



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

(BRITISH SECTION)

BULLETIN

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PUBLICITY-SEEKING

Even the newspapers use this epithet deprecatingly. About the individual whose ego they are so often eager to feed they mean it to sound vulgar. Self-advertisement.

Now let us in AMNESTY admit and without shame that we do want to draw attention to ourselves; but only so that we can make a louder and more important noise about somebody who is prevented from making any noise at all—because somebody thinks he once made too much.

"The success of the 1961 Amnesty Campaign depends on how sharply and powerfully it is possible to rally public opinion". Nothing has happened in the two-and-a-half years since that belief was expressed other than to confirm its truth; and the first two articles in this bulletin describe the different ways in which two AMNESTY supporters went publicity-seeking . . .

CRUMPETS OR CONSCIENCES . . . ?

An Irishman (no doubt) once promised an Englishman that he would train his donkey to do all manner of tricks without any sort of physical violence. The next day, to the Englishman's horror, he discovered his Irish friend whacking the poor creature on the head with a brickbat. "Good Heavens!" cried the Englishman, "you promised you'd use no physical violence!" "Begorra!" replied the Irishman indignantly, "and I will do no such thing. I were just getting his attention, that's all!"

Not with a brickbat, but with a travelling exhibition, vast fistfuls of literature, banners, and a stream-lined throat, I set out a few weeks ago to trek from Bristol to London on behalf of Amnesty International.

But a brickbat would have been useful. As it was, I was restricted to three forms of non-violent propaganda: (a) Set up shop in an abandoned door-way and sell; (b) Plant yourself in a crowd in a market-place with leaflets and books dripping from your pockets, and be sold; (c) Confront your opposite number as you walk along the road, and announce, "I am walking, etc., on behalf of, etc. etc." Nothing sells; nothing is sold. But this method resurrects a long-forgotten, and vital means of communication—meeting a human being on equal grounds.

In time I learnt to pick my customer from afar off, and others, perforce, dismiss. After the first couple, under the sheltered (in more ways than one) balconies of Bath, I did not attempt to stop a business-man returning from his office, again. Somehow a bowler hat does not allow the head to breathe.

A doctor, a clergyman, a teacher, these three stopped, expressed intense interest, and their names were entered in a pocket book "for further material by post." Three sixth-formers from Bath wanted to form a "three" after five minutes conversation. A Devonian, passing through Newbury stopped for ten minutes, recognised Jeremy Thorpe upon the list of Trustees, donated five shillings, and carried the message on its way. Reading finds our travelling shop, many individuals and some local organisations later, sandwiched, most appetisingly, in the portals of a wine-shop. Suddenly, out of Broad Street, and into the "Roche-forêt", lands a young lady, who seizes up a cache of leaflets in her hands and starts distributing them. Between forays into the evening crowd, she asks me precisely what she is giving out leaflets for. "I always do anything like this" she explains. For my part I explain what I am doing. "Marvellous" she cries, and sports an up-turned trident on her lapel which appears to serve as her source of mobilisation. "Mummy supports Spain. But of course this is so much wider." She

thrusts the remaining leaflets onto the pavements, and announces, as if a champagne in full bouquet: "Take my particulars and send me and mummy loads of this jolly old 'info'. Mummy will be thrilled!"

Every compliment to Mummy, and I hope she was.

That donkey must have been an Englishman, too. It takes an awful lot of smacking to get some people off their crumpets. But somehow, I had expected and hoped that every conversation with the unconverted would go something like this one with a student at Hammersmith Green: so smoothly with undeniable arguments moving to an inexorable conclusion . . .

M.: Each minute we stand here doing nothing. Thomas Ammer's spine is coming nearer to a crescent in some East German prison: Juliette Gandara's rare liver disease is worsening, behind the fortifications of Caxias . . .

S.: I don't see what we can do about it.

M.: Pressure from the simple individual like you and me: letters, personal contacts, lawyers, articles, programmes; gifts, food parcels, Christmas Cards.

S.: Does this really influence governments?

M.: We feel so. But even if not now, how can it

fail to do, when we all contribute to the changing of political thought?

S.: But we're only students aren't we?

M.: And what was Thomas Ammer?

Somehow, I feel we have to go fishing for support. This way may not be the respectable way, and indeed, it has its dangers from police and public alike. But, by the time a movement becomes "respectable" it seems to me, it is either dead, or useless. Cast out wide nets, by all means, and the "one in ten thousand" will respond. But what about the second—and the third? I met them, and am convinced that in time—perhaps a very short time—they will respond too. Market-places and street corners are attractive settings for a multitude of persons whom the leading article and "News Background" pass by.

Indeed, how can we lay claims on the "conscience of the world" when nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine out of ten thousand of our fellow citizens will not give theirs?

