

And finally now in '90's, Amnesty has developed into one of the most effective human rights organizations in the world. It is no longer just a letter writing campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience. Its International Secretariat in London has a staff of over 270 and over 70 volunteers from more than 50 countries. Its research department provides many human rights organizations, as well as the body of the United Nations, with the latest information on the condition of human rights in each state. Making recommendations to the United Nations and its affiliated organizations in order to improve the quality of human rights standards is another task AI has been facing, especially in the

'90's. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna last June was the largest international meeting on human rights to take place for more than 25 years. Unfortunately, the lack of agree-

ment among governments on moving strongly ahead on human rights protection exposed the real danger Amnesty and other human rights organizations are facing today. Amnesty International adopted a 10-point plan for governments to strengthen and improve human rights protection within the UN system:

1) Establish a Special Commissioner

for Human Rights as a new high-level authority within the UN system.

2) Establish an effective UN early warning system to identify potential human rights crises.

3) Create an efficient UN emergency response system to enable the international community to react quickly and constructively to serious violations of human rights.

4) Strengthen the UN technical assistance program to help countries develop long-term programs for human rights protection.

5) Include human rights issues and specialist expertise in UN conflict resolution and peace-keeping efforts in order to protect victims and promote long-term stability.

6) Address neglected issues, such as the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples and children, in the UN human rights program.

7) Strengthen the methods and impact of the UN theme mechanisms, such as those dealing with torture, "disappearances," extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detention.

8) Improve the capacity of the UN committees set up to monitor the implementation of human rights treaties.

9) Ensure closer cooperation with other UN programs and activities which have an impact on human rights, such as the program on crime prevention and criminal justice.

10) Increase funding and other essential resources for the UN human rights program, including the Centre for Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights covers two sets of rights: 1) Civil and Political Rights and 2) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. There is an obvious link between the two sets of rights. The protection of one set depends on the other. Today the vision for the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights that seeks a just and peaceful world is under threat. There are a number of governments that want to block action on human rights by the international community. Some governments have gone even further, using arguments based on the idea of "Universal and Invisible Human rights" to put global aid and trade on a more just basis than issues like the prevention of torture. Amnesty International calls on governments to commit themselves to implementing internationally recognized human rights standards. Regional, historical or cultural differences can not justify selective protection of human rights or serve as a screen to mask human rights violations.

Amnesty International consists of many networks: Medical Network, Legal Network, Woman's Action Network, Youth/Campus Network, Indigenous People Network,...

The Canadian section of Amnesty International has been one of the most active and prestigious branches of Amnesty. Group YC 405 (UNB) which was founded in September 1992 is a member of an active coalition of AI groups (Youth/Cam-

pus Network). During 1992-93 our tasks were: increasing the awareness of the university community about human rights issues in general and taking action on human rights abuses in particular. Our information and display tables introduced a variety of AI cases that we have been working on. Last year we focused on two major public events: October Campaign, The 500th years anniversary of repression; and the International Women's Day (March 8). October is Amnesty Month and this week, we the members of AI, group YC 405 celebrate Amnesty Week as well as our secondary anniversary as the UNB

group. Many thanks to all the members: Sam Mubareka, John Jurmain, Hip Vu, Nicole Lundringan, Mark Chandra, Jamal En-Abas, Betty and many many others who supported us. Our struggle toward a better world, a just and peaceful one depends on our contribution to this worldwide movement with over a million members. Join us and share your ideas with the other members. For local contact call Kourosh: 451-6407 or Sam: 451-8282.



Los Angeles Police officers beat Rodney King in March 1991. An amateur video photographer captured these images.

Selected Documents and Publications from Amnesty International: