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INTERVIEWEE Joyce Baker

PLACE St. Albans, Herts

ALL KING UK

DATE May 1st 1984

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ORIGINS: ORAL HISTORY PILOT PROJECT

NARRATOR: Mrs. Eric Baker (Joyce)

DATE: June 1983

PLACE: 66 Clarence Road, St. Albans, England

INTERVIEWERS: Andrew Blane and Priscilla Ellsworth

FOR: Amnesty International Archives

JOYCE BAKER is the widow of Eric Baker, a leading figure in the formation and early development of the Amnesty movement. He was one of an informal group of people with whom Peter Benenson discussed the idea of an Amnesty "Campaign" before its launching in May 1961, and subsequently served as co-Chairman with Benenson.

019 JB: Yes, you were the first American...

A3: That's true; that's true.

004 AB: In other words, as we talk a little bit you will remember some of the people that were critical and close. Now, this thing, this oral history, it's not a very good name. Because it suggests that it's like the writing of history when all it is, is really the putting together of documentation. What we're doing is supplementing the kind of thing you did when you turned over part of Eric's files to the archives; now that's written material. And what we're trying to do is to supplement that with verbal material. Which is rather simple and rather interesting. I'll tell you where we can use your help because we're just thinking out how to do it. It was Priscilla's idea. She had some work in that in the United States and then she approached me because we're good friends; her husband is now a member of the IEC and he's a publisher in New York and we've known each other for the years that I was on the IEC...

019 JB: Yes, you were the first American...

AB: That's true; that's true.

JB: ...because, it was a long time before we got any response...there was somebody, a relative of Peter's, who appeared, but you were the first person, in any way representative.

022 AB: The relative of Peter's was not on the IEC; he was kind of a chairperson of the United States Section. But there was an American, who was more English than American because he was born and raised in London, by the name of Ivan Morris. You may have met Ivan Morris.

027 JB: Yes, I do recall this person, I think from Stockholm. It was of course a time when a number of us went as house observers. I went to a number of those, but wasn't anywhere near being involved in the work of the executive (word unclear). Nowadays I gather that's a different thing.

AB: It is; it's gotten awfully formal.

JB: I feel so privileged that I was able to go as an observer...

032 AB: Now, that machine will be on.

PE: It's on now, in fact. We're just trying to see how...

AB: We're just trying to get the sound.

PE: So someone's got to go back a few seconds to see how the sound

is. Should we try now? See how our voices...we could do that.

(adjusts machine)

AB: That's a nice pillow you've got.

PE: Yes, that softens the sound.

038 AB: One of the ways in which we will need sort of help is knowing other people to talk, as I mentioned that to you, as we come along. What we thought is we would like to come out here more than today but not this visit, but over the next eight months or ten months and follow up and talk. So we really will be getting to know each other. Because what we want to do is start out...we have to limit it. It's a pilot project and what we want, these are our thoughts, what we wanted to do is to really start in this week with the period up to the appeal in May (1961) and the immediate months afterward. Now, what we're not going to deal with, though we will feel free to talk, but we're not going to concentrate now on the last, well, the next decade, we're not going to get into when Robert Swann came, we're not going to get into the crises, we're not going to get into when Eric becomes the brick that brings the thing through the crisis...we'll do that later. And also when he becomes honorary president...all of those things we want on tape but we felt we would start with the earliest period. When he came to know Peter, how he came to know Peter, how the appeal was launched, and those things. So, those are the kinds of limits we had in mind, because it is, as we said, a pilot project. Now, we have some documents here, which may help you because we would ask questions in terms of remembering. We're going to talk with, this week, we're going to have just an appointment

with Peter. He is very pleased to know we'd be down here today. I will see him tomorrow, just to talk, we're not going to really interview him until the fall. We'll be talking with Sean [MacBride], and...[interviewers discussing whom they will speak to] Neville Vincent and others. And we have a list of names.

063 PE: And the Marshes. Christel and Norman Marsh.

JB: There were a few people in the legal profession who were Peter's close friends and I was forgetting Neville Vincent, his name, and I so frequently forget other people's names, but I've got...

8?  
AB: Did you know Norman Marsh and Crystel Marsh?

9?  
JB: I know Norman and Crystel, yes.

AB: Did you know Peter Archer?

JB: .Oh, yes, yes.

069 AB: Is Margaret Archer...

JB: She was never quite so much in evidence, behind Peter. But I didn't see her often; I doubt if I saw her more than once or twice at meetings. But then of course I wasn't at every meeting, but I was usually at the annual conferences and things like that and the British Section AGMs which of course Peter was usually involved with, so I'm sure

Margaret was behind Peter in everything, but I didn't see her very often.

076 AB: You didn't see her very often. When did you meet Eric?

JB: When did I meet Eric?

AB: Yes. We'd love to know something about...

078 JB: I see. Oh, that's interesting. Um, it was a very interesting way in which he came to the Society [of Friends (Quakers)], if this isn't too long a story. He was a schoolboy of 17, 18, and he was the Vice-Head Boy at the school, and the Head Boy had given a talk on, um, the [pause] Cadet Corps that they had (it was just before the way, '38 say, '37, '38) and Eric must have been thinking round towards, against militarism and towards pacifism, as a schoolboy; his parent were in no way able to help him in that. They were quite humble but supportive --

086 he was an adopted child, by the way -- and I think it's his antecedents that really had put that fire into Eric. The upshot was after this talk about the Cadet Corps he went to the headmaster and asked if he could give a talk to the school, to the Assembly, to the school Assembly, and was given permission. And he spoke on another way of facing these things. I don't know what the content was. The upshot then was that one of the masters who was a Quaker at our Sheffield meeting went to him afterwards and he said, "You know if you have ideas like that you'll find yourself probably being very much alone but you would find people of similar ideas at the Quaker meeting. Would you care to come along and see how

we work there?" And Eric came along. That wasn't my meeting. But  
098 we had him come to our Young Friends Group. I was in the area. We  
had what we called a Young Friends Group, which is a very lively affair  
for people, usually, about eighteen to thirty years, and he'd been  
told of this group, "would he care to come along after the Sunday  
morning meeting." And he did. He tells me that he stood outside the door  
and wondered what he was going to find. (laughter) And we were a very  
happy group of young people, brought together by approaching war, my  
brother for instance was a C.O. and other people who were facing not  
going into the army and so on, standing against war on different  
levels. Anyway, he [Eric] told me that by the time he went away he  
decided he would like to marry that girl who was secretary [laughs]  
109 but I didn't know about that for a while. Because he was five years  
younger than me. But you know at eighteen or nineteen Eric was so mature,  
you just didn't notice the difference in ages. My brother and I were  
very good friends and Eric became one of a threesome. We went to lots  
of meetings and conferences and so on.

