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## BULLETIN

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### HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On December 10th not enough people all over the world will commemorate Human Rights Day. Yet the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has appealed that governments should make special efforts to mark the occasion for it will be the 15th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

All member states signed this declaration. Yet many of their governments violate it flagrantly and many others covertly trespass upon it from time to time.

Whilst ever it is more in the breach than the observance that the Day is honoured there will be overtime work for every AMNESTY group in the world.

A clever moralist has said to us: "Human Rights? Too much assertion of these already. What about emphasising the responsibilities?"

That is precisely what we are doing — to governments — to those whose power over, and whose demands upon the individual are total. In their privileged position, so terribly corruptive, they must be reminded every day of the words of John Stuart Mill that "The whole of mankind has no right to silence one dissenter".

On this tenth day of December, 1963, we shall again reiterate this belief for we shall have noted with concern the meagre response to the United Nations' appeal to all governments to honour the day by granting a general amnesty to all political prisoners.

### THE YEAR'S COMMEMORATION

This has been arranged in conjunction with the United Nations Association and will take place in St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street, at 6 p.m. on December 10th. It will take the form of a choral ceremony with the kindly co-operation of Cy Grant (negro-spirituals) Jacqueline Dupres (cello) and the St. Bride's Choir. There will follow the presentation of awards in honour of the XVth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Do come if you can.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, 1963

Much of this bulletin is a report of this year's International Conference. With the gentle whirr of German T.V. cameras accompanying Chairman Norman Marsh's voice, the Reuter man on and off the 'phone, the 'Times' man threatening to come himself and the Italian journalist in Bonn who spent half an hour in personal interview — delegates were made to feel that they now belonged to an organisation which was gathering international recognition.

It was decided that next year's conference should be held in Britain. It is hoped that this will ensure a goodly number of British members present.

### INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS:

ROGER MOODY an enthusiastic Bristol supporter armed himself with literature, posters and a collecting box and set out on Wednesday the 30th of October for London, making the cause of AMNESTY known wherever he could en route. We are hoping to have a fuller report from him later.

GIDEON BERMAN of "The Economist" Intelligence Unit besides offering to do voluntary work collected over £7 in one day at his employment. He has also offered to mobilise a labour squad whenever a rush job comes along.

### APPRECIATION:

1. The following is an extract from a letter dated 15th October from the Catholic Action of Exiles from Czechoslovakia.

"Dear Mr Benenson,

May we take this opportunity to thank the Amnesty International, and you personally for all you have done in the case of our beloved Archbishop — Mgr. Josef BERAN. We were delighted to hear the news about his 'release', but have waited, and are still awaiting the 'details' of the situation, E.G. what are the 'conditions' attached to it...

Yours sincerely in Xto  
Association of S.S. Cyril & Methodiu  
(signed) J. Lang S. J. and Josef Czernin.

P. S. And of course, having mentioned Archbishop Beran, we must not omit bishops: Otčenášek (the Threes in Edinburgh), Skoupý (Lewisham) — Vojtašák (Hampstead) — only to mention those I know! — on behalf of whom the members of Threes have bombarded the Czechoslovak Authorities. It clearly shows — that perseverance and insistence pays!

2. Mr Bent Knudson, Danish lawyer and member of the International Executive of AMNESTY who travelled to the Lebanon early this year on behalf of 180 members of the PPS has received a letter from a lawyer in Beirut containing the following:

"La Breveté de votre séjour au Liban ne m'a donné la possibilité de vous introduire auprès du Président. Néanmoins, il a été mis, ultérieurement, au courant de votre de votre mission, comme je vous l'avais promis.

Les prisonniers de PPS jouissent actuellement d'un régime libéral et human: vos efforts et les nôtres ont donc été couronnés de succès. — Bien plus, il y a lieu d'espérer que leur cas trouvera une solution satisfaisante".

### NEWS OF THREES

RELEASES: Czechoslovakia 8; Spain 1; South Africa 3; East Germany 1; South Vietnam 1.

