**Introduction**

by the Chairman of the International Executive
Sean MacBride S.C.

1968 is an important year in the work of Amnesty International. In the first place, its designation as International Year for Human Rights provides an admirable framework in which Amnesty's work, which is first and foremost concerned with the protection of human rights, can be given a new impetus. As its major contribution to Human Rights Year, Amnesty has designated 17-23rd November "Prisoner of Conscience Week" and plans a massive campaign, with the assistance of other non-governmental organisations, to draw the attention of individuals throughout the world to the plight of such prisoners.

It is to be hoped that all national sections, groups and supporters of Amnesty will take an active part in making this campaign a success in their respective countries.

Action to secure protection at the international level for those imprisoned in violation of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms an important part of Amnesty's activities during Human Rights Year. In this field Amnesty international is giving full support to the resolution adopted by the United Nations International Conference on Human Rights held in May 1968 at Tehran. This resolution calls, among other measures, for the treatment of war or political prisoners under international law of those who struggle against minority, racist or colonial regimes which refuse to comply with the decisions of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While this proposal does not directly or exclusively refer to prisoners of conscience, Amnesty considers it to be of sufficient importance to give its full backing to the efforts now being undertaken to ensure its implementation.

1968 is also an important year in the internal workings of Amnesty International. It is a year which will see the adoption of a new statute reorganising and strengthening the organisation and structure of the movement. It is also significant for the appointment of a new Secretary-General, Martin Ennals, whom I am happy to welcome to the organisation and to whom I wish every success in the tremendous task which faces him.

I would not wish to note Mr. Ennals arrival without paying a deep-felt tribute to Mr. Eric Baker, to whom Amnesty International owes a profound debt of gratitude. Mr. Baker, Chairman of the British Section and already fully occupied by his professional activities, generously consented to fill the breach caused by the absence of a Secretary-General for eighteen months carried a burden that must at times have been very hard to bear. It is not too much to say that, but for Eric Baker's devotion and hard work, Amnesty might well have collapsed during the difficult period when he was bearing the brunt of its problems. I know I express the feelings of all members in thanking him from the bottom of our hearts.

1968 is above all a year in which to look to the future. With a new organisational structure and a new Secretary-General, as well as the exciting possibilities for expansion opened up by the work done during Human Rights Year, I am confident that that future will be a rewarding one.

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This is one of several drawings, smuggled out of a Greek prison by a Greek political prisoner.
Amnesty in Human Rights Year

Human Rights Year marks the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a time for reflection on the meaning of liberty and a time for action in its defense. It has been a time when non-governmental organizations have revivified their efforts, opened new fields for action, and taken a leading role in calling attention to their cause.

By the end of November, Amnesty International's Human Rights Year was only half complete. Amnesty's major campaign, scheduled for November 1968-'Promote of Conscience Work', was still in its early stages. Yet already much had been achieved. The Year was launched on 10 December, 1967, when the American labor leader, Mr. Victor Reuther, a well-known advocate of Human Rights, delivered his Amnesty International's Human Rights Year for 1967. His presence was a notable occasion and a fitting tribute both to the life-long work of Mr. Reuther for international human rights and to the continued support for the work of Amnesty since Human Rights Year began.

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International Executive Committee Meetings

The International Executive Committee met in London during the year, in October 1967 and February 1968. Both meetings were primarily concerned with the financial aspects of the movement and with the development of the International Secretariat. All through the summer of 1967, this work had been highly focused on the efforts of the International Secretariat and the fundraising efforts of the International Executive. It was agreed to invite Dr. Gustavo Comba of the Italian Section, together with Dr. C. van der Vlies, to serve as the General Coordinator of the Executive, to take effect on 1 July, 1968.

The developments that have taken place within the International Section of Amnesty International have been illustrated in the Sectional reports. Many new Sections have been established in many countries around the world. The Sectional reports provide a wealth of information about the activities of Amnesty in different parts of the world.

Regional Sectional Consolidate

The number of National Sections and Groups has increased significantly during the year. More than 100 new groups have been formed, bringing the total number of groups to more than 1,000 worldwide. The Sectional reports provide a wealth of information about the activities of Amnesty in different parts of the world.