113 AB: Your brother was younger than you?

JB: My brother was three years younger than me, yes. So we ended up  
three good friends; so much happened. He [Eric] went up to Cambridge  
soon after and I began to realize I missed this young man very much, his  
companionship, leadership. It was quite clear from the beginning that he  
was going to be with people quite a few years older; he was going to be  
a leader. And, he was a strange young man, but I think we had our effect  
on him as well. He smiled a bit more and laughed and was full of fun



after a little while with us though of course he was very, very serious. Being very much on his own. And I think he's very sensitive. One of the  
122 things I recall very clearly which I think was in line with his feeling about prisoners and so on (it was just all part of the same thing), was going with him the morning after Sheffield had been bombed in the center, quite out of recognition. I had just come back from Birmingham where I had spent a term at Woodbrooke [Quaker] College when nearby Coventry was devastated. I'd remembered that the night when the planes were going over, sweeping round, it was a very, well, very unhappy time, and traumatic in many ways, seeing people just flooding down the roads to get away from the city center because Birmingham had had its share; the Coventry one was really beyond anything we'd had and we'd had many nights in the shelters [cellars]. I went back home at the end of term and remember saying to my mother, it would be nice to have a night of sleep. Because Sheffield had had (till then) nothing. One that very night we had seven hours; and two days later we got nine hours of continuous bombing. And it was pretty shattering. Eric had been caught by the sirens and had stayed overnight at my home. Next morning we went into town together and round where the Quaker meetinghouse had been  
141 was the center of a lot of the bombing damage. And we walked around a bit, saw overturned "tram cars" [trolleys] on one side, and all kinds of rubble. We did not see bodies, but one knew that the building was flattened, and so on, what was beneath. But the wreckage was appalling. Some of it had been hotels, pubs, etc.; some was cleared away. And I suppose he [Eric] was nineteen, perhaps twenty, and he sat down in the middle of the wreckage at one point, put his head in his hands, and he must have shed some very bitter tears. And he said to me, "Well,

now you know the sort of man I am; I can't face it." I said, "Well, that's the sort of man that I would rather know." And you know the same sort of thing happened when he was made president. In matters of really great emotion, he had a very sensitive nature, but he could stand up to a lot as well.

AB: Tough, yet tender.

156 JB: Yes, yes. And I think this is what I certainly got to know and appreciated and felt this was the sort of life, the person whose life I would like to share. So by the time he left Cambridge we were quite decided. And he was barely 23 and he -- was he that? 22, he was barely 22 -- and we married.

AB: In Sheffield?

JB: In Sheffield, yes. In the little meeting where I belonged [Woodhouse], which was outside the city, now closed, a very old one, in fact. It closed down. And our married life was unconventional for those days.

167 I was the breadwinner to begin with, and in no time at all, we were in Keighley, living in Keighley and...

AB: Where is...?

JB: Keighley is not quite north Yorkshire, but getting north. It's the sort of the beginning of the dales, and the lovely parts of Yorkshire, beyond Leeds.

170 AB: I know that...What were you doing?

JB: I was teaching. and he [Eric], because he couldn't get a job teaching (he taught one half day, and they found he was a C.O. and he was out on his ear). The Quaker schools would have had him but they didn't want young married men, so I was the objection there, I was the obstacle there, I should say. And the state school wouldn't have him because he was a C.O. So not a little bit of a dilemma. He  
178 decided to take his teaching diploma, that was just a year, from Leeds University, which then meant that his degree, which had been English Literature and Philosophy, would be augmented by this, and it was while he was doing that year, he discovered he did not like teaching youngsters, but there was such a thing as adult education and he helped in one of the adult education centers in Leeds. And when he finished the course he  
185 looked for work in that line. And it was the WEA, do you know that? Workers Education Association, which has a long and honorable sort of growth; I think by now it's just beginning to wonder if it's needed but it's done yeoman service. So for the first year that was what he  
190 was doing. But I was going to say, in no time we were plunged into a campaign called "Starvation in Europe." It was Holland, Greece, Belgium, all these countries that were being blockaded and the children were starving, and he was organizing certainly a meeting in Keighley, and I think with (that was singled-handed, and with) other people in other areas. We had a Dutch woman who came to tell us what it meant and how things were over there. So...

AB: This was during the war itself?

JB: Yes, this was in '43. So I sort of knew the sort of life I was going to have, campaigning wherever there was distress, human suffering.

202 AB: Was there any provision for a conscientious objector to do alternative service?

JB: Yes. Yes. He [Eric] had to face a tribunal and the first tribunal in Cambridge gave him "alternative service." Now it sounds a little bit stubborn, but he said, "I want to be perfectly free" and he did persuade them, at the next tribunal, the Appeal Tribunal, that whether or not they said it, he would be doing the sort of things they wanted him to do, they didn't need to tell him, in a way (laughs), or to restrict him. Let me think, what was it he was "given" first? It was so clear he was going on to an appeal, I've forgotten. I don't think it was land work, but it was some sort of social work, helpful.

AB: Was that for the period of the war, or for the two years...?

215 JB: No, that was while the war lasted, but we didn't know, of course, how long it would be. And, uh, at the Appeal Tribunal he got a much more I think understanding judge and tribunal and they said, well, it's quite clear that you're a young man who doesn't waste your time (he'd worked with refugee camps as well by then) we think we can trust you

224 to be doing something that is worthwhile -- he'd worked in the hospitals when people were brought in from the bombing, both in London and in Cambridge during term time; he'd done so many things, they allowed him freedom. But at one of the refugee camps where he was working he was quite harassed by the Army. It was a Quaker arrangement. They had set up the camp I believe, and quite a few people from, say, Vienna, Jews mainly, of course, I mean of Jewish extraction in some way, so that was why they had to come out, and they were frequently all interrupted in the middle of the night to get up, both the refugees and the people who were working with them, helping them, running the camp, and Eric being youngest (he said a number of times afterwards, I better not tell Jonathan (that's our son) too much about that, or he'd be more awkward than ever. I'll tell him when he's older. You see because he is a very stubborn young man, too). And on one occasion he [Eric] was ordered to do this and do that and take his hat off when speaking to the chap behind the desk, the army captain, whatever his position was, I don't know. And he took a George Fox attitude [respect shown to a divine power, not always to an earthly one] and refused to. Why should I? And they took it off his head and threw it on the floor, and he picked it up. They had quite a little to do like that, you see. And really didn't like him by that. He learned a lot, learned that perhaps it isn't the best way, but, as a young person one has to learn how to do these things.

245 AB: Now was he listed as a Quaker?

JB: Yes, he'd become a Quaker about, let me think which year did he become...certainly by 1940, it was about a year after he'd come to this meeting [in 1938]. He'd decided this was what he'd been looking for. It gave him the freedom to think out for himself his positions.

250 So, yes, he was a Quaker, but the army didn't think much of that, anyway. The other interesting thing was they took files away from him to keep for a while, and when he got them back, some very respectable little body in Freud's house (who is now the pillar of a meeting in Australia, in Tasmania, rather) had written -- she was working there -- something about, "It's good that you're there, and somebody else or other is coming (or had been). It will make quite a nice useful little cell,"

✓ Meaning, of course, "and we'll both work together." And all reference to this was singed. This "cell" was really dangerous; to them obviously Nazi infiltration or something, but they, of course, they couldn't find anything. Another thing was that once when he was off duty and went to sit by the riverside, he was writing letters to me, from the [refugee] camp, it was his half day when he could go off, so he was -- this was inside Wales, at a camp called Tyni Cae but he'd gone to the nearest town, was it Cardiff? I don't think it was Swansea, I think it may have been Cardiff -- and was sitting, looking out to sea, and writing to me, and somebody reported him, and again he was hauled up to explain himself. Reported him for sketching naval works, or something like that. So it was a very...

AB: ...tense time.

JB: Yes, yes. I think that really did give him an insight into a number of different things that he heard later that happened to people.

276 AB: You say he was adopted. Were there others adopted, or...?

JB: No, he was the only one.

277 AB: And was there religious environment in which he was adopted?

JB: No. Not, well, now let me think. There was a very, uh, oh dear, what...conventional religious attitude, respectability. They were people who were very generous, very narrow-minded, and would have done anything for him, but in fact, his ability outstripped anything they could understand. We got on quite well and we had Grandma and Grandpa Baker with us for quite a little while. But they couldn't see what Eric was getting at at all, in his Quakerism or other concerns. But they were very proud of him.

