briefing of personnel: this should, in every case, be the responsibility of the International Secretariat and particularly of the Research Department. Where a national section has particular requests and/or information this should be included in the briefing supplied by the International Secretariat."

tion circulars issued by the International Secretariat. This includes any manuscripts submitted to the national section executive by members or groups within the section. A decision by the International Secretariat not to publish the manuscript internationally does not necessarily preclude it from being a national section publication.

8. National sections wishing to mention or list names of specific prisoners in any publication are required to use only names of prisoners adopted by those particular national sections. In other instances, national sections are required to consult first with the International Secretariat or with the relevant adoption groups in other national sections concerned.

9. The International Executive Committee has the authority to review and, if necessary, prohibit publication of any document intended for public use by any national section where there is reason to believe that such publication would create undesirable international publicity and/or repercussions.

10. The name of Amnesty International must under no circumstances be used in connection with any publication or document produced without conforming to the above rules.

Internal relations

11. The official recognition of a national section of Amnesty International is the responsibility of the International Executive Committee. The statute of the national section is required to be in accordance with the international statute of Amnesty International and to incorporate changes in the statute as and when these are made by the International Council. The statute of the national section and subsequent changes in the statute of a national section concerning aims, methods and objects must be approved by the International Executive Committee before the revised statute comes into force.

12. National section executives are responsible for the proper functioning of the AI membership in their country. The executive reviews the activities of the members and groups, ensures their proper functioning and has the power to close groups or to terminate membership, or to recommend such action to the International Secretariat, where the work of such groups or individuals is prejudicial to the aims and objects of Amnesty International.

13. National section executives are responsible for screening new adoption and coordination groups before approving them and notifying the International Secretariat.

14. National sections do not normally work for individual prisoners of conscience in their own country. Exceptions to this rule are decided by the International Executive Committee in consultation with the national sections concerned.²

15. A case necessitating urgent action should be discussed initially with the International Secretariat. Only if the prisoner is adopted by a group in the section and if the campaign is limited to members of the same section may a section undertake an action before consulting.

16. Action within a national section involving human rights programs (legislation concerning political asylum, for example) must be conducted by and with the approval of the national section executive. The International Secretariat should be informed of such actions.

17. National sections are required to adhere to the **Revised Guidelines for the Acceptance of Financial Contributions and Fundraising by Amnesty International** accepted by the 9th International Council meeting at Strasbourg in September 1976. (See Chapter 10.)

18. National sections are required to report regularly to the International Executive Committee on their work and are required to submit reports for inclusion in the **Annual Report**.

19. National sections are required to submit annual statements of their finances to the International Treasurer.

External relations

20. Relations with international non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations are the responsibility of the International Secretariat under the direction of the International Executive Committee.

21. National sections are required to report details of contacts with their own government to the International Secretariat.

22. National sections are required to draw up clear guidelines on relations with national press and national professional organizations for members and groups within their country.

23. No public action such as press conferences, demonstrations, public meetings, may be undertaken jointly with exile, refugee, political or any other organization without the prior approval of the national section executive. It should be emphasized to these

² Resolution 24 of the International Council meeting at St Gallen in September 1975: "The International Council decides that

(i) No national section should work for individual prisoners of conscience in its own country.

(ii) It is recognized that there may be exceptions to this rule.

(iii) Such classes of exception should be decided by the International Executive Committee in consultation with the section involved."

organizations that the refusal of Amnesty International to cooperate publicly is in order to protect the independent nature of Amnesty International and does not reflect either approval or disapproval of the aims and judgement of any organization.³

24. No resolution may be signed on behalf of Amnesty International jointly with any other person, group or persons or organization without the consent of the national section executive.

25. Prominent and well known members of Amnesty International who make public statements or address public meetings, whether in their own country or elsewhere, in their private capacity or as members of other organizations, are required to make this fact clear when necessary and as far as possible avoid reference to their role in Amnesty International.

26. In the event of a disagreement between a national section and the International Executive Committee, every effort should be made to resolve the dispute without publicity. Where there is a possibility of pressure being put on a national section executive to dissociate itself from an AI statement or report, the national section executive may refer to the responsibility which lies at the international level and does not lie at the national level. National sections may raise complaints directly with the International Executive Committee and the International Council.

Security

27. National sections are required to appoint a member to be responsible for security. This person should be in contact with the national section executive and with the International Secretariat security committee and recommend to the national section appropriate security measures to be implemented in the national section offices and throughout the membership.

