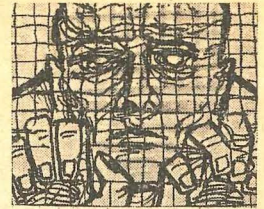


PARIS
CONFERENCE
ISSUE

AMNESTY

Tuesday, 27th June, 1961. Subscription £1-1s. for 6 months



FAITH BEHIND BARS

Paris Conference on religious persecution

RELIGIOUS persecution, regardless of faith or creed, was condemned jointly by representatives of the main faiths at a Conference held in Paris on Wednesday, June 20th. Speakers for the leading religions represented in France gave their united condemnation after hearing details of five representative cases of religious persecution from all parts of the world.

This was the first occasion when leaders of different faiths had combined to expose and condemn intolerance not only against adherents of their own faiths but of all other religions. M. le Pasteur Westphal, welcoming the Conference, said it was a fitting prelude to the Oecumenical Conference called by Pope John for next year, and hoped that it might lead to the day when the faiths of the world would agree on a common standard of religious tolerance.

The Conference opened with a statement by Peter Benenson on the aims of Amnesty '61. (see back page story THE TASKS OF AMNESTY) Plans for a similar campaign in France were outlined by Maitre Nicolas Jacob, Joint Director of the French National Section. These statements were followed by details of representative cases of religious persecution, each presented by a compatriot of the imprisoned minister.

The cases brought to the attention of the Conference were:

The Catholic Archbishop Beran of Prague, Czechoslovakia;

The Catholic Reverend Pinto de Andrade, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Luanda, Angola;

The Baptist-Protestant Pastor Alfonso Navarro of Mellila, Spain;

The Catholic Reverend Alejandro Bello of San Domingo; and The Buddhist Abbot Pen Hua of Nanhua Monastery, Kwantung, China.

Religious leaders taking part in

Amnesty . . .

This is the first issue of AMNESTY. It will appear each fortnight on a Monday, between now and the end of AMNESTY YEAR (December 31st 1961). It will be sent from London to AMNESTY '61 groups and individual supporters all over the world. For the time being it is being printed in English only, but it is hoped to send out French and possibly Spanish editions as soon as funds are available.

AMNESTY is addressed and mailed by student volunteers. Its editorial board and all those who contribute to its columns (except where articles are specially commissioned) are volunteer journalists belonging to the AMNESTY JOURNALISTS GROUP. Cir-

ulation is restricted to supporters of AMNESTY '61 Details of subscriptions are given on the back page.

It is hoped to include in each issue one major article on the personal situation of one, or more, prisoners in a particular country, together with short news items of recent arrests, trials or releases in other countries. As always in the AMNESTY '61 movement, the principle of impartiality will be maintained. Taken over a series of issues, equal space will be devoted to the East, Afro-Asia and the West.

After Amnesty year it is hoped the paper will become a weekly and be issued simultaneously from editorial and production centres in each continent under the title of WORLD CONSCIENCE.

the Conference were M. le Pasteur Westphal, elected leader of the Protestant Churches of France, who stressed that the question of religious persecution was already being considered jointly by the Churches of the Reform and Orthodox Churches; Pere Faidherbe, Chaplain-General to the Associations of French Catholic Lawyers, representing Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris and Primate of France; Maitre Joas Sportiche, a member of the Consistory Court, nominated by Grand Rabbi Kaplan of France; and Pere Riquet, Preacher of Notre Dame, Paris, 1946-1953.

Since Amnesty '61 commemorates, among other events of 1861, the death of Lacordaire, the great Liberal Dominican preacher, the presence of Pere Faidherbe, a Dom-

inican, as Catholic spokesman, and Pere Riquet, whose appointment itself commemorates the tradition of Notre Dame sermons founded by Lacordaire, was particularly appropriate.

In the chair was Mme. Helene Jeanty-Raven, a heroine of the Belgian Resistance and now the wife of Canon C. E. Raven, the well-known Cambridge theologian. Mme. Jeanty-Raven stressed that Amnesty '61 was a spontaneous movement, unconnected with any other organisation or government, non-political, non-denominational, international and impartial.

This Amnesty conference closed with an appeal to the French people by M. Martin Chauffier, who urged enthusiastic support for this new movement in defence of freedom.

