

Modern torture: even Canadians are indictable

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The following article is about torture. You probably won't believe it at first... your mind will set up defences that will turn the facts into remote and unreal statements, because you won't want to believe them. But they are true.

The article is also an introduction to Amnesty International. A.I. is an organization which attempts to keep in touch with, and aid in securing the release of "prisoners of conscience" — who have never used or advocated violence. AI is so neutral that it almost seems bland but in its non-partisan stance it boasts of being called "imperialist" by the Soviet Union and "communist" by Greece. Sean MacBride (chairman of AI) has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1974.

Torture practices occur in nearly every Latin American country, and among most African nations. Sanctioned torture is documented through South America, U.S.S.R., Spain, Greece, Turkey and several countries of Southeast Asia. The reasons for torture remain: the extraction of information, to force dissidents to recant, or just to punish them. What modern torture has that the rack lacked is efficiency.

Torture techniques range from crude physical abuses, to psychological approaches such as the use of drugs that leave no outward mark but can induce lasting neuroses like hysteria, depression, dread and even a phobia against all physical contact. Technology has added many refinements to the classical "third degree" method: electroshock to the victim's joints or sensory organs; the mad dentist torture which consists of drilling the victim's teeth until they shatter; the piquada, an electric version of the needle pushed under the fingernails; and "toasting tables" where victims are literally roasted on a metal table that gets progressively hotter.

In 1971, British servicemen disoriented I.R.A. suspects with sensory deprivation, hooding them and subjecting them to painfully high-pitched noises while standing in an uncomfortable position. These victims later won civil suits against army privates and marines.

In Brazil and South Vietnam, confirmed reports evidence that children were tortured in front of their parents. In an actual film, Brazilian prisoners are seen to be subjected to the application of electroshock on male genitals, and inside vaginas. Some males, lying on boards, were suspended by a rope around their testicles

until fatigue forced them to collapse and in effect, castrate themselves. Other noted devices include the "purple room" in Rio de Janeiro, where the victim is subject to ultraviolet light, and the "reverberation chamber" in Buenos Aires where a victim is placed on a couch and forced to listen to tape recordings of his own screams.

What about Canada? Although we do not have political prisoners or practise torture per se, we Canadians are guilty to a degree. By ignoring the torture practices of our allies, we may contribute to

economic arguments were once advanced for the retention of that other terrible and related social evil, slavery. Nevertheless, a handful of dedicated people succeeded in generating sufficient public outcry for its abolition. We must generate the same kind of outcry for its counterpart in today's world.

If you can say it's none of your concern, put a lighted cigarette to your face and think again.

The is some information taken from the *Saturday citizen* on torture in countries around the world, found in Amnesty files:



torture research and we have had political prisoners (remember October 1971, and the War Measures Act). But the main reason for indictment is the fact that Canada belongs to NATO, whose members are tolerating organized military training in torture. Therefore, our hands are not that clean ...

To conclude, I am under no illusion about the enormous difficulties facing any effort to help those unfortunates arrested and or molested for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin or religion. Strong social, political and

BRAZIL: Infamous for its torture machine, which operates as part of the political system through a coordinated network of police and military units. Torture ranges from primitive methods like castrating a man by hanging, to ultra-refined audio-visual films that alternate photos of the victim's family with approaching high-speed trains.

GREECE: In 1969 the former "cradle of democracy" withdrew from the Council of Europe after the Council charged the Athens security police in connection with 23 cases of falanga (violent

beating of soles of feet), four cases of electric shock, and 38 cases ranging from mock execution to severe general beating. * **GUATEMALA:** Citizens disappear and their mutilated bodies are later found in "clandestine cemeteries". The cemeteries are found after the bodies are thrown out of helicopters and miss their target, either the sea or a volcanic crater. The last cemetery had 12 bodies and was discovered in February, 1973.

HAITI: A long-established torture state, Haiti has no judicial machinery, no free press, and prison visits by lawyers or friends are forbidden. Prisoners have been kept naked for years in underground dungeons. Mutilation, castration, starvation, and inserting a hot poker into the rectum and methods reported by exiled prisoners.

IRAN: Despite the glamour of a jet-setting Shah, torture is a long-standing tradition. In 1969, Iran hosted a large international conference on human rights while in its jails prisoners were tortured, then secretly tried and executed. An Iranian monstrosity is the electric grill, which is alleged to have burnt some victims so badly they could only move by crawling on all-fours.

MOZAMBIQUE: Massacres (including those of old women and babies) and inhuman prison conditions are reported, and wide-scale torture is practised in jails like Pinto Teixeira Cabane camp, which has 2,000 of the 3,000 political prisoners. Its methods are reported to be the most sophisticated in the torture-ridden colonies of Portuguese South Africa.

NICARAGUA: Much of the torture takes place in the presidential palace and one report describes victims caged to wild animals in the presidential gardens.

SOUTH VIETNAM: Amnesty calls it "one of the most serious cases of political repression in the world" with over 100,000 political prisoners. In jails like Con Son, victims are left to rot in the revolting "tiger cages" provided by US manufacturers. Prisoners are often maimed from shackling or torture techniques like 'taking the submarine' which involves forcing soapy water down the victim's throat and then beating his chest.

SPAIN: Torture is commonly used in police station to extract confessions from three basic groups considered a threat to the regime — trade unionists, students and Basque nationalists. Torture practices include beating parts of the body, including the genitals; death threats; solitary

Continued on page 21