PE: How old was he when he was adopted?

JB: About five months I think. And had been very badly looked after in care. He was Irish to his fingertips, by blood, yes. And I think quite a lot of ability he had come from that source. But you see...

293 AB: Was he aware and conscious and proud of his...?

JB: I don't think it had worried him too much. He began to guess this sort of thing when he was about ten, and it didn't really shatter him at all when he was told. But as I said, the two adopting parents were very conventional, and it was a thing to be kept very quiet; it wasn't respectable in those days at all. (As though it was anything to do with the person who was adopted anyway!) And they've been very cautious but they dealt very kindly and fairly over the whole thing. But it was only when Eric had to produce documents when he was going to Cambridge to prove that he was the said Eric Baker. Of course his birth certificate said Eric Carnelly and this had to be put right so that he, having got this "Open Exhibition" to Cambridge, he was proved the right person to take it up. And this had to go through a lawyer, so...I mean it had been a legal adoption but there was this business of just who he was.

312 AB: And the parents who adopted, they lived in Sheffield itself?

JB: Yes.

AB: So he went to school in the Sheffield area?

313 JB: Yes. He was born in London but they adopted him and he then grew in Sheffield. His "father" worked in the smelting company for precious metals, very interesting work.

316 AB: What is an Exhibition? Is it a scholarship?



JB: Oh, yes. It's not quite, I think the same value...I wonder why they call it differently. I believe a scholarship, an open scholarship will provide a little more money. There were three Open Exhibitions not quite as full value as the scholarship (as it was called an Exhibition). I'm afraid I wasn't in the academic world enough to know these differences. And he was...it was really with, do you know, F.R. Leavis, what's his title?

AB: An educator?

JB: Lecturer. English Literary critic. Very much in front. And he's been a very controversial figure in Cambridge University over many years. They talk about "Leavis' young men." And Eric was one of them. But he, after he'd been there a couple of years, he...

AB: Was he at Downing College?

JB: Downing, yes. F.R. Leavis the critic. He certainly has been not so well thought of lately, but I expect like many other people he'll come back again. Of course he did, after all, contribute quite a bit in the way of literary criticism, looking at English literature.

335 AB: And Eric, did he read any...what did he read, education?

JB: He read literature, you see. And then he discovered, as I say after two years (and he'd done his two years in his sixth form reading English), this was -- I think he was fairly balanced between science and the arts,

but he rather did find literature was what was his love. But he found himself getting more and more stale, and rather, well I suppose, "browned stale off," and he was fascinated by lectures he went to in philosophy and his tutor in philosophy, now what was...Ewing...I've forgotten the initials, again. Anyway, Professor Ewing was very encouraging to him, but not having any sort of extra resources Eric could only afford to stay on one extra year, the Exhibition was for three years and he'd done two you see. And so he didn't get as good a degree as he might have done. Ewing kept saying to him, are you sure you can't manage one more year; of course you can't do yourself justice in one year. But I think the philosophy course was really what was absolutely right for Eric, but he just had to go down.

✓ AB: <sup>C</sup> But it short instead of extend it.

JB: Yes. And I say Ewing was very encouraging. He said I can't really do much in one year with you. So that was that. And on the other hand, you see, I've often thought about this, I think Eric was disappointed for some years because it curbed any sort of academic career. But he probably wouldn't have been turned into these other things. One doesn't know. And you see the philosophy, you've seen the booklet really has helped to form his ways of thinking and so on. I think that...I think it informed other thinking, anyway.

368 AB: Was the Campaign for Starvation the first campaign you all were involved in?

JB: It was the first I really knew anything about, and it was quite a new thing to me, although my parents had been involved in sort of Christian socialism and so on and had many speakers and occasions, but they were not people who could have organized it. So that...in a way it brought me back to my childhood, but I never really [had] been involved in anything like that.

AB: How was it organized? I mean, it was an effort to collect food and get the food there, or was it...

JB: No, it was really, what they nowadays call consciousness-raising. I hate jargon, but in fact that briefly is what it was: getting people to be aware and putting pressure on the government if possible... I don't know how...I'm sure there were some practical things done, but that end of it I know nothing about. But it was to make people aware that this, this was the result of the government measures that seemed to  
388 be so effective, "and do you like it then?" You know, do you like the thought of these marvelously effective measures leaching children like that? I have one of the pamphlets that we had...it perhaps will take me a little while to turn it up but I know I've seen it fairly recently, and of these children, just absolutely walking skeletons, and an awful lot of them just dying. It was overtaken by the Auschwitz and other camps because that was so very much more condensed, wasn't it, than it was in these places, and it was against Jewish people, particularly, but these first were mixed, it was generally. But, uh, this starvation was happening and not as a, a putting in a camp, but just as a result of our policies of withholding food. So...

404 PE: And were you raising money to get food to...?

JB: We were trying to raise, yes. There was an organization. If when  
405 I tell you that I was expecting my eldest daughter at the time, and when  
the speaker came, I was really as large as the side of a house and trying  
my best to do things. It was a lovely time, but I really hadn't got  
much more energy to delve into the things behind it. I went to the  
meeting whenever it was near and this was a very, very interesting  
visitor that we had, this Dutch lady. But, yes, it was part of a much  
bigger concern, but this was the local bit that Eric was trying to...

AB: ...to organize.

JB: Yes.

417 AB: And he was the local person? In Sheffield?

JB: This was in Keighly, soon after our marriage. So it wasn't in  
Sheffield, but I'm sure other people were doing the same in other areas.  
But certainly...looking back a bit, I should doubt if many people of  
22 or 23 were taking on that load. He was getting help, but he was the  
inspirer. And I don't know what...

[a fly is in the room; commotion]

...1944.

429 AB: Because I do know this from reading one of the vitaes on Eric that you all went and spent some time in India.

JB: That's right. It wasn't very long.

AB: After this?

JB: It was '46 to '48. A year before and a year after Independent<sup>ce</sup>.  
And it was really quite a fraught time. We'd wanted...Eric had very much wanted to go to China; in fact the nearest he came to a proposal to me was to say, well, I want to go there, would you be willing to come too? And we would very much have liked it. I hadn't read as much about China as he had and he'd met people and really was...he liked the Chinese culture, personality...but at that time -- which was just after the war, when Friends Committee [Quakers] were looking for new people to go and carry on their work. The work in China was having to close down; people were gradually being brought out, or released from their camps to come home. But there was work in India  
451 which neither of us was particularly keen. It wasn't a country we'd first thought of at all, but it was a job in adult education in Delhi and there was an Indian Quaker there with an English wife and it just seemed sensible. They hadn't had any furlough for many years; Eric was very keen to work with them, so was I, this was...we were delighted at the chance of going, a little bit taken aback at being in India.

462 AB: Why overseas? What was the motive?

JB: This I wonder. I think it was youth. I think, too, for  
experience...there was work to be done, but we came back with very  
serious doubts about such work overseas. But I think we learned an  
466 awful lot over that. It didn't really go too well. We were in charge  
almost immediately, which was very difficult; they had come back.

AB: In charge of the school?