Comment

As the first issue of AMNESTY goes to press the daily newspapers carry reports of further political arrests in Portugal. There is nothing remarkable about this coincidence: the deliberate curtailment of freedom on State security grounds has become a pattern of our day. Such action is indicative of weakness, not strength: the strong have nothing to fear from the honest expression of beliefs, political or religious. Those who fling people into prison for presuming to differ do so because they live in fear and trepidation lest they be toppled from their precarious positions of power and privilege.

We have not the slightest intention of dabbling in the domestic affairs of other nations. We are concerned only with the basic human right of any man or woman to give visual or vocal expression to sincerely held beliefs. But when this right is infringed then we shall strive to mobilise world opinion to the point where it can no longer be flouted by the abusers of political and religious liberty. Our aim is the release of those—many of them now forgotten by the outside world—who have been gagged by imprisonment.

No one need be appalled by the task we have set ourselves. It is entirely feasible, and irrefutably right. Our main adversary is not the totalitarian bully, for he is demonstrably fearful of the truth or he would not risk outraging world opinion by imprisoning people for their opinions; our main adversary is the apathy of free people who either cannot be bothered to register disapproval or who have no effective means of so doing. We intend to provide right-thinking and like-thinking people, wherever they may be, with that means. It is for this very reason that Appeal for Amnesty 1961 has been launched and this newspaper has been established. It will become sufficiently influential for its task once it is recognised and accepted for what it is—the voice of world conscience.

At AMNESTY Paris Conference Catholic Leader condemns

THE PERSECUTION OF PROTESTANTS

IN this article PETER BENENSON, a Joint Director of Appeal for Amnesty 1961, reports and comments on that part of the Paris Conference which referred to the persecution of Protestants. The next issue of AMNESTY will contain an article on the persecution of Roman Catholics written by ERIC BAKER, the other Joint Director of Appeal for Amnesty 1961.

The emphasis in this first issue of "Amnesty '61" on Religious Persecution will not, I hope, cause anyone to think that this movement is concerned only with religious persecution. We chose the topic of Religious Persecution for the Conference in Paris, which opened our campaign in France, for a number of reasons—the principal one being our wish to make it clear to everybody that we were not simply concerned with political prisoners. In London we had started our campaign by presenting the cases of four prisoners of varying politics from different Continents to illustrate types of political intolerance. In Paris we presented to a group of specially nominated representatives of the main faiths of France five typical cases of religious persecution drawn from each Continent. Later on, if our energy suffices and our funds increase, we will organise similar conferences on the persecution of intellectuals, of scientists and of trade unionists.

Pastor Navarro

One of the five cases presented to the Paris Conference was that of Pastor Alfonso Navarro, a 60 year old Baptist who is the elected oecumenical minister of 80 Protestants in the City of Mellila in North Africa, recently incorporated as a province of the Spanish mainland. Speaking on his behalf and about him was a friend of his, Senor Juan Monroy, who lives in Tangier. Senor Monroy knows more about persecution of Protestants than almost anyone alive. He has written a book entitled "The Defence of Spanish Protestants", which was published in Tangiers on 31st July 1958 and has since been published in French.

I very much hope that one result of this issue of "Amnesty, '61" will be that a British or American publisher comes forward, offering to publish the book, now translated into English. And I hope too that some of our unknown spontaneous philanthropists, (who are interested in this particular cause), will give us the money to illustrate in booklet-form a selection of the documents which Senor Monroy has brought out of Spain as documentary proof in particular to Mellila: one is a letter from the commanding general refusing permission to open the Protestant Church for services, another is a copy of the criminal charge against a woman whose offence, apparently, was that instead of displaying a picture of the Virgin Mary she had placed instead on her wall a text from the Gospel.

Pastor Alfonso Navarro has been living in Mellila since 1925. Although he was sometimes in difficulties during the Civil War period because of his evangelical beliefs he was never put in prison until quite recently. Since Mellila has come under control of the military government, persecution of the Protestant community has intensified. The church has been closed, and some repressive action has been taken against almost every one of the Protestants living in the town. Pastor Navarro himself has been twice thrown into prison and he has now been compelled to flee for safety to Morocco where he is living and working among refugees.