Prisoner of the Year Freed

Kouman Keita, the schoolteacher and trade unionist from Guinea imprisoned since 1961 for critical comments about the government, was released on 12 February, 1968. His release was confirmed by the International Executive and confirmed by the International Secretariat. He was freed after 16 years in prison. His release was hailed as a major victory for Amnesty International's efforts to promote human rights and to free political prisoners worldwide.
The Greek Mission

In January 1967 Amnesty was informed through confidential sources that four dissident young people had been arrested. Yury Galanskov, Alexander Tigranov, Vladimir Kovalyov, Igor Mitinov and another un-named individual had been detained on the orders of the Ministry of Justice. The arrests took place in connection with the preparation of a government declaration to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the October revolution, at which the Soviet authorities have always categorically refused on the grounds that all the prisoners, whether they be political prisoners or not, are kept in prison only because they refuse to sign the Declaration of Loyalty.

On July 3rd 1967 the trial of a young Czech writer, V. Hradil, was opened in Prague. Hradil had been accused of subversion and speculation, and had threatened a strike. The arrest had been made at the end of June in the presence of the police, and was reported in the West European press. Although the writer was not able to get a friendly hearing, he told the foreign press that we had hoped for, his mission showed that the Soviet government still finds it necessary to deal with dissenters in unconstitutional secrecy.

On July 5th 1967 the three Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, wished to make a further visit to the Soviet Union and to Moscow. A year ago, it became clear that Amnesty could open a Special Mission to Moscow. This visit was to be arranged on the understanding that the three government representatives would be given an opportunity to witness a trial of a dissident writer and to observe the trial of the Soviet authorities.

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Amnesty in Action

Amnesty’s investigations now reach into nearly 70 countries. They start the Iron Curtain and uncomfortable corners within off Asia, the Middle East and the Third World. They reveal a catalogue of unreasoned cruelty and brutality, though thousands of similar cases remain unreported. They have brought freedom to a number, though many remain prisoners. In this International Year for Human Rights, they have vindicated our purpose, whilst demonstrating the terrible extent of repression that goes on unchecked.

Algeria

While the number of political prisoners in Algeria has increased substantially in the past year, Amnesty’s position has altered little. The new prisoners were arrested after Colonel Ziad’s attempted coup in December 1967. Since his defeat, Ziad and his associates have been in hiding, and Ahmed Kaid, the leader of the F.L.A., is said to have been killed by the army. Arrested in connection with violent demonstrations, they are not considered_to qualify as Prisoners of Conscience. We are however trying to find out more about individual cases and some adoption may result.

These political upheavals have reduced the chances of obtaining the promised early release. In the past year the Algerian government has announced the forthcoming release of all political prisoners, but these statements have been merely empty gestures. Unless greater stability is achieved, the government is unlikely to relax its ban on former opponents.

Burma

At the end of February 1968 General Ne Win announced an amnesty for nearly three hundred of the more prominent political prisoners, most of whom had been incarcerated without charges, having been in prison for periods ranging from two to five years. These prisoners adopted by Amnesty. Whether he is or not the amnesty accorded with the thirteenth anniversary of General Ne Win’s military rule and considerable speculation has followed as to the political causes behind the amnesty. However, many observers have been so long in existence of granting amnesty that the amnesty may be considered a major_llow-up to the release of the foreigners in the summer of 1967. The amnesty was declared on the 15th of April 1968, and included political prisoners from all walks of life. It was announced that Amnesty will continue to support the release of all political prisoners.

Czechoslovakia

The demonstration in Czechoslovakia that in 1948 overthrew the Stalinist President, Antonin Novotny, and brought a sudden outburst of uncensored public debate, gave rise to the hope that the country’s prison might at last be relieved of prisoners of conscience. With Novotny’s fall in March 1968, came the good news of the release of nearly three hundred prisoners on the 15th of April 1968. However, Amnesty hopes that these two prisoners will be released as soon as possible.