28. National sections who violate important security measures shall be drawn to the attention of the International Executive Committee.

II. COORDINATION GROUPS

Missions

29. All Amnesty International official missions, regardless of whether they are proposed or funded by

³ This is an amended version of Resolution 9E of the International Council meeting in Luxembourg in September 1971:

"In this context no public action, e.g. press conferences, demonstrations, public meetings, etc., should be undertaken by groups, regions or national sections jointly with exile, refugee or other political organizations committed to opposition to the government of the country concerned, without prior agreement of the board of the national section."

⁴ The International Council meeting at St Gallen in September 1975 approved the note on the role and functioning of coordination groups. The meeting of coordinators, held in London in March 1976, endorsed the document which forms the basis of many of the Working Rules for coordination groups. See also Chapter 6.

the International Secretariat or a national section must be approved by the International Executive Committee.

30. Coordination group members are required to consult the International Secretariat before travelling to countries on which they are involved in AI work. The procedure applies even when they are travelling in their private capacity.⁵

Internal relations

31. Coordination groups are required to fulfil the functions outlined in the document entitled **Coordination Groups**, May 1976 which was approved by the International Council meeting in St Gallen in September 1975 and endorsed by the Coordinators Meeting in London on 20-21 March 1976.

32. Coordination groups are responsible for assisting and supporting the work of adoption groups and for reporting any difficulties to the national section executive.

33. Coordination groups are required to report their activities regularly to the national executive and to the International Secretariat.

34. Coordination groups are expected to cooperate closely in their work with all other bodies of Amnesty International such as other coordination groups in the national section or in other national sections, national CAT groups, and so forth.

35. Coordination groups are expected to keep themselves informed of AI activities and policies in general and not only to concentrate on those relating to their own area of interest.

36. Coordination groups wishing to fulfil a research function are required to seek and obtain the agreement of the International Secretariat.⁶

37. In the event of any serious disagreement between a coordination group and the International Secretariat, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the International Executive Committee and if not resolution to the problem is reached, may be referred to the International Council.

External relations

38. Coordination groups are required to observe the general rule that prominent members of the group should not be nationals of the country involved, exiles or individuals with political affiliations and/or interests which would reduce their political objectivity.

39. Coordination groups may find it useful to consult frequently with exile and refugee organizations. However they are required to seek and obtain the permission of the national section executive before, under

⁵ See Chapter 6.

⁶ See Chapter 6. See also recommendation of the International Council meeting in St Gallen in September 1975: "the decentralization of information-collecting and gathering should be encouraged but the analysis of such information and decisions on how it should be used should remain a centralized function."

any circumstances, undertaking any public action such as a press conference, demonstration or public meeting, jointly with exile, refugee, political or any other organization. It should be emphasized to these organizations that the refusal of Amnesty International to cooperate publicly is in order to protect the objective and impartial character of Amnesty International and does not reflect either approval or disapproval of the aims or judgement of any organization.

40. Coordination groups are required to consult the International Secretariat before establishing information contacts outside their own country.

Publicity and publications

41. Coordination groups are required to seek and obtain the approval of the national section executive before issuing any publication other than routine information circulars. Publications include news releases, newsletters, books, articles, films, sound or video tapes, leaflets and posters.

42. All publications and information provided to the general public or media must clearly indicate the name and address of the coordination group.

43. Coordination groups are required to seek and obtain approval of the national section executive before undertaking to help finance or to cooperate in any other way with the publication of documents jointly with other national or local organizations.

Security

44. Coordination groups are required to observe strict security precautions in the handling of confidential information, and to cooperate closely with the national section executive over initiatives to improve security procedures. The security measures listed in the **general instructions** of the prisoner dossier must be observed in particular.

45. Consistent failure to observe security instructions may result in closure of the group. Alternatively, confidential materials will not be provided to the coordination group.

III. ADOPTION GROUPS

Case work

46. Adoption groups are required to be familiar with the instructions and suggestions provided in the **Amnesty International Handbook** and to follow carefully the procedures explained in it.

47. Instructions and recommendations provided in the prisoner dossier should be clearly followed. Clarification can be obtained either from the national section, national coordination group (where this exists) or from the International Secretariat. No unusual action should be undertaken without prior consultation with either the coordination group or the International Secretariat.