ROGER MOODY.

Note: Shortly after Mr. Moody's march, an inquiry arrived at the office from one of his waylaid, a grammar school master in Bath, asking for speakers' notes.

"SO MUCH CAN BE ACHIEVED . . . BY A SINGLE LETTER"

Lionel Bernstein. South African Architect. Arrested July, 1963. Put in solitary confinement without charge under the 90 day Law Amendment Act.

The Architect's Group of Amnesty International wrote to Lionel Bernstein when he was first placed under House Arrest in November 1962. In his reply he said there was nothing we could do to help him personally . . . "but let me say that it is the expressions of goodwill and encouragement from people like you, both in this country and abroad, that help me to keep alive, confident and in no doubt that the eventual outcome will be a good one."

When he was arrested we wrote to his wife immediately asking whether she had any objection to our trying to get some publicity for his case through the architectural press. Her reply to our letter was then published at the end of August in the "Architect's Journal", "The Architect and Building News" and "The Builder". During the following weeks the "Architect's Journal" (of the three publications, the most widely read among architects) published two letters from architects who had been horrified to read in Hilda Bernstein's letter of the difficulties her husband had encountered as one of the accused during the three-

year long Treason Trials when he had struggled to keep working while having to attend court every day; of how he was now having to endure solitary confinement, with no books allowed, no writing materials, no visitors and nothing to do.

Two letters which were out of sympathy were also published, one of their objections being the publicity given to a "non-architectural subject" in an architectural journal. The Editors replied by saying how glad they were to give such publicity and had done so in the hope that "many architects would respond in a rational and civilised way." Edward Carter, the Director of the Architectural Association wrote sympathetically as did Sir William Holford, Sir Hugh Casson and Maxwell Fry.

WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN—STUDENTS RALLY SUPPORT

An appeal for funds to help Bernstein's wife and four children was then sent by the Architect's Group of Amnesty International to the three publications mentioned earlier. All printed it. The following week a letter appeared in the Journal from some students of the Canterbury School of Architecture who had formed a "Bernstein Com-

mittee". They had sent copies of the letter from Hilda Bernstein to all schools of architecture in Britain and Ireland and to all architect's chapters together with their letter asking for all students to undertake to contribute 1/- a month to the Bernstein Fund. They also intended writing to the South African Government.

When Lionel Bernstein was eventually brought to trial together with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others, it was widely reported in the national press that this trial had to be postponed owing to the shocking condition of the prisoners.

Our appeal letter was published on November 13th and in about three weeks we had £100. Money continues to arrive and so far we have received £203. Some of the letters we have had

have been quite moving and it is extremely heartening to discover that so much can be achieved merely by the publication of a single letter. We sent the November issue of "Architectural Design" to Lionel Bernstein in Pretoria gaol. In a letter dated December 16th he says "The first copy of the magazine arrived this week, and very welcome too. How quickly one loses contact with such a highly specialised world in a place like this".

He still remains alone in his cell, but able to write now and to read the two books a week chosen for him by the prison authorities. The trial will be resumed in three weeks' time and it is expected that it will continue for many months.

DIANA REDHOUSE.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AMONG THE THREE GROUPS

Some groups really went in for this and arranged functions that brought in money or publicity or both. Many others probably did too but with no details from them we can only say thank you and congratulations—and please send us details next year.

EXETER. A celebration lecture "The Hungarian Revolution and its Aftermath" was given in the Rougemont Hotel by Paul Ignotus, himself a political prisoner for seven years in that country. Thanks to the enthusiasm of David Gibson and his Group the press publicity before and after was astonishingly copious. The "Western Times and Gazette" devoted its leader to AMNESTY on December 6th. This paper and the "Express and Echo" contained over 400 lines of newsprint on the subject around December 10th.

ELGAR GROUP, LONDON. A letter was sent to all embassies and high commissions asking if their respective governments were observing the Day and if a general amnesty would be granted, in accordance with the appeal of the United Nations. In addition, Patrick MacSweeney drafted a letter that all members might make use of in writing to their local newspapers.

IMPORTANT APPEAL TO THREES. Will you PLEASE fill in and return the postcard bearing one or two questions which Mrs. Marlys Deeds is currently sending out. It may not look very significant but we urgently need the answers here.

BRISTOL. Mr. J. D. Roberts secured a four-column headline in the "Evening Post" about the meeting his group organised. The Abbot of Downside had originally agreed to speak but was prevented at the last minute by illness.

WESTMINSTER, and HAMPSTEAD. The arrangements of both these groups were publicised in the November bulletin. Deputising for an absent M.P., Neville Vincent spoke at the Westminster meeting.