Ghana

Ghana is slowly returning to civilian rule and democratic institutions. The great majority of the thousands of political prisoners have been released. However, Amnesty is concerned that several prisoners are still in jail and that some of these still untried prisoners have not been convicted of any crime.

Hong Kong

Large-scale demonstrations, riots and strikes took place in the summer of 1967. They began as a labour dispute, but rapidly grew into what was regarded as a political confrontation between the Administration and the Communist opposition. The situation was further complicated by the events of the Cultural Revolution inside China.

China

Traditionally, China has not recognized the concept of the rights of the political prisoner. However, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1965-1967 has caused an enormous upheaval in the country. The government has been forced to release a number of political prisoners. Amnesty is concerned that some political prisoners are still in jail and that some of these still untried prisoners have not been convicted of any crime.
India

At the beginning of the period under review there were some two hundred prisoners of conscience detained under the Defence of India Rules. Many of them had been adopted by Amnesty. In January 1968 the State of Gujarat, which had been in force since 1962, was abolished and the sit-in in which the Foundation of India was holding an open forum at which several hundred of them were then directed entirely to suitably improve the criminal record of some of the prison authorities, a political motive was suspected.

Iraq

In Iraq only a small number offew were detained and there have been no reports of summary executions. However, from time to time, political prisoners have been arrested, sometimes on grounds of subversion and in other cases for membership of political groups. In January 1968 the State of Kuwait was abolished, but it is not known whether the sit-in in which several hundred of them were then directed entirely to suitably improve the criminal record of some of the prison authorities, a political motive was suspected.

Kenya

The political environment of the Kenya government has changed in recent months. The opponents of the government, the Kenya People's Union, have increased support for opposition. The government has adopted a more conciliatory approach, and there have been no reports of summary executions.

Kenya People's Union has increased in recent months. Opposition supporters have been arrested and some have been held without trial. The government has been able to report arrests and releases, but it is not possible to establish a network of contacts with the Kenya government.

Malaysia

Amnesty's work in Malaysia has been facilitated by the existence of a small but active opposition movement. The government has granted permission for Amnesty to work in the country, but it has been difficult to obtain accurate information about the situation. There are no reports of summary executions.

Latin America

The situation of the people and the obstacles encountered in our work in Latin America have made it necessary to concentrate our investigations in a few countries rather than diffuse them over the whole continent. For this reason Amnesty's work throughout this year has been concentrated on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay. In all countries there have been reports of violations of the freedom of the individual and of various types of interference with their freedom of association. The interference has been directed entirely to suitably improve the criminal record of some of the opposition authorities, a political motive was suspected.

Pakistan

Pakistan's State of Emergency was ended in August 1968, and a number of political prisoners were released. However, the situation remains difficult, and Amnesty continues to monitor the situation closely.

Portugal

There is, unfortunately, very little evidence in the past year's events in Portugal to suggest that the Salazar regime is moderating its attitude towards political opposition or relaxing its repressive measures against the people. Although there have been some developments, such as the release of a few political prisoners, these have not been significant. The situation remains difficult, and there have been no reports of summary executions.

Argentine and Brazil. In all these countries, our work is hindered by a lack of information about trials, appeals, and imprisonment. There have been reports of summary executions.

There is, unfortunately, very little evidence in the past year's events in Portugal to suggest that the Salazar regime is moderating its attitude towards political opposition or relaxing its repressive measures against the people. Throughout the year political trials have been held in the Portuguese courts and in Lisbon an appeal was recently held for acts against the security of the State. With the aggravating deprivation of political rights for periods of between 5 and 15 years and security measures which provide for sanctions for acts of subversion the army has been able to report arrests and releases, but it is not possible to establish a network of contacts with the Portuguese government.
Rhodesia

During the past year, Amnesty has again concentrated on providing relief for the families of detained and condemned Africans.

In January, Mr. Lardner Burke, the Minister of Law and Order, told Parliament that 549 people were under political relief for the families of detained and restricted Africans.

