

# world news

## INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International has refused to include lesbian sexuality in its 1992 Conference on Women and Human Rights and canceled an invited speaker on the subject, unless she would agree to talk on another topic. Dr. Monika Reinfelder, a lecturer in Political Science at the University of London's Institute of Education, had originally been invited to speak, but Carolina Kaoudines, British AI's Women's Officer, canceled the invitation, saying the subject is too controversial. In September, 1991 Amnesty International made a policy change to accept gays and lesbians persecuted based on sexual orientation, their International Executive Committee (IEC) must draw up guidelines for such cases. To date, these guidelines have not been delivered, and there is no clear timeline for this to be completed.



In response to pressure in the United States for the Boy Scouts of America to end its antigay discrimination, Jacques Moreillon, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, in February told the international press, "Scouting activity discourages homosexuals from joining its ranks." The Geneva-based organization is made up of scout organizations from 150 countries and territories, claiming to represent 16 million scouts worldwide. "No one is obliged to be a scout. Our scout youth should not be a hunting ground for homosexuals," said M. Moreillon.

## AUSTRALIA

The rising tide of street violence and the almost regular news of murders has fostered unprecedented anger in Sydney's gay and lesbian communities. This anger has now focused on the trial of eight young South Sydney men who beat a gay man, Richard Johnson, to death in Alexandria Park on January 24, 1990.

There have been two large marches against antigay violence, and another is planned. The Whistles Project has distributed thousands of whistles and is teaching people how to use them to avert violence and call for support when threatened by bashers. This group, together with Dykes on Bikes, has begun regular night time patrols, while another group, the Gay and Lesbian Street Patrol, is also planning patrols.



A gay couple from China was granted refugee status March 19 because of China's persecution of homosexuals.

Chinese law mandates incarceration for as long as it takes to "re-educate" an individual through "treatment," according to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, which provided the information that "clinched" the case, according to the couple's lawyer.

## BURMA

Twenty-five HIV positive prostitutes were injected with cyanide after being deported from Thailand, reported UPI.

Thai officials who publicized the killings said they did not know who infused the women with the lethal substance.

Twenty other deported prostitutes were murdered last year by Burmese military troops, according to Nitiya Thippayanuraksakul, director of Emergency Home, a Bangkok shelter for abused women, who received her information from Thai border police.

"The girls were injected with something and buried," she told UPI.

Burmese dissident groups have reported that bodies of murdered prostitutes have been found at sea, said UPI.

## CANADA

Canadian Customs seizes all U.S. gay porn magazines and removes depictions of or references to anal sex—even though anal sex is legal in Canada.

Canadian readers of such magazines as *Honcho* and *Jock* receive copies full of blank space.

This has been going on since 1985 in accord with Customs Memorandum D9-1-1. The Canadian Committee Against Customs Censorship has finally had enough and filed suit.

Lawyer Charles Campbell will base his case on mangled copies of *Blueboy*, *Mandate* and *Playguy*. He says that since videos showing anal sex are available in Canada and anal sex is not illegal, Memorandum D9-1-1 amounts to antigay discrimination.

## ECUADOR

Twenty gay men were killed by morality death squads in the last half of 1991, *The Advocate* reported.

"The murders are carried out as executions," according to the defunct Quito gay newspaper *El Directo*. "Some victims were kidnapped and raped."

*El Directo* ceased publication after two issues when the publishers received death threats.

"The gay activists [there] are full of fear," said Enrique Santos of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. "The only chance that they have now is international pressure."

Antigay death squads also operate in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

## ENGLAND

One hundred OutRage members staged a "cruise-in" in Picadilly Circus last month to protest laws that prohibit publicly seeking male-male sex even though gay sex is legal.

Later in the demo, several threesomes took turns placing a small mock house over the top three-fifths of their bodies and dropping their

pants to engage in "frenzied bonking." This worked a horde of news photographers into a frenzy of their own.