Although 5 of the Czech prisoners had already been presumed free in July their releases were not confirmed until October. The names of the eight are: Juergen Caesar - Ladislav Hlad - Bohumil Lausman - Dr Jan Lichner - Mgr. Dr Karel Skoupy - Vieslav Stein - MGR. Jan Vojtassak - Mgr. Stanislav Zela. Of the 3 South Africans 2 escaped the country:- Abdullah Jessat

and Leon Levy. Mrs Pixie Benjamin is the third: 12 months of her 18 months' sentence were suspended. The East German is Juergen Wiechert. His early release deserves special mention. His story, briefly, the nineteen-year-old son of a West German clergyman, who participated with a group of other young people in a boat trip to Bornholm. When it was found that the captain had received orders to remain in the safe waters of the D.D.R. a letter of protest was written by Juergen and signed by all the boys requesting that their original trip should be completed. This was considered as an act against the democratic republic indicating the intention to flee the country, and in August 1961 Juergen Wiechert received a sentence of 8 years imprisonment for hatred against the state.

The Harrow THREES group undertook to publicise these facts in the East German press, letters were written to the Minister of Justice. And a fortnight ago the boy's release was published by the Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen, six years before completion of the sentence.

**MEETINGS:** Manchester University organised a two-day student conference which was attended by representatives of seven colleges. A five-member committee was elected and a report outlining future activities amongst student groups will be issued shortly to all participating universities.

**NEW GROUPS:** St. Christopher School, Letchworth; Bristol Friends; Durham College; Journalists, Cologne; Toronto; additional groups in Belfast, Reading, Elgar (London).

**WANDSWORTH PRISON:** It seems at first glance a puzzling suggestion; how can criminals — and reconvicts at that — show any interest at all in 'Prisoners of Conscience'? A meeting held in the rehabilitation wing of Wandsworth prison on the subject of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and how the inmates can usefully share in our activities revealed that men, considered by society as social misfits without a future, were more than willing to understand the misery of men and women persecuted for their beliefs outside their own misfortunes, and thereby showing a sensibility no one had been willing to credit them with. By Christmas some members will be free and in a position to start a THREE.

**REGIONAL NEWS LETTERS:** In order to achieve more cohesion amongst individual groups it would be helpful to circulate news letters: this would be particularly helpful to newly formed THREES who are anxious to have a yardstick by which to measure the extent of failure and success. You may therefore be asked in future to send a copy of your news letter to a group abroad, or vice versa.

We regret that the later publication date of this bulletin has robbed the following notice of its advance publicity value. We apologise to the Eltham Group who have worked tirelessly for the success of this large-scale function.

#### ELTHAM GROUP: CHRISTMAS MARKET

An ambitious fund-raising project is being organised by the Eltham Group. On Saturday, November 16 at 3 p.m. Christopher Chataway, M. P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, will open the Group's glittering Christmas Market at Eltham College, Grove Park Road, S. E. 9. Widespread local support is expected both from Amnesty groups in the area and from members of churches and other organisations.

The scope of this market will extend to the whole range of Christmas present buying. Timed to take place near the beginning of the gift rush — 33 shopping days, in fact — the market will offer toys from a £7.10.0 electric train set to sixpenny luck-dip trinkets, electrical goods such as records, table-lamps, irons, etc., originally dressed dolls in various shapes, sizes and colours, stationery including a selection of Christmas cards, delicious home-made cakes, biscuits and sweets, a grocery stall, a large variety of knitwear, babywear, aprons, handkerchiefs and many household and toilet goods, not forgetting the ever-popular and highly seasonable assortment of decorative candles.

Members of Amnesty International and all their friends in London will be most welcome at the market; it is a unique opportunity to get a large part of one's Christmas shopping done in good time, at reasonable prices and — most important of all — at a considerable benefit to the cause of our prisoners of conscience.

