

Letters...

Claim lacks evidence

Amnesty International conceives of itself as an organization which combats human rights abuses without regard to the political orientation of countries in which they occur. AI's commitment to impartiality is, however, often challenged. William Rusher, in a recent Daily Nebraskan essay (Jan. 14) contends that AI de-emphasizes human rights abuses in communist block countries. He seems to have four reasons for that conclusion.

First, Rusher contends that space in the 1981 AI Annual Report of the human rights situation world-wide is allotted unfairly. Second, he reminds us that the Soviet population is not permitted to read AI reports critical of the USSR. Third, he asserts that AI has a biased view of the world distribution of torture. Fourth, he insists that AI press releases in the last nine months are slanted.

The first, third and fourth reasons are each disguised attempts to assume just what it is that Rusher seeks to conclude. It cannot be shown that AI's research is biased by merely asserting that it is so. What Rusher needs, and does not provide, is a demonstration of instances where AI's reports are inaccurate or complete. Accuracy and completeness, as apposed to quantity of allegations, are the tests of impartiality.

Rusher's fourth reason suffers from an additional difficulty. He invited us to support a tally of nine months of press releases from an organization which has pursued research and investigation for over twenty years provides a true account of AI's objectivity.

His second reason is doubly curious.

AI is obviously not responsible for what the Soviet people are permitted to read. Next, if Rusher's conclusion were true, why is the USSR so concerned to censor AI reports and charges?

I conclude that Willian Rusher provides no evidence for his claim that Amnesty International is partial.

Jim Benders,
Chairman
Amnesty International USA Group



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