

# Amnesty

No. 9 18th October, 1961

## Comment

**O**RGANISERS of the AMNESTY Movement in France, Germany and Belgium arrived in London on Saturday, 7th October for the second meeting of the International Committee of the Movement; other national organisers sent good wishes. The principal object of the meeting was to decide the form of the Movement after the end of 1961.

The main function of the AMNESTY Movement is to mobilise public opinion by disseminating information about individual prisoners. This in turn depends on steady and reliable sources of information for the Library. Where there is censorship, or no means of communication, the only effective way of obtaining information is by sending personal investigators. But money is needed for on-the-spot investigations.

How to raise money and finance the Movement? It was agreed that, at first, every penny must be used in building up the Library. Other schemes, though admirable, must be postponed.

It was decided to concentrate on commemorating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10th, the day set aside by the United Nations for this purpose. In London the ceremony will take place in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and it is hoped that simultaneous ceremonies will be held elsewhere so that the international and idealistic character of the Movement is brought home.

It is essential for the AMNESTY Movement to carry support from all parties, churches and countries. By building up the Library, with funds principally gathered on Human Rights Day each year, no existing organisations would be hurt and all would benefit.

## Do we get an answer?

3rd October, 1961

His Excellency the Cuban Charge d'Affaires,  
The Cuban Embassy,  
22 Mount Street,  
London, W.1.

Your Excellency,

I am writing this letter on behalf of APPEAL FOR AMNESTY, a newly-formed international organisation for the defence of freedom of opinion and religion. At London Headquarters we are compiling a library of biographical details of Prisoners on Conscience, that is to say, people who are held in prison solely because their views are unacceptable to their Government. We have received a letter asking us to include within the library a Cuban citizen by name Luis Miguel Linsuain. My informant writes to say that he has been held for some time incommunicado in Santiago de Cuba. We understand that no charge has been brought against him and that he has not been tried.

We should be obliged to learn from you what are the reasons for holding Luis Miguel Linsuain prisoner. If our information is correct and he is being imprisoned solely because his views are unacceptable to your Government, then we would ask you to transmit to your Government the fervent hope that he will be released from prison as soon as is possible.

Yours sincerely,

PETER BENENSON

## Amnesty Notes

Fridtjof Nansen, the centenary of whose birth was celebrated on October the 10th, 1961, was a man of many parts, zoologist, explorer, don, diplomat, and humanitarian. As Norway's first Ambassador to Britain, he started out on a career of international services, ending up as the first High Commissioner for Refugees. His untiring efforts on behalf of refugees led to the creation of an international passport to which he gave his name.

It is a sad comment on the state of the world that statelessness is once again on the increase. Paying tribute to Nansen would perhaps be best achieved by introducing an international passport, thus greatly diminishing or even extinguishing statelessness.

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AMNESTY "earnestly requested" President Nkrumah of

Ghana, by cable, that those he recently arrested be brought to trial. We received the following answer: "Re your cablegram, 4.10.61, the Government will soon publish full facts about the arrests." All very promising no doubt, but meanwhile President Nkrumah's political opponents are still behind bars without a trial.

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Willi Brandt, the mayor of West Berlin, recently told Ion Ratiu, on the plane from Berlin to Bonn, that the humanitarian aspect of the crisis must be coped with. Families must be allowed to be reunited whatever the political decisions of the Great Powers about the "Ulbricht Wall." There is a precedent: the agreement between Communist Poland and the Federal German Republic concerning families hit by the introduction of the Oder-Neisse Line.