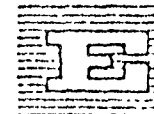


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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Thirty-fifth session  
Agenda item 10

QUESTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS SUBJECTED TO ANY FORM  
OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT

Letter dated 14 March 1979 addressed to the Chairman of the  
Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-fifth session by the  
Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations  
at Geneva

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the position of the Ethiopian Delegation with reference to the statement made by the Representative of Amnesty International on 14th March, 1979, with regard to the human right situation in Ethiopia.

I should be most grateful if you would arrange to have this declaration distributed as a document of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Tadesse Terrefe

Declaration addressed to the Chairman of the 35th Session of the Commission on Human Rights by the Head of the Ethiopian Delegation concerning the reference made about the human rights situation in Ethiopia by the Representative of Amnesty International on  
14th March, 1979.

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The Permanent Mission of Ethiopia wishes by this declaration to make known the position of the Ethiopian Government concerning the reference made by the Representative of Amnesty International in his statement to the Commission on 14th March, 1979, in connection with the consideration of item 10 of the Agenda.

We have no intention of taking up the baseless allegations, innuendos and the aspersions directed by the Representative of Amnesty International against Ethiopia, for it is evident that Amnesty International thrives on rumours and deliberate falsifications.

Ethiopia, as a founding member of the United Nations is fully committed to the cardinal principles enshrined in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of human rights and other basic documents of the Organization.

The aim of the Ethiopian Revolution is to eliminate oppression and exploitation and to build a genuinely free and just society.

Amnesty International might have been conceived and created by well meaning people. Unfortunately, however, its present activities are a far cry from the purposes for which it was initially conceived. It is now a movement that objectively became a mouth-piece of international imperialism and reaction. As such it only occasionally pays lip service to genuine human rights issues. The nature of its pernicious activities should be clear to all those who are able to see beyond the smoke-screen

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of high sounding principles behind which Amnesty International has been conveniently hiding.

Amnesty International's present statutory concern is not what it claims to be but rather frantic opposition to and subversion of governments which are engaged in fundamental socio-economic transformation for their people with the aim of advancing the cause of human rights.

Amnesty International operates from imperialist countries. It is almost exclusively staffed and funded by them. Consequently it is only natural that it should reflect the philosophy and policies of its imperialist mentors and monopolist benefactors. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that Amnesty International should make revolutionary Ethiopia one of its prime targets. What is indeed surprising is the audacity of its Representative to present its hostile views against Ethiopia to a respectable and responsible body of the United Nations. The only rationale could well be its total subservience to and instrumentally for the forces which are strenuously opposed to a genuine social revolution. Otherwise this organization has no right in assuming an investigating role about the human rights situation in Ethiopia.

For the better part of its existence, toeing the line of its imperialist benefactors has been the distinguishing characteristic of this pseudo-humanitarian movement. Amnesty International has never raised such a hue and cry when the most inhuman cruelties were being inflicted around the world by the combined forces of imperialism, reaction and their agents. These same forces to-day masquerade as the self-appointed advocates and guardians of the cause of human rights.

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Can any person of conscious ever forget the cruelties to which the american indians are even to-day subjected? In addition to being confined to reservation camps they are paraded to satisfy the perverted pleasures of tourists from so-called civilized countries. Can any honest organization be oblivious to the plight of black americans? Where was Amnesty International when the most devastating imperialist weapons of mass destruction rained on the people of Vietnam and when these heroic people were being used as guinea pigs for the products of the military - industrial complex of the arch imperialist power in the contemporary world?

What concrete action has Amnesty International taken for the cause of human rights in Southern Africa when the most odious type of racism in collaboration with imperialism and neo-colonialism continues to perpetrate repressive oppression and exploitation on millions of Africans?

Did not Amnesty International and its supporters keep an eloquent silence when nearly half a million of the oppressed and exploited masses of Ethiopia perished of famine as a result of the willful concealment of the disaster from the international community by the overthrown regime? Did Amnesty International and its supporters raise even a muffled voice when students whose singular crime was a demand for change were mowed down by machine guns in the streets of Addis Ababa and other major cities of Ethiopia and the survivors were thrown into appalling dungeons?

The Commission might wish to ask further where this self-righteous organization had been prior to the advent of the Ethiopian Revolution? Of course, the movement would try to evade the issue

by reference to some meaningless and ritualistic gestures it claims to have perfunctorily made. But this is not going to absolve it from criminal neglect of the plight of the Ethiopian masses who were suffering under the iron yoke of one of the most despotic monarchies nor is it going to cover the duplicity of its policies.

The fact remains that Amnesty International and its supporters preferred to remain silent when hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians were denied the most basic of human rights - namely the right to life, and scores of thousands were arbitrarily arrested and detained simply because they protested against the prevailing human rights condition.

Amnesty International is clearly hostile to the fundamental social transformations in Ethiopia and indeed to any genuine social revolution that would inevitably affect the interest of the imperialist countries. This hostility is surpassed only by their determination to subvert and reverse such revolutions by covert means and overt pressure.

Working hand-in-glove with the enemies of oppressed people, the movement clearly manifests itself as a tool of imperialists and uncritically echoes their sterile propaganda. Amnesty International has lost all sense of direction and has proved itself to be a movement of double standards that are applied according to the philosophy and the wishes of its masters. Its hysterical out-bursts are synchronized with the policies of international imperialism and reaction. It has lost any semblance of credibility in all revolutionary countries. We, in Ethiopia categorically reject the self-appointed role of moral policeman assumed by this suspect organization and its narrow definition

of human rights.

The people of Revolutionary Ethiopia do not accept lectures on human rights from such a well known lackey of imperialism and from countries that sustain the apartheid system and send specialists to teach their friends the latest techniques of human oppression. The most fundamental objective of the Ethiopian Revolution is to advance and safeguard the rights of the Ethiopian people as a whole, as distinct from the privileged status despotic regimes bestowed on themselves and their henchmen. The Ethiopian Revolution has been a target for wild accusations and a vicious campaign directed by all sorts of reactionary movements which distort events and circumstances and engage in subversion. The Ethiopian Government considers the statements by Amnesty International to constitute an invective against the Ethiopian Revolution and to be a betrayal of the ideals of human rights.

We therefore strongly reject the allegations of Amnesty International and protest the campaign by this organization to confuse world public opinion about the true situation prevailing in Ethiopia.