It is illegal for more than two men to bonk in England, even in private.

Pop stars Jimmy Somerville, Andy Bell [Erase] and Tom Robinson joined the protest. "I should have been arrested a thousand times for cruising," Bell told reporters.

Somerville related to MTV-Europe how he'd been arrested for a frenzied bonk in Hyde Park.

## GREECE

The public prosecutor in Athens convicted Irene Petropoulou, the Executive Editor of *Amphi* (Greece's gay and lesbian magazine) and sentenced her to five months in jail and a fine of 50,000 Drachmas for publishing "indecent materials" on November 8, 1991.

After receiving a number of lewd sexual proposals from heterosexual men wanting contacts with lesbians, *Amphi* published an announcement in the personal ads column asking heterosexual men to leave lesbians alone "because they have nothing in common in bed." The prosecution argued that the announcement was "indecent and offensive to public feeling."

## JAPAN

The Second Asian Lesbian Network Conference is in Tokyo May 2-5. The meeting will "provide an opportunity for Asian lesbians to ... share 'herstory,' situation and experience, to address lesbian rights issues ... and to strengthen the ties between Asian lesbians living inside and outside of Asia, and for conference organizers ALN Nippon to acknowledge the position of invader that Japan ... continues to hold with respect to other Asian countries," a spokeswoman said.

For information, phone the gay hotline, (011) 81-3-453-16118.

## NETHERLANDS

It is now a federal offense to speak or publish slurs of gays and lesbians, reports *De Gay Krant*. Lawmakers offered the phrase "vile faggot" as one example of now-banned speech.

The measure passed as an amendment to a law that increases penalties for crimes committed because of hatred of a protected minority group.



Besieged with petitions from 250 municipal governments, Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin said a gay version of marriage will be offered nationally by the end of the year.

Thirty-two Dutch cities, including Amsterdam, already allow gay couples to register their relationships and hold unofficial weddings at City Hall. City officials have officiated at scores of the ceremonies.

## ROMANIA

Long considered the most dangerous country

in Europe for homosexuals, Romania now has its first formal gay organization. Authorities granted official recognition to the group Total Relations on March 11. It has 50 members.

Romania bans both gay and lesbian sex under Articles 200 and 201 of the Penal Code. Many gay men and women are still placed in mental hospitals, two years after the anti-Communist revolution.

Total Relations, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and the International Lesbian and Gay Association will stage Romania's first gay demonstration May 17 in conjunction with the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization.

## RUSSIA

Parents of U.S. gays and lesbians and other interested folks will travel to Russia and Latvia June 28-July 13 in an effort to improve relations between Russian/Latvian gays and their parents.

The trip costs \$3,000 from New York and includes two days in Czechoslovakia. Phone (202) 638-4200 or (415) 255-8680.

## THAILAND

Police closed four gay bars and arrested their operators last month following antiprosstitution raids, reported *Capital Gay*.

Ninety-seven boys aged 15 to 20 were also arrested, said Police Major General Rangsit Yanothai, head of the Crime Suppression Division.

Thailand is a major destination for so-called "sex tourists," gay and straight.

## UNITED KINGDOM

Under pressure from the British government, Amnesty International and fellow signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights, the parliament of the Isle of Man voted 13-11 March 31 to legalize gay male sex.

The move brings the British Crown dependency into line with United Kingdom law and European Court of Human Rights precedents. Previously, sex between men was punished with up to life in prison.

Pressure mounted in February after police targeted a cruisy park restroom in Douglas, the capital, and arrested 21 closeted men, two of whom later committed suicide. Other police action brought the suicide total to four.

The 220-square-mile Isle of Man, population 69,000, lies 35 miles off the northwest England coast.

Translation: Charlie Fineman (Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish), Bliss Frings (German), Dave Kelly (Dutch), Bob Miller (Italian), Charles Smith (French), and Rex Wockner (Spanish).

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