48. Letters to government authorities and other persons must be written in accordance with the **general instructions** and **recommended case action** provided in

each prisoner dossier. Directions concerning the use of Amnesty International's name in all correspondence should be carefully observed. Letters should always be factual and correct. Letters to prisoners and/or their families should not refer to matters which could put them in danger.

49. Adoption groups are required to submit reports on their activities to the International Secretariat and to their national section every six months. However new information obtained about any case should be reported immediately to the International Secretariat.

50. Adoption groups are required to inform the office of their national section and the International Secretariat of any change of address or group closure.

51. Adoption groups are required to be aware of and observe accurately the difference between adoption and investigation cases. The decision to adopt or investigate a prisoner case rests with the International Secretariat. Adoption groups may request a review of the suitability of the International Secretariat's decision by communicating to the Borderline Committee.

52. Adoption groups are not empowered to initiate international appeals on behalf of prisoners without consultation with the International Secretariat.

53. Adoption groups wishing to visit their adopted prisoners or prisoners' families are required to consult fully with the International Secretariat in advance and if possible to obtain the consent of the family before making such a visit. Such visits are not official AI missions and members are not empowered to speak or negotiate in the name of the international organization.

54. Adoption groups may on occasion cooperate with nationals of the country of their adopted prisoners. Under no circumstances, however, are such nationals permitted to sign letters to government authorities of their own country. Where such nationals are members of adoption groups, they should not be involved in case work on their own country but should work on behalf of other adopted prisoners. Where the advice of such nationals conflicts with the advice of the International Secretariat, the adoption group should request a review of the advice by the International Secretariat before taking any action.

55. Once a prisoner case has been found by the International Secretariat to be unsuitable for adoption or investigation, the adoption groups are required to cease AI activities on his/her behalf. If so desired, private initiatives may be continued but it is recommended that subsequent letters be signed by someone other than the group members who have previously been writing to the authorities on behalf of Amnesty International.

Publicity and publications

56. Adoption groups are normally recommended to seek publicity for the individual prisoners and the general human rights situation in the countries concerned. When the instructions in a prisoner dossier indicate that publicity about a case is strictly pro-

hibited, this rule must be carefully observed. In all cases where publicity is encouraged, care should be taken to prevent publication of confidential information.

57. All publications including news releases, newsletters, books, articles, films, sound or video tapes, leaflets and posters — other than documents specifically relating to the prisoners of conscience adopted by a group — must be submitted to the national section executive for approval before making publishing arrangements.

58. All information provided to the media must clearly indicate the name, number and address of the adoption group. In all cases, a copy should be sent to the office of the national section.

59. All information provided to the media on behalf of Amnesty International must be based solely on information contained in AI material.

External relations

60. Letters sent on Amnesty International letterhead or sent by anyone in their capacity as an AI member should always indicate the number and address of the adoption group.

61. Adoption groups are required to consult the International Secretariat before corresponding with other international organizations.

62. Adoption groups are required to inform the relevant coordination group or national section executive in advance of any plan to visit an embassy.

63. Adoption groups are expected to cooperate closely in their work with all other bodies of Amnesty International such as other adoption groups in the area, national CAT groups, other adoption groups in other national sections involved in double or triple adoption cases, relevant coordination groups and so forth.

64. Adoption groups may find it useful to consult frequently with exile and refugee organizations. However, they are required to seek and obtain the permission of the national section executive before, under any circumstances, undertaking any public action such as a press conference, demonstration or public meeting jointly with exile, refugee, political or any other organization. It should be emphasized to these organizations that the refusal of Amnesty International to cooperate publicly is in order to protect the objective and impartial character of Amnesty International and does not reflect either approval or disapproval of the aims and judgement of the organization.

Security

65. Adoption groups are required to study and implement the specific security instructions given in the **general instructions** booklet included in each prisoner dossier.

66. Consistent failure to observe security procedures may result in the closure of the adoption group.

Appendix Commonly Asked Questions

Many people know of Amnesty International only through periodic news items which appear in the press. This can lead to a number of important questions. This appendix provides concise answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

1. Where does the money for Amnesty International come from?

To maintain its independence and impartiality, Amnesty International depends almost entirely for financial support from its members. They pay membership fees (varying from country to country) and conduct fundraising campaigns in their local communities. For certain special projects (such as relief, resettlement of political refugees or the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture) government funds can be accepted. But under no circumstances can any part of the organisation be allowed to become dependent on money provided directly or indirectly from government sources. The Amnesty International accounts are audited annually and are published in the **Annual Report** of the organization.