JB: No, of the Quaker center. A sort of educational center where we  
were trying to meet the needs on quite a few different levels. Eric  
was lecturing part time at St. Stephens, the university just over  
the hill ("The Ridge") from where we lived, Delhi University, and  
he managed to gather some informal discussion groups of the other  
lecturers and then all sorts of students, a student group, separately.  
I managed a sort of nursery class for children of the families at the  
Quaker Center. We had a number of exhibitions; we used to arrange --  
not me, really, Eric did -- arrange talks, say, from Australian  
Commissioner's Office or this, that or the other office. Whoever was  
486 interesting who was passing through; a number of Americans. I remember a  
Dr. Nelson who came through. And we had a lot of contact with the other  
missionary groups which meant that (they were dealing more with  
schools and children) we were feeding more and developing that side of  
it. And some of them ["missionary bodies"] wouldn't come to the  
Quaker Centre when this man came to speak to us, you have to understand  
that. Numerous stories, one wouldn't have easily known -- he was black.  
542 After all it never occurred to us, and it still wouldn't have occurred

to us not to go ahead. Dr. Nelson was such an eminent man and so delightful. But they found this was unacceptable enough. They had come to all the other things and were quite prepared to send a number of people to previous lectures, but walked out of that. We got enough of an audience...but it taught us a lesson, i.e., not to put somebody like Dr. Nelson in that sort of position of fellow American coming, more or less coming to the door I believe and to the first reception, then walking out. We were involved in a number of things because immediately following Independence India was in all sorts of trouble. We went there when they were saying "Englishmen go back home" walking behind you and saying this. We came back -- it was after Gandhi's assassination, a few months after -- when they were more or less saying "please stay and help us." And in both cases it was all very genuine and you had to understand it. We were isolated in the hills for a bit because of the breakdown of communication and so on. We went up to the hills to learn the language and we were getting on quite nicely. Certainly this happened after Independence. We came down from the hills -- we were in Mussoorie, just beyond, just a bit higher up at Landou. We came down to Delhi for the Independence Day celebrations and we were invited to the reception at what had been Vice Regal Lodge and, oh dear [remembering] Nehru and Lord and Lady... Mountbatten, were receiving about six or eight hundred of us, you know. It was just one great big milling crowd but it was fascinating to be there. People representing all walks were invited. And that was marvelous. And a few weeks after, all the massacres started. We were back in the hills to finish our timethere with the language course, back to the children. And we could see from the hillside, every now and again, a mosque going up in flames or a house, and so on, and got news of trains

546 that were stopped and people massacred. We had our very dear teacher from Delhi come to us and said, "could we travel back with you, we feel that we would be safer with you." He was Muslim; his home was in Delhi. And two of his children were in school in Delhi but he'd got three or four with him there. And I remember talking about it and Eric saying, "I don't know that we could possibly not have them, but do you know what that means? If the train was stopped on the way to Delhi and if we...they come for these children, could you stand by and not say anything? If you did anything at all our own children would probably be taken too." It really was an awful decision to make. You couldn't say no, and we said yes, come with us. And we would all hope and pray that we should get through. And you know, the next day there came this decision from the government that all Muslims who were in the hills must be, for their own sake, got together into camps. They were going to be taken by the government over into the new Pakistan (they [the decision] must not come back today). It was taken from us. We had quite an adventure getting back to Delhi; we had to do it more or less separately. I went with the two little girls; Eric and the servant boy made their own way. I got a seat with the High Commissioner's car. It took us... we'd had to move from one house to another hopefully waiting for a chance to get back because first of all it was the trains didn't stop, then it was floods and the railway land was washed away. The original had been that we had been advised to wait a bit because "you'll only add to the confusion, wait a bit." We waited a bit and...well, we waited six weeks eventually with all these different things happening and then I got this chance of a lift; Eric worked it for me. The High Commissioner's

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Office was trying to get to isolated people to arrange transport,  
etc. And Eric and Met Ram had to make their own way down and it took  
them a few days longer than me. But all told we'd taken six weeks!  
Our colleagues had come from London in just under 24 hours because  
of the situation and we simply hadn't known...there was no communication.  
The postal and cables and things like that were absolutely cut. So for  
some weeks, some good part of that six weeks, we were totally out of  
touch with the world. Then things weren't quite so happy, but that's  
605 you know, perhaps another story. We felt that we were looked on as  
having let down Friends [Quakers] and we hadn't made quite enough effort  
to get back. We were young; we had been told by older missionaries not  
to make this effort but it didn't go too well. Quite a bit more work was  
612 done but quite clearly -- I think it was the difference in the Indian  
attitudes, sensitivity, you know, feeling that a young man mustn't be  
taking on too much. The older man is the one and you should be sitting  
at his feet. And it didn't come quite so easily. I don't think Eric  
was in any special way being different from most young Westerners. He just  
used his initiative and tried to fit in, but it didn't go down too well.  
Gradually I certainly felt, well, this isn't an atmosphere to bring up  
a young family and I don't think I'm going to do it. And so we decided  
in the two years that we would go home. But just before that happened  
Gandhi was shot in January 1948. It was all very harrowing. Plus the  
635 fact that our second daughter was really quite ill.

636 AB: She was? The first one was born in '44 and the second one was  
born in...

JB: '46, just before we went.

AB: And had your son been born yet?

JB: No, he was born in India, just before we left. He was born in Landou<sup>R</sup> and feels he has ties with India.

AB: The second daughter you say was ill at this time?

JB: Yes, and it was a sort of dietary disorder. To my astonishment and shame it was laid to rickets. And I had thought I knew enough about child care not to fall into that one because of course in the West it's a thing of the past. But food was deficient in calcium and I didn't  
651 recognize it. They soon got it right but I think if we'd stayed there we might well have lost her. Looking at photographs of her she really had gone down, before I'd quite realized what was happening to this little girl who had been so well. So I was really very thankful to get back to this country. And as I say we learned a lot from the Indian adventure. I don't think it really was "meant" for us but it was a very worthwhile thing to do. I don't think we fitted into India too well.

664 AB: I noticed in Eric's vitae that he mentioned that if he looks across his life, two things are threads in terms of the work he did. One is education; one is international affairs. That's one of the reasons I was wondering about the Indian experience. Where the motivation came to go to India and what the experience in India had in that way.

677 JB: I'm sure he had a feeling for life on a very wide canvas.  
I'm sure this was Eric at even nineteen, that he could see that  
what he experience<sup>d</sup> in this little bit of the world should have some  
relation to what people were experiencing in other parts of the  
world. And he wanted to know about it and of course, as I say,  
China was his first choice. I'm sure India gave us a great deal of  
insight into what it is to live outside your own country and gave us  
more patience in realizing that other cultures can be just as valid as  
your own and it's up to you (while clining<sup>g</sup> to your own because it's  
good for you to have your roots), to appreciate what it means to  
other people. We certainly felt that living outside this country  
would help us. I hope not in a selfish way; we often talked about it  
708 and felt that, for instance, missionary work, we thought perhaps a good  
deal of missionary work could be done here and that we've got to learn  
about other countries and other cultures. It would be an equal thing, not  
a matter of going down to give out. I think we got some little idea of  
it.

720 AB: When you came back what kind of work did you do?

JB: Yes. That was interesting.

723 End of Tape I, Side A

Beginning of Tape I, Side B

JB: I knew the best of what the family would uphold us and what happened first was (words unclear). I guess it was the security that it gave us, that we both had the teaching qualification. But it wasn't really suitable for me to go teaching unless it was desperately needed.

005 AB: What did you teach?

JB: I was a kindergarten teacher. Then I trained for disturbed children and finally did some teacher training. But I felt that the basic one with young children which was really marvelous training.

009 Eric got a job after a few months in Edinburgh as Community Center's Officer, yes. His job was to set up community centers. You know there were quite a number of temporary housing estates. I think most towns must have had it (words unclear) of Edinburgh, areas where people were living in the disused Army huts; they were tin huts, what do you call them?

AB: We call them quansid huts.

