

# this is amnesty international

Amnesty was started in 1961, the brainchild of an English barrister, Peter Benenson. He had defended political prisoners in the courts of many countries but realised that he alone could help only a fraction of the many thousands of innocent men and women being persecuted for their political or religious beliefs. So he set up a bureau to collect information on cases, to publicise them and to organise other practical help. Within a month he had over a thousand offers of support. Within two months, representatives from five countries had established the beginnings of an international network of helpers.

That was six years ago. Today Amnesty remains the only organisation of its kind in the world, with Groups in 20 countries, members in a further 23 countries and a total membership of over 10,000. Through them it mobilizes public opinion, works for the release of prisoners and protects their families from hardship.

Amnesty acts with complete impartiality. It is a humanitarian organisation with no political or religious affiliation of any kind. The only limitation on its action is the belief that the pursuit of freedom must be carried out peaceably. Amnesty only adopts 'prisoners of conscience', those who do not advocate violence.

## amnesty world-wide prisoners of conscience in over 60 countries



## the people amnesty helps

have one thing in common: they are being persecuted for holding political opinions or religious beliefs their governments don't like. For this they are deprived of their livelihoods, torn from their families, exiled, jailed, put into solitary confinement, tortured. They are ordinary people: teachers, students, factory workers, peasants, politicians, catholics, baptists, jews, liberals, communists, nationalists. They come from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas. They are the victims of religious bigotry, political intolerance, racial prejudice. Together they need your help, your protection.

### THREE OF THE VICTIMS:

#### Brazilian Mother

"It was my "crime" to help out in an agricultural trade union, and to fight with words the misery and the illiteracy of 60% of our people. . . I was arrested in my house on April 18th, 1964. . . was in solitary confinement for 120 days. . . I was 18 months in prison guarded by soldiers day and night. . . I ask for help and a review of my case. I have three children; yesterday the 13 year old fainted from hunger in front of me. . ."

(From a letter to a German Amnesty Group, to 11 66 .

#### South African Teacher

Zeph Mthopeng, High School Teacher. Arrested after Sharpeville, 1960. Served two years imprisonment for membership of banned Pan-African Congress. Re-arrested April 1963 for same offence. Held without trial until August. Charge then withdrawn but immediately re-arrested under 90-day law. Assaulted, tortured. Re-tried on original charge, sentenced to three years imprisonment. Attempting to sue Minister of Justice for damages, alleging mental and physical torture. Three children, one blind. Wife earns £15 a month. Adopted by St. John's Wood, London, Group: over £300 sent for household needs and legal fees.

#### Russian Writer

Andrei Siniavsky is a writer but now loads goods wagons in a Russian corrective labour camp. Unless amnestied, he will continue to do so until 1973; his punishment for writing books satirising certain aspects of Russian society, and for publishing them abroad under another name. Siniavsky's close friend, Yuli Daniel, is also a writer. He was prosecuted at the same time, for the same "crime": propaganda and agitation. He was sentenced to five years in a "rigorous regime corrective labour camp". He can expect to be free in 1971.

A well-known Russian critic, Lydia Chukovskaya, supporting a flood of letters and protests by Russians against the sentences, writes: "Ideas should be opposed by ideas, not by prisons and camps." (Adopted by Bristol and Redbourn Groups).

## how amnesty helps



AMNESTY PRISONERS  
Abdull Ghaffar Khan  
Released 1964

Julieta Gandra  
Released 1965

Heinz Brandt  
Released 1964

Between 1961 and 1966,  
over 1250 of Amnesty's 3000  
adopted prisoners were  
released.

### THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS

There are many thousands of 'prisoners of conscience'. We cannot help them all but we can help many. Because of Amnesty, some are freed, others have their sentences reduced and conditions improved. All are encouraged by the knowledge that they have not been forgotten.