2. Does Amnesty International have a religious or political bias?

Because it defends the right of all people to hold their own religious or political beliefs, Amnesty International is sometimes mistakenly believed to be actively supporting those beliefs. But the organization maintains a rigorous balance throughout its work and seeks only the enforcement of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. One of the ways in which Amnesty International is seen to maintain a political balance is reflected in the policy that all "adoption groups" must act simultaneously to free three prisoners of conscience from contrasting geo-political backgrounds or holding different political or religious beliefs.

3. How does Amnesty International obtain its information?

The Research Department of Amnesty International receives and cross-checks reports of political imprisonment and torture from a wide variety of sources. It makes use of the international press, transcriptions of radio announcements, reports from legal experts, letters from prisoners' colleagues and a wide network of Amnesty International contacts in numerous countries. It also dispatches fact-finding missions to assess situations on-the-spot, to meet prisoners and to interview government authorities.

4. Is Amnesty International like UNESCO or the Red Cross?

These organizations are working in related fields but without the independence of Amnesty International. UNESCO is an inter-governmental body which does not take action with regard to specific violations of human rights. The International Committee of the

Red Cross operates with the agreement of governments in the field of relief and improvement of prison conditions. It does not question the legitimacy of anybody's detention and shuns publicity, its reports being transmitted only to the government whose prisoners are the subject of inspection.

5. What sort of cases does Amnesty International handle?

A good example is that of the release of Dr Eli de Gortari. In 1968, the Mexican army invaded the campus of the University of Mexico to quell protests demanding reform of the police system. Among those arrested was Dr Eli de Gortari, Dean of the Institute of Philosophical Research. Charged with crimes ranging from inciting rebellion to robbery, he was held two years without trial and then sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

Amnesty International adopted Dr Gortari and in addition to group action, coordinated its activities with academics in various countries who were particularly concerned about his deteriorating health. Finally, a formal Amnesty International mission was sent to make direct representation on behalf of Dr Gortari and all other prisoners adopted in Mexico. Subsequently, Dr Gortari and 26 others were freed by President Luis Echeverria. After receiving the medical treatment denied him in prison, Dr Gortari travelled to Sweden to meet the Amnesty group which had worked two years for his release.

6. Does Amnesty International get results?

Over half of the 13,000 prisoners of conscience adopted by Amnesty International since 1961 have been released. It would be wrong to ascribe this to the intervention of Amnesty International alone. Amnesty International's record of accuracy and impartiality have however given it increasing impact and particularly in the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, Amnesty International has proven its effectiveness in rescuing victims of police brutality — in countries with governments of varying ideologies.

7. Does Amnesty International take up cases of armed political prisoners or of those who advocate violence?

All prisoners, regardless of the charges brought against them, have basic rights which Amnesty International defends: the right to a fair and early trial, the right to medical facilities and sanitary conditions as established by the United Nations **Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**, and the all-important right to freedom from torture. Amnesty International is alert to the fact that especially in situations of mass detention political "undesirables" may be charged with violent criminal charges and held for lengthy periods before trial. In such situations, governments are pressured to expedite the legal process

so that innocent and guilty alike may have the right to defend themselves.

Amnesty International does not "adopt" as prisoners of conscience those who are thought to have used or advocated violence.

8. What do Amnesty International members do for prisoners in their own countries?

Working methods of the organization also reflect the fundamental belief that responsibility for the protection of human rights transcends differences of nationality, race or belief. Unlike domestic civil liberties organizations, Amnesty International groups work for the defence of civil and political rights on an international basis. The members may bring pressure on governments to adhere to the United Nations **Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners** and to observe the universal injunction against torture. The members may also concern themselves with preventive work in their own countries: human rights education and the improvement of national legislation to conform with international human rights standards.

However, no groups or individual members work for prisoners of conscience in their own country. No section or member is expected to provide information on their own country and no section has any responsibility for action taken or statements issued by the organization concerning its own country.

9. Who are the members of Amnesty International?

The members come from all walks of life and include social workers, teachers, trade unionists, lawyers, housewives, students, doctors, news media personnel, businessmen, retired people and artists. Membership is subject to the acceptance of the statute

of Amnesty International as approved by the International Council. Each national section has to submit its national statute to the International Executive Committee (IEC) for approval before recognition of a section. Where no national section exists, individuals may enroll as international members directly affiliated to the international organization.