520 were adopted by Amnesty groups who aim to send regular payments to cover rent and food for the families, school fees for many of the children, and the costs of correspondence courses for those restrictees who want to study. These payments are sent through the Salisbury and Bulawayo offices of the Christian Council, which has now given official recognition as a relief organisation by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

No restrictees are released at the end of 1967, compared with 607 at the beginning of the year. Of these, over 200 are payments to cover rent and food for the families, school fees for many of the children, and the costs of correspondence courses for those restrictees who want to study. These payments are sent through the Salisbury and Bulawayo offices of the Christian Council, which has now been given official recognition as a relief organisation by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Sierra Leone

The assumption of power by the military National Reconstruction Council (NRC) in a counter-coup after the general election in 1967, led to a number of short-term arrests which were investigated at the time by Amnesty. The third military coup in Sierra Leone, which restored parliamentary government, has led to the arrest of a number of supporters, both of the defeated SLP and of the NRC, as well as of some of the soldiers involved in the coup which brought the present government to power. A number of Margai supporters are currently in detention or restriction at the end of 1967.

The government of Sierra Leone has been extremely secretive about its detentions, and has forced many of its victims to return. A security file containing the names of these detentions is being held by the government, according to Amnesty's source.

South Africa

During the past year, the government of South Africa has again increased the number of political prisoners. The number of political prisoners in South Africa has been dropping steadily since 1961, when, in the light of the potentially violent opposition to Singapore joining the Commonwealth, Legal restrictions on individual liberty in the last year have again increased, while arrests, trials and detentions have continued. With one small exception, Amnesty can report no reversal in this trend.

In June 1967 the Terrorism Act was introduced for the Republic and for South West Africa. It has since been extended to the former Union of South Africa and to the Transkei and other areas. The government of Singapore has been extremely secretive about its detentions, and has forced many of its victims to return. A security file containing the names of these detentions is being held by the government, according to Amnesty's source.

much harsher conditions than are prescribed for political detainees. Mr. Low is an adopted Amnesty prisoner, and the Group which adopted him (Sweden 25) has been working to obtain permission for him to come to England, to study law.

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**Spain**

The Tretiach Act is a piece of legislation which enacts the commission of torture which must be done the commission of torture. It has not only self to create efficacy of such sympathy, and such broad restrictions for any group does it make mere efforts to create sympathy for what they are doing. Therefore, most of the guarantees of a fair trial for persons charged without the right to counsel, and thereafter for trial at a place and time chosen by the prosecution, by a summary of a number of highly ambiguous acts.

In November 1967, Mrs. Helen Joseph's house arrest was immediately renewed for another five years; since then other bans have been renewed at the end of their original duration. Some 780 people in the Republic are now banned. But during 1967, 12 adoptions are made in South Africa than in any other single country, and Group efforts to support the families materially and psychologically have met with considerable success.

**St. Kitts**

The first West Indian territory to experience serious internal troubles after achieving independence, St. Kitts has, for many years now, been the scene of violent disturbances. Resistance to the government has been widespread, and attempts to establish a police force have failed. The situation there is believed to be rather more serious than in Egypt.

**Syria**

In Syria, as in the U.A.R., political prisoners (including Amnesty prisoners) were tried. Most of the trials were held in Damascus and Hama. The government has been accused of using torture and of holding prisoners in inhuman conditions. A disparity in the severity of sentences being prepared for adoption or investigation is now over 100. A disparity in the severity of sentences imposed on political prisoners is observed. severe sentences have been imposed on those who have been charged with sedition, while others have been allowed to leave the country. Amnesty and other international organisations have been working for the release of political prisoners.

**Tanzania**

The situation has not altered significantly during the past year. Another, although part of the Union, still remains to act independently of the government of the country in which it is situated. The government of the country has been accused of using torture and of holding prisoners in inhuman conditions. A disparity in the severity of sentences is observable. severe sentences have been imposed on those who have been charged with sedition, while others have been allowed to leave the country. Amnesty and other international organisations have been working for the release of political prisoners.