As Senor Monroy made clear to the Paris Conference, and as we know from many letters and other

information received since the Amnesty campaign opened, persecution of Protestants in Spain is not confined to Mellila. Under the law of the country Protestants suffer under many disabilities. Their churches are not allowed to advertise the hours of meetings; Protestant forms of marriage are not recognised; Protestant soldiers, civil servants, and prisoners are often required to attend Catholic services and take Catholic oaths to which they cannot in conscience subscribe. These are only a few of many general disabilities but much more distasteful is the vigour with which the law is being applied.

Following representations, so it is said, by Lord Home, British Foreign Secretary, when he was recently in Madrid, permission has at last just been received to re-open the Baptist Church in that city. However, within a few days of this news came reliable information that the Protestant Church in Zargossa had been closed. Similarly from Barcelona came news only last week that the police had raided and seized copies of an evangelical book as it came off the printing press.

Persecution condemned

When Senor Monroy had finished speaking to the Paris Conference there followed what must have been one of the most stirring speeches ever delivered in a religious gathering—one which may well make religious history. Pere Faidherbe, the Dominican, the Chaplain General to the Associations of French Catholic Lawyers and the representative of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, turned to the audience saying that, even speaking in the name of the Cardinal as he did, he was not afraid to tackle the question of the persecution of Protestants. He realised that this persecution came in the main from Catholic Governments. He took this opportunity to say that any government which is Catholic and which persecutes Protestants has no right to claim that this persecution is done in the name of, or on account of the Catholic Church. And he said that such persecution was wrong. Dom. Faidherbe concluded his speech by quoting from Saint Paul, "Truth is to be found in Charity"; and Pastor Westphal,

the leader of the French Protestant Church, took up this quotation with appreciation, calling upon all the Churches to show tolerance one with the other.

This plea for religious toleration could not have been made in a fitter setting than in Paris. For it was to gain this city that Henry of Navarre had been willing to renounce his Protestant principles, coining the cynical expression "*Paris vaut bien une messe*".

Persecution of Protestants is not only confined to Spain. It occurs also on a shameful scale in Colombia, South America; and though the position has improved there since the recent change of Government, persecution still continues. There are other parts of Latin America where local authorities, in mistaken bigotry, deny the Protestant churches freedom to conduct their services, Christen, marry and bury. But in Spain the persecution is more distasteful than in other countries on account of the very large number of Protestants who go there as tourists each year, and whose money is so gladly taken.

Press disinterested

If Protestants generally knew more about the suffering of their co-religionists in Spain, they might think again about their choice of resort. But, alas, one of the great difficulties facing those working for toleration-in-charity is that the Press gives such very little attention to religious persecution.

A typical example occurred during the Paris Conference. Its occurrence was reported by no British daily newspaper (despite their great interest in our campaign for political prisoners). Equally, I noticed only one reference in the British Press to the sentences meted out to the alleged 'religious conspirators' in Hungary. This was widely reported in France, as it should have been, since those concerned had different names when they were sentenced to those announced when they were arrested.

Instead, I read a leading article in the *TIMES* entitled "The Anglican Church", on the occasion of Dr. Ramsey's succession to the See of Canterbury. And there, standing without apology, were the words:

"Anglicans, like other Christians, are conscious of being on the defensive, and membership of the Church with the duties which it implies can no longer be an easy habit of conformity." I do not believe this to be true. Christianity is not on the defensive, but on the offensive. The Oecumenical Movement, of which this Paris Conference was a small part, is an upsurge of the spirit which rises into the sky in a great column which over-towers even the Nuclear 'mushroom'. This Paris Conference on Religious Persecution, coming before the meeting of the Protestant Orthodox and Anglican Churches in New Delhi in December and Pope John's Oecumenical Council next year, shows that the faiths of the world have the will to work together. And with one Church speaking for the other, as in Paris on 20th June 1961, we shall succeed in finding not just the lowest common denominator, but the highest common factor—the revealed truth.

CORRESPONDENCE

Amnesty's International Headquarters is at 1, Mitre Court Buildings, Temple, London, E.C.4. United Kingdom. Tel. CENTral 7867/9429.