*quansid*

[Nissan huts]

JB: I'm sure we've another name which will come back to me. But you know that the, two...a whole one together made two homes. Well, people made quite nice places out of them, of course. It wasn't subdivided. They had communal washplaces and the army fitted them up quite well, but to bring down (?) the crime rate, well, that

wasn't easy. And it was many years before these were really replaced. People were supposed to be moved out soon, but the huts lasted far too long. So there were one or two areas in Edinburgh where Eric was going to try and give them heart and encouragement and get them to come together and make something of their life there as well as asking for rehousing. Quite a few of these (words unclear) and there were many others, new building areas and so on, a few older ones were under his care. We were six years in Edinburgh there doing that. (It was the responsibility of the Education Office, under the Education Officer. Eventually youth work was added. They needed  
030 someone to take responsibility.) And it was while he was in Edinburgh he took his postgraduate Master's Degree (M. Ed.) in education. There was a very good course under Sir Godfrey Thompson. I think it's now discontinued, yes, I'm sure it was...but just at the time he was taking it they called it a B. Ed. but then the English colleges started offering a B. Ed. to first degree people who had just taken  
+ TRAINING / their teaching. This was for much more senior work, postgraduate, it became M. Education. And that was very, very interesting.

AB: Did he do that by night work?

JB: Yes. Rather like when he was helping Amnesty he'd managed to  
do these things as well as a full-time job. He had tremendous  
039 discipline in organizing his time and he just could get through most of these things and that would make most of us feel very tired; he'd make me feel very tried anyway, if I'd do a bit of it, it takes an awful lot out of me. Anyway then after six years he really felt he

044 didn't want to go on doing C. Centre work all his life. (Incidentally  
if I may go back, while we'd been in England we were living in Doncaster  
for a short time before we went to India, he'd undertaken with a  
Quaker in the meeting we were at a survey of social services in the  
Doncaster area. This had been a very useful insight into what was  
being offered to all the different peoples and their social needs.  
But it wasn't very much at that time because of all the Welfare State.  
And that I think had quite...yes, an educative effect, because done  
under this well-trained social worker, and she was very pleased to  
have someone who was enthusiastic to organize this side of it for her,  
to produce the evidence and so on.) So then he got a job after feeling  
056 for a year or more that he didn't want to go on with Local Authority  
work much longer. He got this job in London with the National Peace  
Council.

AB: He was the general secretary, wasn't he?

JB: He was, yes.

AB: Did they have an office, and a staff, or...

JB: Yes, it was at St. James Street. And there were a number of  
other people employed. What's the women's organization? Women's  
League for Peace and Freedom [non-militant suffragettes]. They also  
were there. I think the National Peace Council had got the lease of  
the building and let off various rooms. And some other similar groups,  
some charities and so on were in the building with them. But they

had their office.

AB: It was a sort of an umbrella organization.

064 JB: I don't know how much it was that. Again, this is where I came back into teaching and I was rather inclined to let things...to let Eric do his thing and me do mine. I was so thrilled to get back to the classroom and the children.

AB: Because your children were a little bit older?

JB: Yes. Jonathan the youngest was seven then, so I thought I can and it fitted very nicely. Anyway, I'm trying to think about the  
 068 National Peace Council. It was always friendly and...yes, I suppose in a sense it was umbrella, not in a really organized way, but anybody who came with these sort of ideals and wanting to know something got quite a bit of encouragement. So that the other bodies like the Women's League that were already established quite clearly would get a chance to get rooms there for their office. It was a matter of  
 075 helping each other then. But while Eric was there, for instance, Danilo Dolic [Sicily and poor - 1958] came along. I think that was just before Eric left and they had the entree to so many people they arranged a meeting to introduce him [Danilo Dolci] to other  
 influential people in London. I remember one or two others and the  
 [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament]  
 079 CND/(I don't know how much Eric would like it now) but in the early days in the CND. The peace women came to him and said, "we're just appalled at this prospect."

AB: Was the committee on nuclear disarmament?

[sic]

081 JB: Yes. Campaign Against Nuclear Disarmament, which has grown really superior I think, much more political than it was at that time. And he said well, you can meet in my office. And if you like, you know, I'll be with you if you want me to guide you. Because they were just half a dozen housewives and one or two men. And they said, what can we do about it, and got his advice on organizing themselves. And he went to many of their meetings, especially when they got to the point where everybody was resigning and saying, we don't agree with this and pulling in different directions in the early days. He was there persuading them and saying they'll never get anywhere unless they keep together and we've got to get something positive going and not just always be against each other. See what you can agree on. I've known him come home after some of the meetings really physically sick, with a sick headache and, really quite ill but triumphant: "I've got them to stay together."

095 PE: What kinds of things was the National Peace Council doing?

JB: Again, I should think it was a good deal education of the public mind about things. I remember us having Schumacher there, the "Small is Beautiful" man, before his books had appeared. And I still recall what marvelous weekend's conference that was with him leading it, and we had diplomat conferences. I say "we": I often went with Eric, and of course I knew nothing about the work that I saw him producing, but I did enjoy going there. And people, Tom M'Boya, who



was murdered, wasn't he?

AB: Yes.

JB: ...when he got back to his country. He was one of those speakers at one of the weekends we had. I can't remember the names of many; they'd be in the archives, I expect, of the National Peace Council. When they happened, Reginald Sorensen -- later Lord Sorensen -- was chairman then and so on. But I do remember the liveliness of the times, and the interesting people that were gathered together. And then the interesting people who were brought in to listen to this because it would be something for them [i.e. junior diplomats were invited]. It was usually to very carefull<sup>y</sup> chosen groups of people. That was about 1958 I think.

114 AB: Also in this little vitae, it says that while with the National Peace Council he took a trip to Greece and Turkey and Cyprus. And it was said that he was doing that when he met Peter.

JB: Yes, that's right. I'm tr<sup>y</sup>-ing to think just which were the years. Because it was about as he left; I would need to perhaps go to Friend's House and find this because he went for Quakers, you see. And I'm not sure whether the first visit wasn't when he'd already transferred to Friends' House because he did about three years with what we call Quaker Home Service Committee. Really, it was Quaker work within this country: he was visiting meetings all over, writing pamphlets and working with that committee. I had thought it was just after...that the other department in

Friends' House, the [Quaker] Peace Committee, asked him if he would go to Cyprus to look at the troubles there. Some friend or other had left money and it had been designated for someone to look into the problems in Cyprus. And so Eric was asked to do this. I'd like to know why they thought of him. He certainly was on the Peace Committee, and maybe as he spoke they felt he was the sort of person who could do it. But I don't know much of that side. And he said, yes, he would go, but part of it would have to be going to Turkey and Greece. He couldn't look at the problems of Cyprus and not see what was happening in the home countries. And of course this went on over a number of years. And then there was quite a gap. He went two or three times before he left the Quaker work in 1961 [also after, 66-69]. The last time he went was in '75 and that time I went with him and it was very, very interesting. The thing was, Michael Harbottle who is quite known for work in UN Peacekeeping forces...he, I don't...what, what is his title? Oh, very high up in the army. And he was asked...he was beginning to be concerned, having left the army, about the effect of this nuclear dimension. And he was working rather more with Friends (Quakers). And then came this dreadful business of Turkey invading and they wanted to have a look at that. I don't know, I think that Harbottle had been in Cyprus; his wife certainly was somebody who lived there for a bit. And he worked with the peacekeeping force. That's where he came in. And so he was working then with Friends, and wanted to go to Greek Cyprus. And this came up in committee meetings. And Eric said yes, but who are you sending to Turkey? Because it was a time you couldn't go to both, as he had done in the previous times. And certainly they thought, oh yes, we're not being Quakerly; we're looking only at the Greek Cypriots, and true they have a case but we cannot say

anything about one without saying something about the other side.