**Tunisia**

Bibler, a Tunisian student, has been sentenced to death for the murder of a police officer. The sentence has been upheld by the Court of Cassation. The government has been accused of using torture and of holding prisoners in inhuman conditions. A disparity in the severity of sentences is observable. severe sentences have been imposed on those who have been charged with sedition, while others have been allowed to leave the country. Amnesty is planning a study of the background to these sentences.
Uganda

Although the treatment of the five Ministers arrested and some of the other prominent political prisoners kept for months in total solitary confinement, has been improved and they are now reported, with one or two exceptions, to be in good health, the conditions in which they are kept are not conducive to the preservation of their health. The fact that the imprisonment of a person for a period of months without any formal charge has been estranged in Case of the Presidents of the People's Republic of China, a clear indication that human rights and political prisoners are held continuously in some sort of political detention. The Ugandan government has been approached by Amnesty and other international organisations to release political prisoners in the latter case. It is hoped that the preparations for the presentation of President Mute which is to be made will be considered by the Government of the U.A.R. and that it will continue to damage the reputation of one of the most powerful black African states.

U.S.S.R.

In October 1967 we received a list of 200 imprisoned dissident Baptists, prepared by an organisation called the "Council of Primitive Christians" in Pravoslav tv, including the date of birth, the date of imprisonment, the address of the prisoner, and the number of dependants involved. Attached to the list was a copy of the letter to U Thant from the Council which described the difficulties encountered by dissident Baptists in daily life. A document of this kind is almost unprecedented. It is something of a mystery how those who compiled the information, which covers an area stretching from Baku to Central Asia, were able to do so successfully.

Unlike members of the official Baptist organisation, who are careful to conform to the restrictive state laws on religion, the dissident Baptists, asserting their constitutional rights to freedom of religion, continue to build their communities and conduct their own religious services without undue interference. The state authorities continue to give religious instruction to children. The authorities take no more serious view of proselytising or the involvement of children. Most of the hundred people adopted since October were granted in 1966 and received a 3-5 year labour camp sentence.

While the world press gave wide coverage to the Moscow trial in January there was a marked lack of interest in two trials in Kazan and in December 1967 and March 1968. In the first, a professor of Tibetan studies was sentenced to fifteen years hard labour for allegedly plotting to overthrow the regime. According to reports, he and his associates had stockpiled arms for the purpose. In the second trial, seventeen people received labour camp sentences for belonging to philosophical groups, roughly speaking, bad as their aim a parliamentary democracy in Russia with the Russian Orthodox Church as the state church. Amnesty groups may also have learned the same lesson in the latter case. It is unfortunate that the response of the Soviet authorities to Group letters has not improved, but there have been interesting instances where replies were received, even though little information was gained. Experts feel that enquiries of this kind may not bring the information expected, but that in some cases the prisoner received better treatment than he would otherwise do.

The tragic development of the Nigerian civil war is well known to the audience and continues to be a test situation of this kind. The normal framework of law and human rights within which Amnesty operates is inevitably suspended. A careful watch is being kept on the situation and information on the legal background to the situation is being released to the U.A.R. The human rights situation in Nigeria has been forwarded to the I.C.J. At present Amnesty has only one adopted prisoner, Wole Soyinka, the poet and playwright.

Yemen

In the Yemen and the former British Protectorate of South Arabia, the change of regime was an indirect result. The Saudi Arabian government's offer of financial aid to the U.A.R. after the disastrous defeat was received with mixed feelings by the new President Sallal. The Yemen government's request for financial aid was rejected by President Nasser. They returned to the Yemen and the former British Protectorate of South Arabia, the change of regime was an indirect result. The former British Protectorate of South Arabia, the change of regime was an indirect result.

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West Africa (Nigeria)

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South Yemen

The failure of Egyptian policy in the Yemen by turn affected the course of the revolution in its neighbour, South Arabia. The British government had planned to hand over power on their withdrawal to the unpopular, hastily-formed Federal Government of South Arabia, which excluded the most powerful opposition force, the British government's emergency powers. Before independence F.L.O.S.Y., the official Egyptian protege, with an office in Cairo and impressive overseas contacts, appeared undoubtedly the most powerful opposition force, destined to take over once the British withdrew. Many of those who had joined the party were detained under the colonial government's emergency powers. (Amnesty's mission to Aden in 1965 was primarily concerned with investigating allegations of ill-treatment of F.L.O.S.Y. detainees).