NORTHERN IRELAND. In commendably good time an article appeared in the Belfast "News Letter" spread over three columns. It featured, in large italic type, the preamble to the Code of Conduct.

ELTHAM. The Christmas Market, mentioned in the November bulletin, raised over £200, of which the Group generously donated 10 per cent to Head Office funds. We regret we have not space to say more about it, but we hope to return to one feature of it in a later bulletin.

After a rehearsal just before Christmas, the New London Singers decided to sing a few carols in their two favourite pubs. One of the singers (who shares a flat with an AMNESTY member) thoughtfully passed a hat round for AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. Result — £4 2s. 9d.

THE CEREMONY IN ST. BRIDE'S

A Moslem Imam, a Jewish rabbi, a Roman Catholic archbishop, a Non-conformist minister, an archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church—all gathered and prayed under one roof in Fleet Street on Human Rights Day. In addition, the Rector, the Rev. Dewi Morgan, gave a short opening address. Then a congregation of two hundred heard a 'cello solo from Jacqueline du Pré; the plaintive song of the American Civil War "Blowin' in the Wind" played and sung by Cy Grant, and a religious ballad from the guitar-playing Jesuit priest Père Duval. Shortly after the ceremony had begun, Frau Heinz Brandt, whose husband was chosen as this year's prisoner and who had come specially from Germany for the Ceremony, lit the candle which was standing on a plinth in the nave of the church. Incidentally,

the photograph of this symbolic gesture was reproduced in the "Times Weekly Review" as the whole of the front page.

One item, long awaited, was to hear the Litany for Human Rights Day, written by Salvador de Madariaga and now set to music by Thor Pierres and presented for the first time by the St. Bride's Choir. Though primarily designed for two voices, preferably baritone and contralto, the Litany can be sung as a solo or even chorally.

Towards the end of the ceremony the newspaper "WORLD CONSCIENCE", specially published for the day by AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, was laid on the altar as an act of dedication by the Rector.

"I AM SEVERELY DISABLED, IN BED ALL THE TIME . . . BUT I HAVE LONGED TO HELP PEOPLE OF THE TYPE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DO HELP."

Offers to help arrive from time to time at Head Office and they are always gratifying. But the way individuals qualify their offer in accordance with their own particular capacities is sometimes quite moving. The extract below is from a letter from Miss A. E. Granger:

"I am severely disabled, in bed all the time, but I am a professional needlewoman. I enclose a packet of handkerchiefs which I am selling at 3/6. I will gladly sell these for AMNESTY. I have already got a stock of handkerchiefs to embroider and I will give the entire proceeds for the first 1,000 handkerchiefs. I cannot do more than that at this moment . . . My personal affairs are based on my pension and what I earn by my needlework, but more than anything in the world I have longed to help people of the type AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL do help . . ."

A. E. GRANGER,

20 Otterburn Avenue,
S. Wellfield, Whitley Bay,
Northumberland.

This is an admirable way for supporters to help Miss Granger to help AMNESTY. We can certainly vouch for the quality and value of the handkerchiefs. Send orders with remittance to this office, NOT please, to Miss Granger.

ODDMENTS

The Executive Committee has decided that this year's A.G.M. should take place in Birmingham. Provisional dates—July 13th, or 20th.

The addendum enclosed was one of the resolutions adopted at the International Conference in September.

In the HAMPSTEAD group we decided that we were tired of the bring-and-buy-with-sherry idea, profitable though it had been. We knew that the Freedom from Hunger campaign had recently asked local shops for goods without much success, so we wrote to about 90 manufacturers of products ranging from records and kitchen equipment to stockings and cosmetics.

We thought the result might interest other groups with the same idea in mind. We received:

70 cans of beer

2 packets of playing cards

1 box of kitchen knives

1 voucher for a family-size packet of crisps.

Needless to say, we were grateful for anything given and appreciate the fact that big firms get a lot of similar appeals. But you can't have much of a bazaar on two packets of playing cards and three kitchen knives. In the end we gave a social evening to mark Human Rights Day. Beer and crisps provided.

JULIA NAPIER

THE CHRISTMAS DRAW. Though many groups rightly took advantage of the "fifty per cent for you" offer, there were still almost £700 raised by this effort. Prizes numbered about eighty. Many sellers probably felt the same way as the Elgar critic who said the tickets ought to be out earlier and look more cheerful! Noted and promised for next year, when a more ambitious venture is planned. Anyway, despite the ticket's lack of eye-appeal, the Aylesford Group, not a large one, managed to sell twelve books.

Trading with new printers in a hurry caused confusion about the number of the last bulletin.

We regret that we have not sufficient space this time for the Prisoner of the Month feature, nor for any book reviews.