When news of an arrest has reached our Investigation Bureau, and the facts confirmed, the prisoner is adopted by one of the world-wide network of Amnesty Groups. The work for release then gets under way. Letters are sent to governments, embassies, leading newspapers; and to the prisoner's family or friends. Meetings are held. Influential people are asked to add their names to the public protest. If possible, money will be sent to pay for defence counsel. If a severe sentence is anticipated, we try to send an observer to the trial. If a death sentence is passed, renewed and intensive pressure is put on the government concerned to have the sentence commuted.

Our growing index of released prisoners confirms that this life-saving operation *does* work. Some governments are sensitive to public opinion. They *will* respond to pressure so long as it is sustained, sensible and impartial.

### THE RELIEF OF HARDSHIP

Invariably, the prisoner is the family breadwinner. When he is imprisoned, his wife and children are left destitute. Through letters to the family, we find out what they most need: food, clothing, money for rent, lighting and heating. . . Whatever funds can be spared are sent - in 1966 over £15,000 - and regular contact between the adopting Group and the prisoner's family helps to give continual hope.

Many prisoners are helped directly - by sending gifts of books and clothing, through letters and Christmas cards. Perhaps most important of all, this human contact prevents them from giving up all hope.

## the people who help amnesty

## your help counts both sides of the prison wall

## ways you can help

### 1 Become a Member

As a full member (£2. 10. 0 per annum : £2 by Covenant) you receive all our literature and reports.

### 2 Join a Group

There are over 500 Groups throughout the world. Each adopts three prisoners - one from the East, one from the West and one from an 'uncommitted' country. They work directly for the release of prisoners and the protection of their families. The more Groups and Members we have - the more prisoners we can help.

### 3 Join the 'Postcards for Prisoners' Campaign

Send three special cards each month for three urgent cases - prisoners who may be under sentence of death. The cards pour into the prison from Card Scheme members all over the world, proof of the mounting weight of public opinion, and a further plea to the authorities for clemency.

### 4 Become a Collector

In April, 1967, we are launching a monthly donation scheme. Helpers are wanted to collect 25 6d a month from 8 or more friends, neighbours, or work colleagues. A little time, well spent.

### 5 Send a Donation

Prisoners *can* be released. Their lives *can* be saved. Their families *can* be cared for - but it costs money. Money to investigate cases thoroughly, money to fly lawyers to crucial trials, money to send to prisoners' families, money to run the Card Campaign, money to raise more money. . .

Please return this slip to: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL,  
TURNAGAIN LANE, FARRINGDON STREET, EC4.

Please send me an application form for membership.

Please add my name to the list of '25 6d a month' Collectors.

I wish to join a Group. Please send me the address of my nearest Group.

I enclose £ (cheque/postal order/cash) as my contribution to Amnesty's work throughout the world.

Please send details of the Card Campaign.

(tick box where applicable)

NAME

CAPITAL LETTERS

ADDRESS

CAPITAL LETTERS

L.I.

## words from the prison cell

'I am a man, 38 years old, and my wife is 32. We have four children... They need help to get food, clothes, accommodation and the school fees. Here, I suffer in more than one way... I am a political prisoner since December 1959. I hope that, you all, my unknown friends could do something to relieve my sorrows by appealing for clemency in my own case.'

A Political Prisoner in Rwanda, Central Africa.

'I received (your) letter telling me the arrangements Amnesty had made with regard to my case... It was an enormous surprise for me and for all my friends who finally ended up living with me in this little prison... I thank you most sincerely and deeply... It is something far beyond what we thought you would be able to do.'

A Political Prisoner in Spain.

'I have received your letter and understood its significance as well as the noble targets your committee is working for, and am too glad that you are asking for me, my friends and my family... I have been in prison since three and a half years... I was imprisoned because of nothing but a particular belief, knowing that I committed no violence against the government or any people.'

A Political Prisoner in Iraq.

how  
amnesty  
international  
fights  
persecution,  
protects  
human  
rights

From the Universal Declaration  
of Human Rights,  
proclaimed at the United Nations,  
10 December, 1948.

### 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 in 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'.



in consultative status with the  
United Nations and Council of  
Europe

Amnesty International,  
Turrain Lane,  
Farringdon Street,  
London EC4  
Telephone 01-236-0111/3

and how you  
can help