In the event the comparatively unknown N.L.F., which drew its support predominantly from the up-country sultanates, established its supremacy with unexpected rapidity during the bitter infighting between the opposition groups which precipitated the removal of the British presence ahead of schedule. This success appears to have been due to two factors: the party's considerable membership in the Federal Army (mostly recruited from up-country), and its more overtly nationalist character. E.L.O.S.Y., more moderate and politically experienced, drew its support mainly from Aden, where it was strongly represented among trade unions and immigrant Yemeni workers. It was openly supported by Egypt and identified with Egyptian political aims. Several N.L.F. members, including the new President, had been detained at one time in Cairo. Egypt's loss of prestige after the war, the humiliating reversal in the Yemen and her temporary inability, or unwillingness, to provide the practical support necessary, swung opinion behind the uncompromised, locally based and more discreetly Egyptian-backed N.L.F. The new revolutionary government emptied the prisons, both in Aden and the former sultanates, but the empty places were soon filled. Amnesty protested to President Qahtaan as-Shaabi against the death sentences, later commuted, imposed on some of the more prominent political prisoners by arbitrarily-formed military tribunals. The numbers of prisoners is very considerable. They include members, supporters and employees of the British-backed, former Federal government, members of the families or administration of the up-country sultanates and F.L.O.S.Y. supporters. The exact figure is unknown, but some estimates have put it as high as 5,000. Rumours of torture and ill-treatment, frequent and disturbing, appear to be not without foundation. Amnesty is deeply concerned by these developments, but effective inter- vention to protect human rights in such an area, so fresh from revolution, presents almost insuperable problems.

Yugoslavia

In the last year recent moves towards legal reform have been continued and consolidated by the introduction of a new Code of Criminal Procedure. This particularly welcome feature of this is found in the provision made with the accused's right to legal defence. The revised Code gives considerably greater rights to the defence and much stronger protection to the accused than existed under its predecessor. Appropriately, the Code was introduced on 1 January, the first day of Human Rights Year. The traditional Yugoslav political stability has been threatened by the separatist demands of its component nationalities. Today this is reflected in the pattern of imprisonment. Instances of imprisonment from two very different areas have continued to arouse Amnesty's concern in the last year: the Albanian minority in the Kosmet and young Croat nationalists in Zagreb. Neither has a tradition of non-violent protest, but both groups are now in jail as prisoners of conscience.
imprisonment. They join a number of other young Croats sentenced for a similar offence in 1966.

In October 1967, Mihajlo Mihajlov's four-and-a-half year sentence was reduced on appeal by one year on health grounds. A psychiatric report submitted to the court said that he had 'a psychopathic personality insufficient for social adaptability.' Mihajlov was then moved to a hard labour prison at Posaresatz where he was put to work enamelling iron plates at a furnace. He refused to work, on the grounds that this was unsuited to his educational and cultural qualifications—a right accorded to prisoners in Yugoslavia. He was put in solitary confinement as a result of his demands to be treated as a political prisoner—a status which is not recognised in Yugoslav law.

In 1967, 140 Croatian linguists and scholars signed a declaration asking that the Croatian language should become a fourth official language of the Federation. They condemned the imposition of Serbian on Croat speakers and the consequent relegation of Croatian to the level of a local dialect. As the two languages are essentially similar, this was regarded as a political rather than a strictly linguistic demand. The Declaration aroused serious political controversy. A few of the signatories were expelled from the Communist Party; several were officially warned; and some withdrew their support. None was prosecuted. But a year later, in 1968, six young Croats who had distributed leaflets supporting the Declaration and advocating autonomy for Croatia were tried and convicted of spreading 'hostile propaganda.' The leader, Vinko Vukasovic, was sentenced to three-and-a-half years' imprisonment. They join a number of other young Croats sentenced for a similar offence in 1966.