The address of a National Section (or where these do not yet exist, of those trying to form them) will be sent on application to the International Headquarters. To save time: General Correspondence must be addressed as AMNESTY '61; Letters relating to the International Appeal to Artists (to paint one picture on the theme "Out of the Darkness, light") should be pre-fixed "Art and Conscience".

THE TASKS OF AMNESTY '61

IT is estimated that several million people are today in prison for no reason except that they have given expression to opinions or religious beliefs which are unacceptable to their respective governments. Among these governments are member States of the United Nations which in 1945 approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The governments which are today flagrantly disregarding these rights and the U.N. Declaration made to protect them are by no means all behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.

At the instigation of Peter Benenson, a London lawyer, Appeal for Amnesty 1961 has been started as a world movement to urge governments by force of public opinion to release their political and religious prisoners or at least to give them a fair trial. Its most important task is to mobilise public opinion quickly and widely before a government is caught up in the vicious spiral caused by its own repression and becomes faced with impending civil war.

One way of doing this is by a series of public conferences held in different countries where people can be confronted with first-hand evidence. Two such conferences have now been held: one in London to focus attention on political prisoners, and one in Paris to focus attention on religious persecution. The greater part of this first issue of *Amnesty* is devoted to reports of this second conference.

The majority of people are unquestionably disgusted by almost daily reports of repression by one government or another. But only an infinitesimal proportion of them can attend public meetings like the London and Paris conferences, so they must be reached by means of the printed word. And that is the reason for this fortnightly newspaper. The quicker its circulation is

increased the quicker will be the effect of world opinion on the repressive tendencies of governments. As the first of our readers you are asked most earnestly to commend *Amnesty*, and the organisation which publishes it, to men and women of conscience and compassion.

We ask that those of you who did not read the *OBSERVER* article on this new world movement should write to the Appeal for Amnesty 1961, 1 Mitre Court Buildings, London, E.C.4. for the text of this article which has been printed in booklet form and is available for the price of 1/3d. incl. postage or 11/- per doz.

The price of AMNESTY

AMNESTY is available by subscription, and will not be placed on open-sale. Its cost is £1 1s. 0d. (post free) for the 6 months ending 31st December 1961. Separate issues may be purchased in bulk by supporting organisations for distribution among members at reduced rates. These will be quoted upon application.

Approximately the same price will be charged in all countries. British and West European readers should please bear in mind that the price they pay helps to defray the heavy air-charges to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In those countries where NATIONAL SECTIONS of *AMNESTY* 61 have been formed, subscriptions should be paid to the Section. Elsewhere, if transfer of currency to the United Kingdom is permitted, by cash, cheque or other credit to 1, Mitre Court Buildings, Temple, London, E.C.4. Where transfer is impossible, subscribers are asked to write for special instructions as to the cause to which they should devote their subscriptions.

Footnote. Subscriptions in U.S.A. and Canada until 31st Dec. 1961 are 3 dollars, in France 1500 francs, in Germany 26 D.M., in Italy 2000 lire.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY INDICATED THAT YOU WILL SUBSCRIBE TO THIS BULLETIN YOU WILL BE SENT THIS AND 3 MORE COPIES WITHOUT CHARGE

ARRESTS IN PORTUGAL

News has reached *AMNESTY* '61 from various sources that Dr. Gouveia, Dr. Soares, and Dr. Sormenho, leading Portuguese lawyers, have recently been arrested in connection with the publication of a leaflet claiming the 'democratisation of the Republic'. In addition, news has come of Dr. Arnaldo Veiga-Pires, the 70-year old Professor of Medicine at Oporto. He has been arrested and taken to Adjube Prison, Lisbon.

The Joint Directors of *AMNESTY* '61 wrote to the Portuguese Ambassador two separate letters two weeks ago, asking for information to enable them to decide whether these men should be classified as PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE. No

reply whatsoever has been received. On the strength of the information supplied by the relatives, and by British journalists who have known and interviewed some of the men, it has been provisionally decided to classify them as 'Prisoners of Conscience'. Their names are being issued to groups of *THREE*, to start campaigning for their release.

In all such cases *AMNESTY* '61 will write to the Embassy concerned, and will give sufficient time for the Embassy to reply, and space for the kernel of their answer to be published. Where Embassies fail to acknowledge or reply to letters, this fact will also be published.

See Comment on page 2.