



DERBY AMNESTY

Amnesty International (AI) Derby and District Group Newsletter

<http://derby.amnesty.org.uk>

March 2013

Secretary: Steffi Hahn 01332 370469 @ steffihahn@gmx.net
Chair: James Lam 01332 606937 @ dr_j_lam@hotmail.com
Editor: Alison Simcock 01332 349405 @ alison.simcock1@ntlworld.com

Bumper Book Sale

Saturday 13th April

Help!! The annual Book Sale is slightly later this year, on Saturday April 13th, but will be in the large Guildhall clubroom as normal. As ever, we are looking for supplies of books, which I can collect if you ring me on 01332 766536.

Any books in good condition apart from old textbooks will be welcomed. We will also need helpers on the day, from 9.00am until 3.30pm.

Please encourage your family and friends to come and buy books – we always have a wide variety of good, clean books, but we need customers!

It is getting more difficult to attract buyers with the lack of footfall past the Guildhall and the concentration on books by charity shops. So please come and buy and bring others with you.

There is a tear-off slip below for help or donations in lieu.

Anne Feist

Diary Dates . . . Diary Dates . . . Diary Dates .

Group Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Friends Meeting House, St Helen's St. Derby All welcome.

Tue 12 Mar Group Meeting 7.30pm FMH.

Tue 9 Apr Group Meeting 7.30pm FMH

Sat 13 Apr Annual Book Sale, 10.30 – 2.30 Guildhall Clubroom, Derby
Lots of books and help needed (see coupon)

Tue 14 May Group Meeting 7.30pm FMH

Very Early Warning!

Sat 28 Sep Flag Day Derby City Centre

Emergency General Meeting

At the last International Committee Meeting (ICM), the governing body of Amnesty International, it was decided that the richer sections would increase their contributions to the movement from 30% to 40% of income at the end of the decade. This was in support of expanding Amnesty International in the South and East. The UK section hoped that the income from membership recruitment would compensate for the increased contribution to the international movement. Unfortunately the UK Section's income was less than expected. The Board of the UK Section decided on a programme of reducing costs. This meant that some staff would be made redundant.

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Greeting Card Campaign

The December 8th 2012, was the nearest Saturday to Human Rights Day, and the day that the Derby AI group had set aside for the annual Write-a-thon, or Greetings Card Campaign action. For me this is one of the most meaningful of AI activities. I value the opportunity of sending a person message however short and carefully worded to various prisoners of conscience, or families of prisoners or the disappeared.

Continued overleaf. . .



Reply Slip Amnesty International Book Sale 13th April

I am able to help with the Book Sale and can help between and

I am unable to help at the Book Sale but enclose donation of (Cheques to Amnesty International)

Name.....Address.....

Email Phone

Please return to Anne Feist (or email or phone) by April 2nd. 3 Willson Ave, Littleover DE23 2BD. anne.feist@ntlworld.com

Greetings Card Campaign . . .

continued from overleaf

Letters of appeal and requests for release sent to governments are effective as we know, but it is a privilege to be able to write to some of the prisoners AI supports, even though we may never know whether the greeting arrived. I do treasure two postcards I have received in reply to greetings sent.

This year the group held the Greetings Card event in St. Peter's Centre, newly opened in June 2012. It was a warm and welcoming venue, with room for people to settle down and take time to sign letters, send personal cards, or quickly add a signature to cards prepared for multiple signing. We are grateful to Margaret and Jill and other AI members behind the scenes who prepared cards for multiple signing, gave cards ready for participants to use, or prepared letters of appeal which were signed and sent on to various governments.

The centre was busy for most of the day, and the statistics are a testimony to its success. 388 items of mail were posted, £170 was donated and the merchandise stall did some useful trade and took £160 altogether. We were honoured by the visit of both the Mayor of Derby and Rt. Hon Margaret Beckett MP. Both signed cards in support of the Amnesty's work. Thank you to all who supported the day, in whatever way, and watch this space for our next event!

Jean Mary

Emergency General Meeting . . .

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Many Amnesty members in the UK objected to the redundancy programme, believing staff with valuable skills and experience would be lost. Others believed that ordinary members should have been consulted before the programme of redundancy had started.

These members managed to get enough support for an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) to convene in January this year.

About 500 delegates attended the EGM in London. Seven resolutions were tabled for debate. As the UK Section of Amnesty International (AIUK) is organised to a certain extent as a corporate entity it is subject to Company Law. This meant that the resolutions were written in "legalese". However the objectives of the resolutions expressed the concerns of many Amnesty members. Such concerns include the view that the redundancy programme is wrong and that any increased contribution should have the consent of ordinary members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

One aspect of company law is that in order for any resolution at an EGM to be accepted it needs the support of at least 75% of the votes cast at the EGM. All the resolutions had the support of at least two thirds of the votes. However, the delegates accepted only one resolution opposed by the Board. This resolution called on the Board to not make any "material reorganisation" without the consent of an AGM. "Material organisation" was taken to mean reducing the number of staff by at least 10%.

After the EGM the Board decided to postpone the redundancy programme until after this year's AGM in April. The Board promised to submit a resolution at the AGM proposing what they intend to do to cut costs including any redundancies.

Most of the speeches at the EGM were in support of the resolutions. However it should be noted that those who opposed the resolutions believed that as the ICM is the main decision making body of the Amnesty movement we should abide by its decision. They asked the question how would the poorer sections in the South and East perceive the wealthier sections who refuse to abide their promise to increase contributions at the ICM.

Whatever one's views of the rights and wrongs of the issue, the impression I got at the EGM is that there has been lost of trust between ordinary members and the Board. It will take some time before that trust is regained.

James Lam