10. Where are the members located?

Amnesty International has 100,000 members in a total of 78 countries, with organized national sections in 33 of them. These cover almost all parts of the globe. In some countries, due to lack of understanding on the part of the government, Amnesty International membership may entail personal risk and in some countries it is simply impossible for Amnesty International to function as an organization, due to the prevailing human rights situation.

11. How do the members participate in policy decisions?

All national sections of Amnesty International send representatives each year to an International Council Meeting which determines policy and budgetary matters for the organization. A nine-member elected International Executive Committee, elected by the Council, is responsible for administering the decisions of the Council.

All national sections have their own internal structures for membership participation.

It is at the very centre of Amnesty International's structure and existence that the membership, through the groups and sections, decide the policy of the movement which they finance.

Index

ACTION

general guidelines 27-38
groups 26
methods (Statute) 51
recommended case action sheet 41
see also PRISONER DOSSIERS

ADOPTION

casework 13,14,39-46
double and triple 41
groups 25
selection of cases 40
Statute 51

AID, and Trade 35

APPEALS

general 30
general petitions 30
by professional category or grouping 30
by prominent people 30
by institutions 30
public declarations 30
Working Rules 62,64

ARTS PERFORMANCES 33

ASYLUM

offers of 45
Working Rules 62
see also REFUGEES

BALANCE, see IMPARTIALITY

BORDERLINE COMMITTEE 21

CAMPAIGNS

general 14
Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (CAT) 14
CAT Bulletin 15
CAT groups 27
Greetings Cards for Prisoners 16
Prisoners of the Month Campaign 15
Prisoner of Conscience Week 15,16
specific country campaigns 16
unit 14,21
urgent actions 16

CASE SHEET, see PRISONER DOSSIERS

CASEWORK 39-46

general 13,14,65
adoption cases 40
allocation of cases 39
approaches to other organizations and institutions 43
correspondence with AI contacts 43
correspondence with government authorities 41
correspondence with the prisoner and family 43,44
double and triple adoptions 41
fundraising 45
group cases 40
investigation cases 40
IS liaison with the adoption group 39
meetings with government representatives 42
offers of asylum 45
prisoner dossiers 39,40,41
publicity and press relations 42,43
releases 45,46
relief 44
replacement cases 39
reporting 39
responsibilities of an adoption group 39
security 39
selection of prisoner cases 40
suspension of group work 46
transfer of cases 40,46
visits to the prisoner's country 45
Working Rules (adoption groups) 63-64

CLASSIFICATION, of documents 28 see also SECURITY

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS 35

COMMITTEES

borderline 21
financial control 21
international executive 21
relief 44

CONVENTION

definition 47
American 48
European 48

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

general 11
Policy Guidelines Relating to Conscientious Objection 55-56

COORDINATION

of activities 28
groups 25,26
unit 21,39
Working Rules 62-63

CORRESPONDENCE

- with AI contacts 43
- with government authorities 41
- with international organizations 28,29
- with the prisoner and family 43,44
- sample letters 58-60
- Working Rules 63,64
- see also LETTERS

COUNCIL, International of AI 20,21

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

- consultative status with 8

COVENANTS

- definition 47
- civil and political rights 16,48
- economic, social and cultural rights 16,48
- optional protocol 48

DEATH PENALTY 10,11

- Statute 51

DECLARATION

- definition 47
- Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* 49
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 47

DELEGATIONS

- general 30
- to embassies 30,42
- to home government 31
- to visiting officials 30
- Working Rules 64

DOCUMENTATION CENTER 13,22

ECONOMISTS 35

- sample letter 59

EDUCATION

- general 18
- police, military and medical training programs 17
- working with educational institutions 36,37

EMBARGO 31

EMBASSIES

- correspondence with 41
- visits to 30,42
- Working Rules 64

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS 21,39

EXILE ORGANIZATIONS

- relations with 29,39
- Working Rules 62,63,64
- see also REFUGEES

FAMILIES

- correspondence with 43-44
- relief 44
- visits 45
- Working Rules 63,64

FINANCE 24,54,55,65

- Statute 53,54
- Working Rules 62

FINANCIAL CONTROL COMMITTEE 21,24

FUNDRAISING

- general 24,65
- by adoption groups 45
- Guidelines for the Acceptance of Financial Contributions and Fundraising by Amnesty International* 54-55
- Working Rules 62
- see also SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

