

Violations in 111 countries

AI blows the whistle on repression

by Stuart Logie

Amnesty International (AI) released its Annual Report for 1978 detailing human rights violations in no less than 111 countries.

According to Maynard Gertler, vice-president for AI Canada, "The report deals with three main areas of concern: prisoners of conscience, use of torture, and the use of capital punishment."

1978 saw the release of political prisoners through amnesty or other means by several governments, including those of Vietnam and

Rhodesia. Some amnesty programs, however, left many prisoners of conscience imprisoned still.

While AI continued to work for Palestinians convicted or detained without trial by Israel, the greatest number of human rights violations in the Middle East and North Africa occurred in Iraq, Syria, and Iran. In an update accompanying the report, AI confirmed allegations that torture of Iranian political prisoners has been practiced systematically throughout the country for the last 15 years.

Italy, West Germany and Britain were criticized in the report for special legislation to deal with terrorism; no one imprisoned under such legislation was adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience. Eastern Europe has also retained legislation prescribing imprisonment for those exercising the rights of freedom of conscience.

The report singles out the continuing torture and/or killing of people abducted by government authorities or paramilitary groups in South

and Central America. AI continues to investigate the "disappearance" of some 1,500 Chileans. Cuba was also cited for its use of repressive legislation in the name of "national security," resulting in 3,200 political prisoners.

AI named fifteen prisoners of conscience in the United States.

Throughout Southeast Asia and China thousands remained in detention under "political re-education" because of various forms of emergency legislation under which real or suspected

dissidents could be detained without court proceedings.

In November, a major report was released outlining China's constitutional, legal and penal systems under which the dissidents were detained and punished. In July AI submitted a report on Democratic Kampuchea stating that an impartial examination of all available information "indicates that fundamental human rights are being grossly violated in Democratic Kampuchea."

The issue of the death penalty was discussed in Stockholm in December 1977 at an AI-convened conference. A "Declaration of Stockholm" was issued calling on the United Nations to declare that the death penalty is "contrary to international law." The declaration also stressed that the death penalty, like imprisonment, "is frequently used as an instrument of repression."

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Kipawo showboat

Following the pleasing reception of the children's musical NUTS AND BOLTS at the Rebecca Cohn earlier this month, the Kipawo Showboat Company returns with another play for children. This time it is the well known Hansel and Gretel story which the company has been having great success with in Wolfville. The cast is made up mainly of children, some who have been proving their acting abilities in shows at the Kipawo Theatre for as long as two or three years. It is a delightful collection of some of the province's youngest performers and is sure to thoroughly entertain youngsters. It will be performed Saturday, March 3rd, at 2:30 p.m. All seats are \$2.00.



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