So they sent Eric to look at that. That was the only time he wasn't able to go all over the island. But it was a fascinating time and I was able to see what a demanding job it was.

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159 AB: What do you mean by not being Quakerly? Because that's an interesting Amnesty principle, but it's interesting of course...

JB: That you shouldn't take one side if you haven't seen the other side. You shouldn't make a judgment if you only know one side, and you can't take somebody else's point of view. I mean you can take it into account, but you must really make sure you understand the opposing point of view. You may still say they were wrong, but it also gives you a chance to do something about that. But it is entirely wrong to look at a problem and only look at the more obvious side.

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167 AB: Now where does this stem in Quaker history? In the concern to reconcile? The desire for peace?

JB: I should think so. It's a very interesting point; I shall find that one out.

AB: It would be interesting to know.

JB: Just to try and see its absolute roots. It seems to me that it's implicit in all that, yes, the Quaker quest for truth and truth is not really to be found if you take the first, the first popular voice isn't

going to give you the whole of truth, you've got to be more discriminating. I think it's in the Quaker desire for truth, for the whole picture.

179 AB: Now when he went for his first trip, which was probably in the late Fifties, or so.

JB: Yes, yes. '58 probably.

AB: Was he away long, do you remember that?

JB: No, it was a matter of weeks, usually. Perhaps some people grumbled when he came back and gave a report (andoh, you know) after such a short time. But he always said, there are two ways of knowing about a country: one is to get your impression when you go and see as many people as you can, get their...all the different points of view; and the other is to live there a lifetime. But both can be valid. This is quite true. It was sometimes three weeks, sometimes four; it was while he was doing...yes, it was while he was in Friends House and just into the time when he went to the college where he was until he died. That was '61, I think, '61 late, '61 perhaps that he changed over to this NE London Polytech. And I think there was one journey at least then.

AB: So you took probably one in the late Fifties and then on in the early Sixties.

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JB: I think there were two fairly close together and then there was a little gap till about '62 or '63, but I probably could find out just when they were, but my memory's a little bit vague. But there'd been two before 1960 and two or three after.

AB: So obviously since the Amnesty birth came in '61 he would have met  
197 Peter in one of the first two or both.

JB: That's right. When he was going out, his usual approach, he wanted to see people in London of the Turkish, Greek community, as well as any Cypriot. He then was wanting to see other people who'd been and who had had anything to do with the Cyprus situation and all these prisoners. Of course then it was the British government against Archbishop Makarios and all the people who were being held as terrorists, and so on, in the usual way, and this is where he met Peter.

AB: In London?

205 JB: Yes, in London. Peter had already been out there observing the trials and, I'm not sure just what he'd done, he'd rather tell you, but I'm sure he was involved in them. About...immediately, they seemed to take to each other because I heard of Peter Benenson, Peter Benenson, Peter Benenson. And eventually, I think when I met him it was 1960, the autumn that I was doing a special training for teaching handicapped children at London University. And we three had a meal together and I found this, this man who was such a charming person, had such a charisma with him, and then once or twice he came out to see us at Chinqferd [our

8/

home] and so on. And of course I met him at a number of meetings. And you could feel the energy in this person. It was wonderful.

219 AB: Why do you think the two of them hit it off so well?

JB: Yes, because they were different, weren't they? Eric always used to say "Peter's the inspiration, I'm the one, I'm the engineer." You can't...also I think they must have felt mutual attraction. Peter said something like that, too. That you keep us going on the scheduled course and so on. And sensitivity they both had and the real seeking for the truth in a situation, wanting to "know." I think...quite tough search for what the meaning of things was. Not just truth about something, but the inner meaning of things. They certainly had long, long talks. And  
231 just before I knew that something was hatching, and of course all this talk I used to get bits of it coming over because Eric wanted someone to talk to about a campaign something like the one for slavery and...isn't there a paper where Peter, and Eric I think, together, had worked out that this would be an anniversary of things that had happened in the United States?

AB: They tied it into the 1861 freeing of the slaves of America and the 1861 freeing of the serfs in Russia.

JB: Yes, that was right, the two things. And what I noticed about it,  
243 too, (and I knew they'd later on forgotten this until I reread it) that it was only looked upon as being an immediate "one off" and it was going to be done as well as they possibly could. But they certainly hadn't

even, shall we say, hoped or thought about it being a continued campaign. And it was really unique. (I think they forgot that then and forged ahead.) But it was talked of as being something to wake people up to, this need. Then, of course, when it was launched it was quite clear that there were enough people interested and they discovered there was enough work to do to go on. I think that's at least how I saw it from the sidelines.

254 AB: Were they in touch with each other fairly frequently?

JB: Oh, yes.

AB: Even before...

JB: Months before. Every night about 10 o'clock there was Peter on the phone, or Eric was on the phone to Peter. They were arranging the final details; it really was a very intense thing, preparation. And Eric has always been very single-minded and he really was giving himself up to that, very much. I think it, 10 o'clock at night, almost, not to the dot, but it was a time Peter knew he could get Eric because sometimes he had to be in college in the evenings and for one or two other things, but it happened with long talks from then on. There was very few nights when they were not talking about something, who else they could bring in, and what somebody had suggested and so on. And then I began to hear about Sean  
269 and Neville Vincent, Norman Marsh. Oh, dear, there's another man whose name... Louis Blom-Cooper and of course Tom Sargent.

AB: Louis Blom-Cooper...

JB: Yes, Cooper, that's right, Louis Blom-Cooper. I could see his face now. And so many people begin to build up around.

274 AB: Was Eric also on the phone with these others, or was Peter more or less the one that was...

JB: Peter? I think Eric felt all the time that what he could offer was hard work and thinking things out and he had a good logical approach. But he knew he hadn't the contacts, he hadn't the background that Peter  
279 had, and family and so on, that had brought Peter along. It was just a fact of life, that Eric had come from a working class family in Sheffield and he would find his way. But he knew that Peter could get these people and had the knowledge of who would be worthwhile approaching and so on. And of course there was the book, wasn't there, that Peter wrote.

286 AB: Persecution '61.

JB: And Eric did the research for it and this he was very glad to do. I have the copy which I couldn't find just last night with Peter's handwritten bit in it, saying this is the book that in every respect really wouldn't be here "if it hadn't been for you." You have done the major part of course. I'm very pleased to have that. Yes, they were  
295 very different people but they...I'm sure...because Peter was also searching, wasn't he, for it was a time when he was becoming a Catholic and from a Jewish background.



298 AB: You don't know when he converted, do you?

JB: No, I ought to; it was in that time and Eric was much more close to what was happening and...

AB: Peter will tell us, I know, but it really was at this same time, too.

JB: Oh, I'm sure it was...it could have just about happened. I'm sure Peter was in that frame of mind when Eric first met him that he was making his decisions and there was this Bishop Roberts, someone who was such a guide, so much the person Peter was looking for. And then I think he found that Eric also gave it, it was a different facet, but it was equally a sincere search for something that made life have a meaning. And this has always been very much Eric's line, when I first knew him he was...I have a poem that he wrote when he was seventeen that shows that he was really somebody who was looking for the purpose of life and I'm sure this was the thing that brought the two of them together very much.

315 AB: That poem that Eric wrote...

JB: Yes, yes. I found it in one of his school notebooks with two or three poems from, you know, the classics and then I came to this. In fact there are two of them; the end of each is (some well, I mean some other well-known name by everybody was) "Eric Baker" and the date. And reading it it was quite clearly his. Yes, I'm quite, quite sure that certainly on Eric's side, there was great satisfaction in finding a mind

like Peter's to tousele, you know, to work things out in an honest way. He hadn't so many personal friends and I think Peter was one of the really worthy ones.