### Hampstead Group.

A social gathering on the evening of December 8th, at Burgh House, New End Square. Stalls, beer and cheese and all Amnesty supporters welcome.

Sheffield, Bristol and Westminster are just three of the many groups who are arranging something special for Human Rights Day and we hope to have details to print in the bulletin following the occasion.

### DELEGATES

**SOUTH AFRICA.** Early in October Peter Benenson went to South Africa to attend the trial of the Rev. Arthur Blaxall. He also visited the High Commission Territories. On his return the International Secretariat published a report "NOW IN THE FUTURE IS IT PEACE OR WAR?" and this together with a confidential annex was sent to the leaders of the three main political parties. All Amnesty Three Groups will soon be receiving a copy of the report. Copies are available to other members at one shilling each; for non-members two shillings.

**HIGH COMMISSION TERRITORIES.** Lt. Commander G. H. Cunningham, M. B. E., M. V O. R. N. (retd.) left England early this month to become AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL's Refugee Counsellor for fugitives arriving in Bechuanaland from the Republic of South Africa.

### SOUTH AFRICA. AUTUMN 1963

It is bright spring in Southern Africa; and when I was there they were waiting anxiously for the first rain-cloud. In the stretched heat tension mounts: there were an average of 5 suicides a day in Pretoria, and one afternoon 11 women took drug overdoses in Johannesburg.

The European population enjoys a standard of living that is strikingly high, but nowhere more than among the lower artisans - they earn twice what they could in Britain. "Apartheid" is best explained as an economic restrictive practice: its purpose is to preserve 87% of the land in European hands (average farmholding 2,200 acres) and all the skilled and semi-skilled jobs. The only fields which Africans are allowed to penetrate are medicine, because white people would not want to go to an African doctor, and the arts, where the Europeans lack inclination. Nonetheless the chronic shortage of skilled labour for the enormous industrial development in South Africa obliges industrialists secretly to give responsible jobs to Africans - the profit motive is eroding "apartheid" in Johannesburg and on the Road.

Since Dr Verwoerd led his country out of the Commonwealth (on a most technical point in the Prime Ministers' Conference) the European population has increasingly rallied behind him. There are two main factors: first, the extraordinary pick-up in industrial production, outside investment, immigration and business activity in the last year. The United Party, never steadfast on the colour issue, only put up formal objections to the 90-day detention bill. Last month two of its leading M. P's in English-speaking Natal defected to the Nationalists. The only voice left in Parliamentary opposition is that of the Progressive Party's one M. P. Helen Sulzman.

She and Helen Joseph are examples of the most impressive courage of the women of South Africa: the Black Sash movement another South Africa is not the only country or age where the women have proved more steadfast to ideals than the men, but never was it more marked.

The most cruel part of the situation facing the Africans remains the appalling poverty of their agricultural lands: this forces the men into the mines to pay the Government's poll tax. Malnutrition to the point of near-starvation in parts of Transkei and areas of North Transvaal strike the visitor more forcefully than in other parts of Africa where there is no European population truly living off the fat of the land.

The drift away from the countryside, inevitable in these conditions, explains the apparatus of controls of Africans centred round the Pass Book. Without some city influx control Johannesburg and Durban would become as crowded as Tokyo or Kyoto. But in Japan rural agriculture is developing in strides; in South Africa the Africans are being pushed back into the already eroded Transkei and refused grants for tractors and fertilisers.

British papers emphasise the arrests of political leaders. Abhorrent is in the system which denies 12,000,000 people their political rights, the most hurtful thing to the visitor - and to South Africa's reputation - is the development of a situation in which the rural African may be reduced by the weakness of malnutrition to complete impotence. This may not be genocide, or even intended to be anything more than the preservation of the white "platteland", but history will judge the Nationalist Government, not by its intentions, but by its results. There is no good having an enormous surplus of unsaleable mealies, all carbohydrate, when African children are dying for want of essential vitamins.

P. B.