GOVERNMENTS

- correspondence with authorities 41
- lists of authorities 40,41
- meetings with representatives 30,31,42
- representations to national governments 17

GREETINGS CARDS FOR PRISONERS 16

GROUP CASES 40

GROUPS

- general 25
- action/working 26
- adoption 25
- CAT 27
- coordination 25,26
- professional 27
- Statute 51,52,53
- Working Rules 62-64
- see also CASEWORK

GUIDELINES

- general for action 27-38
- Guidelines for the Acceptance of Financial Contributions and Fundraising by Amnesty International* 54-55,62
- for individual members 20
- Policy Guidelines Relating to Conscientious Objection* 55-56

HOW TO FREE YOUR PRISONER 5,28

HUMAN RIGHTS

- education 36
- in international law 47-49
 - American Convention 48
 - European Commission 49
 - European Convention 48
 - European Court 49
 - Inter-American Commission 49

HUMAN RIGHTS

- in international law (continued)
 - United Nations Commission on Human Rights 49
 - United Nations Human Rights Committee 48
 - United Nations International Covenants 48
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 47
- terms and definitions 47

IMPARTIALITY 13,38,65

- Statute 51

INFORMATION, sources of 7,13,65

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES 21

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL 20,21,66

- Statute 51,52,53,54

INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS 16

- on Civil and Political Rights 48
- on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 48
- Optional Protocol 48

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 21,66

- Statute 51,52,53,54

INTERNATIONAL LAW 47-49

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- relations with 17,28,29,43
 - International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) 29
 - International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) 28
 - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 28,65
 - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) 29
 - International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) 29
 - International Labour Organization (ILO) 29
 - International Press Institute (IPI) 29
 - World Confederation of Labour (WCL) 29
- Working Rules 62,64

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

- general 21
- administration 22
- campaign unit 14,21
- coordination unit 21,39
- documentation center 13,22
- field secretaries 22
- information office 22
- legal office 22
- multilingualism unit 22
- publications unit 21
- program department 21
- research department 13,21
- secretary general's office 22
- Statute 51,52,53,54

INTERNATIONAL TREASURER, of AI 21,24

- Statute 52,53

INVESTIGATION CASE 9,40

LEGAL AID 11,12

- Statute 51
- see also RELIEF

LETTERS

- general 29
- sample 58-60
- see also CORRESPONDENCE

MEDIA ACTIONS

MEDIA ACTIONS 22,31,32

- Working Rules 62,64

MEMBERS

- general 19,66
- individual 19,20
- Statute 51,52,53

MISSIONS

- general 16
- Working Rules 61,62

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

- representations to 17,66
- Working Rules 62
- see also POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- relations with 43
- Working Rules 62

NATIONAL SECTIONS

- general 20
- Statute 51,52,53,54
- Working Rules 61-62

NEWSLETTER 15,20,22

- Working Rules 61,63,64

NEWS RELEASES 22,31,32

- Working Rules 61,63,64

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- general 17
- relations with 28,29,43

OBJECTS

- Statute 50

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

- observer status with 8
- see also REFUGEES

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

- consultative status with 8
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 49

- PARCELS** 44
- PETITIONS**
general 30
Prisoners of the Month 15
- POLITICAL PARTIES**
working with 37,38
Working Rules 62,63,64
- POLITICAL PRISONERS**
detention without trial 40
- PRESS**
general 17,22,31,32
relations with 31,32,42,43
Working Rules 62,64
see also MEDIA ACTIONS
- PRESSURE** 29
see also SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS
- PRISON ADOPTION** 40
- PRISON CONDITIONS** 10
- PRISONER DOSSIERS** 39,40,41
- PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**
general 9,65
selection 9,40
Statute 51
see also CASEWORK
- PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE WEEK** 15,16
- PRISONERS OF THE MONTH CAMPAIGN** 15
- PROGRAM DEPARTMENT** 21
- PUBLIC ACTIONS**
general 33
films 34
marches 34
public meetings 34
vigils 34
Working Rules 61,62,63,64
- PUBLICATIONS**
general 17,33
unit 21,22
Working Rules 61,63,64
- PUBLICITY**
general 17,22,31-34,42,43
Working Rules 61,63,64
- RATIFICATION** 47
- REFUGEES** 12,39
Working Rules 62,63,64
see also ASYLUM
- RELEASES** 8,45,46,65
- RELIEF** 17,44
action sheet 41
committee 44
Statute 51
- RELIGIOUS BODIES**
working with 36
sample letter 59-60
- RESEARCH**
general 7,13
department 13,21
importance of group reports 39
- RESEARCHERS** 21
- RULES**, see WORKING RULES
- SAMPLE LETTERS** 58-60
- SECRETARY GENERAL**
office 22
Statute 53
- SECURITY** 28,39
Working Rules 62,63,64
- SELECTION**, of prisoner cases 9,40
Working Rules 64
- SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
working with 35,36,37,38
- STANDARD MINIMUM RULES FOR THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS** 10
- STATUTE**, International of AI
amendments to 20,21,53
text 51-54
- STUDENTS**, see EDUCATION
- SUSPENSION OF GROUP WORK** 46
- SYMBOL**, of AI 8
- SYMBOLIC ACTIONS** 35
- TEACHERS**, see EDUCATION
- THEATRE** 33
- TORTURE**
general 9
Campaign for the Abolition of 14,15
Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 14,49
Statute 16
urgent actions 16