329 AB: And they became very good friends, did they not?

JB: Eric made good friends, but he didn't often find someone who either by circumstances or else -- what, geographical circumstances -- suited his mind and he could make long term friends. He would keep up with people but he had to be working with people. It seemed to him there was too much to do. I was the one who wrote the family letters, for instance. But he was a bit of a lonely man, Eric was.

339 AB: In the archives which you gave to the Secretariat they took one of early letters of Peter to Eric for that twenty year anniversary, remember the one you attended, and we found that because, now they typed up, all right, why don't you do that. It's lovely. [activity] That's only a portion of the letter of Peter to Eric. But it helped us get a sense of the time frame. [activity] The last half of the letter. The summary of it is actually typed here, so it's the same thing there. [activity and she reads letter to herself]

JB: Yes, I remember those were the next of...

AB: ...letters which they exchanged. Because that would indicate that in January '61 the scheme was there in Peter's mind, broached Eric with it, so that the next months were the ones that must have been very

intensive ones that you speak of.

JB: And there were few...I was a bit surprised that the letters were not thicker, but of course they were talking to each other. But I realized then that that was the time -- that spring -- Eric was so bound up in this and he was so satisfied with it.

AB: So you say that probably one of the reasons the correspondence between the two of them was less is...

370 JB: I've often seen, Eric would <sup>go</sup> in... '61, yes this was, it was before he'd gone to the college, the Polytechnic, that was later '61, when he was still working off-and-on in Friends House, sometimes at home but sometimes in town. He would go from Friends House, and he used to meet Peter at his...

AB: His courts, his chambers.

JB: Yes, yes. His chambers, that's right. One forgets these words.  
378 Because all our married life, Eric has been, was, one who filled his day as much as possible. I always was glad that we had holidays because then I could see something of him. And just once he said (because I can't say I haven't occasionally complained, you know, he was out so much, and always it was on some worthwhile thing) and just once I remember him stopping and saying, "Look dear, do you really want me to drop this work?" And of course I...I mean I wouldn't have said to him anything else but "Of course I don't. I'm glad that you're doing it." But yes, it was a very good thing that we had holidays because he was a very good companion

and this was why I felt so drawn to him in the earlier days. We'd gone around together a lot but as life develops you find you're doing one thing and he another. You see less of each other.

AB: You feel sympathetic?

PE: I feel very sympathetic. [laughter]

JB: You know that this is what makes life worth, what makes a partner worth having.

PE: And they have to do it, too.

JB: Yes, it's insoluble I'm afraid.

✓ 399 PE: And how did you <sup>the</sup> children react?

JB: He was so delighted with the children, I doubt...well, the two girls were away at Quaker boarding school for quite a little bit. It wasn't as bad as all that, but I always felt I could have enjoyed a lot more companionship because even when he was at home he was writing. After a meal, when we'd all enjoyed ourselves together, and he did live life fully, and the children did enjoy it, he would be off, writing. But it seemed natural. They are pretty well following his pattern, you see. My daughter is absolutely involved in St. Alban's in working with the Bangladesh wives. She's running the course for the people who work with them. And her children occasionally complain, "You're always

going out." So I can see the family just is repeating the pattern. But the times together were so good that it made up.

AB: Compensation on quality.

JB: Absolutely, one had to accept this and you wouldn't be human if you didn't grouse about it.

422 AB: Did Eric write letters to Peter as well as Peter to Eric? Because I'm going to guess that Peter's file would have a lot of Eric's letters like Eric's files have a lot of Peter's letters.

JB: I think it probably is if Peter has kept them. Yes. Yes, I'm sure because...

AB: They usually didn't keep carbons, they just wrote each other.

JB: No. I think that began to be more so later in general AI correspondence. Certainly in those days it wasn't. But I think here now I have to make something of a confession -- and probably it was due to the development of the work when it became obvious that you needed (after all this was more a personal friendship at first, doing something together which they both enjoyed so much) and then it began to be clear that you needed copies of what you'd said. So, really not for any suspicious reasons but that it was common sense to them to refer to.--

440 And what I was going to say was I had a small part of Eric's papers that didn't go to the AI office because they were too sensitive. It was too soon. It was partly correspondence with Sean...

AB: But it's at a later date, is it?

JB: Oh yes, much, much later. But there you see, there you see the difference. You begin to have the copies of what Eric wrote and this is the letter that came back. So that it was quite clear that it was needed then.

AB: How did you decide...we noticed a letter of yours also in which you  
450 said some others related to the honorary presidents, and in that letter you mention that Martin Ennals had approached you about Eric's archives. How did that come about? Martin just wrote you a letter and said, will you be willing to let AI have Eric's files for the archives.

JB: Yes, it was funny, it was some years after Eric died, and obviously it was so, so very sudden (because he hadn't been ill, and I just woke up to find that he died by the side of me at the early hours) so that I really, my mind was blank, I coped with most things, but I think for a year, certainly for six months, I was pretty numb and didn't know what hit me. I just went through the motions and did what I was asked. But I was advised that there were some letters and I had known of them from the telephone conversations (I'd been in the rooms when they were taking place) with Sean and Eric and things that Eric had worried about and told me that there were problems. These letters that were very sensitive and would really not be fair to be made public for some time. And I kept them for quite a while. You see they were to do with Martin [Ennals], not entirely but very much and that when I came here after a year or so, so that would be three years I should think, Martin

wrote and asked me if I had papers of Eric's that would be useful to Amnesty for their archives, they were starting to be able to cope with that side of it. And I felt very badly about it because I knew I was going to keep some of them back, but I said yes. There were some, especially the ones about the early days that I thought certainly Amnesty should have and I, too, having a much smaller place to live in, was finding it difficult to house them. I mean I was falling over books and papers all the time. So then Friederike came out with this young man, Peter, I forgot his name.

then head of  
[Knox Docu-  
mentary Centre]

491 AB: From the archives office?

JB: Yes. And I gave them the bulk of these files. I did have a few words with Sean about that time. I said they're wanting the files and look, Sean, I've got letters that you have written to Eric and some of them are very personal and I'm not at all happy about the (unclear) and he said, why don't you give them to the Bradford University Peace Library. And he's very much connected with them, at least for some time he was. And so I sent them along with a whole lot more papers of Eric's about Cyprus and all of his other papers that were not to do with Amnesty especially. But this small amount went with it, and that's where it is now. Because I really felt that I couldn't cope with all these pressures. I think this is what has worried me. A little bit worrying me today was because I felt once again Eric left me so suddenly, was I going to do the right thing, I didn't feel up to it. But I was...my heart was in it, but this feeling that you might not be doing it right...

512 AB: We talked with Martin Enthoven last week and it's interesting...

JB: Oh! What is he doing now?

AB: He's an old and dear friend of mine...

JB: Yes. Oh, I thought Martin was a dear, but is he, he's not with Amnesty any more?

520 AB: No, he left Amnesty some time ago. And we talked to him about this. Because one of our decisions was although as we continue next year and the year after, we do want to get into the sensitive period because that's an important thing for the future to know...

JB: Yes...quite correct.

AB: ...with everybody absolutely candid, and at the same time everybody having total discretion to say, "that is not to be used." Anyone can say whatever length of time they want or in what forms or by whom, you know, if it becomes that way. But we felt at this early period it was better just to get into the more glorious time when it was spontaneous.

JB: Absolutely, yes, yes.

