Be a Hero for a Better World

"Tothra is beyond but in two thirds of the world's

"Torture is banned but in two-thirds of the world's countries it is still being committed in secret. Too many governments still allow wrongful imprisonment, murder or "disappearance" to be carried out by their officials with impunity."

-- Peter Benenson (founder of Amnesty International)

Peter Benenson

(1921-2005)

Peter Benenson was a British lawyer who helped create Amnesty International in 1961. Today, Amnesty International is the world's largest human rights organizations with nearly 2 million members in 64 countries. Amnesty International's success helped spawn human rights organizations all around the world, so that today there are more than 1000 local, national and international organizations working to protect human rights.

Peter Benenson's involvement in advocating human rights began while he was sitting on the London subway reading the evening paper about 2 Portuguese students who were sentenced to 7 years in prison for toasting to freedom. He was outraged and tried to think about how to help them. Instead of rushing off by himself to the Portuguese embassy to complain, he decided to find a way to get lots of people to speak out about it. He created an Appeal to Amnesty which was picked up by newspapers all around the world asking for the release of the students, and it generated thousands and thousands of letters in a short time. This simple tool grew and spread and was a major force in helping to mobilize 'civil society' to have tremendous power for change, when organized into coordinated worldwide campaigns.

Peter Benenson was born on July 31, 1921 in London, England

Be A Hero For A Better World!

- 1. Find out more about this hero
- 2. Hold an event to raise awareness about human rights issues
- 3. Contribute to organizations working to defend human rights

Human Rights Organizations

- Amnesty International (amnesty.org)
- Carter Center (cartercenter.org)
- Human Rights First (humanrightsfirst.org)
- Human Rights Watch (hri.org)
- Rights International (rightsinternational.org)
- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (ohchr.org)
- Witness (witness.org)
- Women's Human Rights Net (whrnet.org)

For more information: www.BetterWorldHeroes.com/benenson.htm

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