- TRADE**, and Aid 35,42
sample letter 59,60
- TRADE UNIONS**
working with 35
- TRIALS**
general 11
"fair trial" 11,40,51,6 ,66
observers 11
- UNESCO**
consultative status with 8,65
- UNITED NATIONS**
and AI 8,17
and death penalty 10
and torture 14,49
correspondence with 29
Commission on Human Rights 49
Committee, Human Rights 48
Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders 9,49
Covenants, International 48
ECOSOC 8,17
High Commission for Refugees 12
Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners 10
Universal Declaration of Human Rights 47
- URGENT ACTIONS** 11,16
- VIOLENCE** 13,14,40,56-57,65
Statute 51
- VISITS**
to country of prisoner 45
to embassies 30,42
to foreign delegations 30
Working Rules 63,64
- WORKING RULES** 61-64
adoption groups 63-64
coordination groups 62-63
national sections 61-62

Amnesty International Publications

Report of an Inquiry into Allegations of Ill-Treatment in Northern Ireland, A4, 48 pages, March 1972: 75 pence (US \$1.85).

Report on Allegations of Torture in Brazil, A5, 108 pages, first edition September 1972, re-set with updated preface March 1976: £1.20 (US \$3.00).

Political Prisoners in South Vietnam, A4, 36 pages, July 1973: 35 pence (US \$0.90).

A Chronicle of Current Events (Journal of the Human Rights Movement in the USSR), numbers 17, 18, 21, 24, 27 published individually: 65 pence (US \$1.60); double volumes 19-20, 22-23, 25-26: 85 pence (US \$2.10); numbers 28-31 in one volume: 95 pence (US \$2.50); numbers 32-33, one volume, £1.95 (US \$4.95).

Amnesty International Report on Torture, 246 pages. First published December 1973, second (updated) edition January 1975: £1.50 (US \$3.75).

Chile: an Amnesty International Report, A5, 80 pages in English, 88 pages Spanish, September 1974: 85 pence (US \$2.10).

Short Report on Prison Conditions in West Bengal Jails, A4, 16 pages, September 1974.

Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to Investigate Allegations of Ill-Treatment and Torture, A5, 34 pages, April 1975: 50 pence (US \$1.25).

Workshop on Human Rights: Report and Recommendations, A5, 15 pages, April 1975, issued by the Amnesty International Campaign for the Abolition of Torture.

Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Spain, A5, 24 pages in English, 28 pages Spanish, September 1975: 35 pence (US \$0.90).

Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR: Their Treatment and Conditions, A5, 154 pages, November 1975: £1.00 (US \$2.50).

AI in Quotes, A5, 24 pages, May 1976: 25 pence (US \$0.50).

Amnesty International 1961-1976: A chronology, May 1976: 20 pence (US \$0.40).

Report of an Amnesty International Mission to the Republic of Korea, A4, 36 pages, June 1976: 50 pence (US \$1.00).

Report of an Amnesty International Mission to the Republic of the Philippines, A5, 60 pages, September 1976: 90 pence (US \$1.80).

Professional Codes of Ethics, A5, 32 pages, October 1976: 40 pence (US \$1.00).

Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Sri Lanka, A4, 52 pages, second edition December 1976: 75 pence (US \$1.25).

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