AB: And he felt that was better. [Aside to PE:] Do you want to tell  
535 your experience?



PE: Yes. I had worked for President Kennedy and soon after he died they started an oral history program of his Administration and his life and they came to me and asked questions about my job in the White House and what I knew of him, and...I was very reluctant to talk. It was so close to the time that I worked there that I kept a lot back and...

JB: Yes, I think both the timing and your own feelings somehow (unclear) in too short a time. You've got to get more control of your own feelings and judgment as well as the fact that I think most of the world needs to have a little bit more perspective on it before it seems right for all of the things. Yes, I think that.

554 AB: Stephanie made the comment -- and she's a very wise woman -- and I think she's right, that in some ways we've come to this project just because of the enormous interest that's arisen in the movement and even beyond it in the roots of the movement. And it exists and so Priscilla got this idea, wouldn't it be fascinating to supplement the written materials with oral memories while the people are alert and alive and available. The tragedy of it, Eric's not here. There's so much more to talk about. But in a way it, from the point of view of [the movement] it's remarkable that only one of its most critical figures has gone and the others are here. And yet he's got his papers and you're a witness. So the timing is good in that sense.

JB: Yes, yes. You're...after all...you win some, lose some. You can't have everything that's just as you would like.

AB: No, no. But we felt that the timing was good to start and what Stephanie had said that in some ways its substantive side would be useful, but that some of the...because there's a new generation that's operative now and some of the problems of the earlier generation which came at a later time are almost in a position of reconciliation, because of perspective. The further one stands away the more one sees that... in a larger light. And that it becomes less burning, and less out of focus, and can be seen in context.

591 JB: I have great regard for Stephanie and I think it was in Copenhagen that I first saw her when she'd newly come to the Annual General Meeting there, was newly in the office and I do recall her very well. I was in the same group; we were discussing something or other, and since then I could see what, what stature she had as a...in her mind.

600 AB: How did Eric -- we were interested, as we look at it -- how did he keep files? I mean, I have terrible problems with mine; I'm overwhelmed with paper.

JB: [laughs] Everybody has their own way, isn't it? He had in this nice old house we were in, it was what we called the long room. It was a peculiar one, a long, narrow one. I used to say, I don't know how you can work up there; I'd think it was claustrophobic because even with a very nice window, it was partly in the eaves, you see, it was an old building, and he'd got it absolutely lined with shelves, mainly books, but also his files on them, and he spent hours there. And he'd got this nice window in the middle of it with this nice view out, and he

was lot to the world as long as he could look up and see the greenery around and so on. But in detail, I don't know enough about filing to know or to give any...

AB: Clues.

JB: Clues, about...I'd probably muddled it up so much that nobody else could see it. I'd try to look at things and see them as they meant something to me so I wouldn't know what to put where. But they were certainly numbered.

AB: Yes, he has a little numbering system.

JB: Yes, hm. And each file usually had the bottom corner its number and some other...was it the letter with it as well...it wasn't my sort of forte so it didn't speak to me.

AB: Do you still have files of his, or are all of them donated to  
636 Amnesty or to the Bradford Peace Library and do you plan in the future for example to give them to Amnesty?

JB: I think I sent all to Bradford. The things I've got are much more personal things like some records of his work in his college when he was head of Department of Social Work and...social work training and sociology. It was partly a degree course in sociology and partly training social workers and so on. And there was a great deal in that and I've  
652 often wondered if something would be useful. He'd started writing

booklets for discussion groups because he was very interested in ethics, all kinds of professions, he was coming up I think to look at ethics in business, but he'd worked with doctors, they'd invited him to address some of their [unclear]. They were trying to get doctors to look at the ethical side of their relationship with their patients and so on. He'd been with World Health Organization to a conference in Reykjavik, I don't know, speaking on this. He'd been asked along, because he wasn't really in the medical world and he also lectured regularly for, I think, it was for two years to the health visitors in central London and that seemed to go down much...he was, as I say, beginning to write this book and he'd got about six chapters, six or seven chapters on ethics and nursing, health visitors to nurse [unclear] discussing the various big issues coming, one for instance would be divorce, another would be, oh, what is this business, abortion (in London). You know the big problems they had to face.

AB: Probably euthanasia also.

JB: And I have the notebooks that he, which he prepared but he just got, I think halfway through the sixth, and he hadn't got anywhere near to offering it to any publisher but I know this was his intention. Because it's gone down very well with Eric's students, the student nurses and health visitors. So he thought there might be something to do there.

695 PE: Did you keep photographs or did you give them to the...

JB: No, I've got those notebooks and all these things. I just don't know what to do with them. And other books on, notebooks, I mean, with notes, because Eric was great at notetaking, he kept really everything.

AB: Napkins, envelopes, yes, I do the same.

[JB reads letter to himself]

JB: Yes, this is...

AB: So he says Peter was the founder...

JB: Eric always maintained that...

AB: ...and that he goes on to say, and then after Peter there were many of us. There was a close circle, but he said this is truer than just him and myself and he said he thinks for the sake of historical record and justice that ought to be equal...

JB: Yes. They certainly were the names, you know, that I first heard, the ones they were so close, all of them. Louis Blum-Field, Tom Berger, William March, and others. Oh, there were quite a lot and I think there...

88 [after lunch]

AB: This is a beautiful letter from Eric that I was privileged to get a copy of because I was on the IEC and it was written to

93 Mark Kramden who was then in charge of the Press and Publications and what occurred is that in the newsletter of that year there had been an article which referred to Peter and Sean and Eric as the more or less co-founders of the movement. And Eric wrote a letter to straighten out the record and it's a bit like you say, of things become a little bit twisted in one direction and then the truth the way it was is irretrievable. But I think you'll like that.

[JB reads letter to herself]

JB: Yes, this is...

AB: So he says Peter was the founder...

JB: Eric always maintained that.

AB: ...and then he goes on to say, and then after Peter there were many of us. There was a close circle, but he said this is broader than just Sean and myself and he said he thinks for the sake of historical record and justice that ought to be equally...

110 JB: Yes. They certainly were the names, you know, that I first heard, but oh, they were so close, all of them: Louis Blom-Cooper, Tom Sargent, Norman Marsh, and others. Oh, there were quite a lot and Neville Vincent

and Peter Calvoc<sup>nessi</sup>~~kes~~. They were often on the phone, too.

112 AB: I like the way he says that [reads from the letter]: "Peter had a remarkable ability to gather together a remarkable group of people."

JB: Yes, yes.

AB: That's a nice phrase.

117 JB: Yes, that is certainly the sort of feeling one gets about Peter. And that it wasn't too surprising that Peter burnt himself out for a bit. I'm delighted when I've seen him since to realize it was only a temporary thing, but he really had done himself a sort of harm with this.

AB: The only other thing and then we'll quit, but the reason I had a personal interest in this...Priscilla has her own...is I inherited Eric's...this is, um...he gave me a responsibility. I became responsible for the torture campaign...

JB: Yes.

AB: ...when he left the committee.

JB: Yes.

AB: And I think he knew that was in the works because I was on it, so his year on the IEC, his last year, he turned over to me some major reports and

asked my judgment. And I now know that what he was doing is that he was getting me a little bit trained in it. So I...this was my response which I also found in the file and I told him that he had baptized me with a bit of fury with that. But that's another sort of personal aspect.

133 JB: I remember Eleanor Aiken used to be also, at one point, ~~it was~~ always on the phone.

AB: Oh, yes, I'm sure. [silence] Very good.

PE: Thank you so much.

JB: I remember Eric saying how Amnesty was launched ...

[Turns off tape]

-- END OF INTERVIEW --