



STOP JUNGLE JUSTICE

By Sam Okello

ARCUP Human Rights Coordinator

Violation of human rights in most developing countries seems to be the order of the day. To the rest of the world such injustice remains one of the most unfortunate inconveniences of modern life.

Take for instance a country such as Haiti: last year Canadians witnessed TV pictures of the abuse of human rights by the Haitian military government. It was a typically hot, dry morning in Haiti when popular dis-

content about the military's brutal rule turned to ugly riots. To many people this was not only a mystery but also a nightmare.

The Haitian environment had turned government soldiers into sadists. They liked blood. Gruesome sights did not revoke the actions of government soldiers. TV pictures depicted untold suffering of civilians. Even the newspapers served readers with gore at the breakfast table. It could be a headless body, a bodyless head or mutilated body printed on the front page where one couldn't miss it.

The military junta had brought this brutality into its laws. At the shout of "Tonton Macout" (Haitian secret police), a suspect would be either detained, shot to death or grabbed and have a car tire hung around his neck like a necklace and set ablaze. The crowd would cheer.

The victims tortured in this hostile environment were branded terrorists or murderers by their captors. Perhaps these victims had nothing to do with politics in the Haitian government. It could be that they were simply seeking social change.

During the Christmas holidays, I spoke to eyewitnesses who told me that the victims came from humble beginnings; most of them came from the proletariat middle-class. They went to church regularly, and held university degrees. The bottom line is that the victims were neither terrorists nor murderers as alleged by their captors; but they became subject to every imaginable piece of incriminating allegation.

As a result, the government claimed that the victims were guilty of charges of treason and the victims were guilty of charges of treason and the result was either cruel torture, life imprisonment or capital punishment. In the government's zeal to smear all opponents as traitors to the country, it often got carried away and forgot to respect human rights.

What the Haitian military government couldn't win through logical argument, it wanted to win through intimidation and blackmail. Local people orchestrated a chorus of angry protest at the atrocities committed. Despite this, the government turned a deaf ear. The local people then argued for the removal

of what one would call jungle justice. It was this jungle justice, this unprecedented terror that foreign journalists were encouraged to report on.

For many in the Western world, such violence is unbelievable, a forgotten topic. If what we see on American and Canadian TV can be believed, then the Haitian military junta wants to put tires around the necks of their victims. Government soldiers prefer to publicly stone their targets to death. For this reason human rights abuse in Haiti is shocking.

That, to me, is a way of attempting to clean the society by restoring the rule of the jungle. A civilized society should be governed by the rule of law. Until the military government in Haiti acknowledges the rule of law, suffering remains to all Haitians.

Now that the public is expecting new elections later this month, it is time to enforce the rule of law and respect human rights. Due to past experiences, the Haitian government should not repeat the same mistakes. Leaders should refrain from "crazy" things such as incompetence, criminal offences, political naivety and ineffectiveness.

Mussels and other goings on

by Vivian Huizenga

DIDN'T YOU FEEL good when you heard that a professor at our university was actively working on the toxic mussel problem? I sure was! I was elated thinking our university housed, hot on the trail, brainy professors.

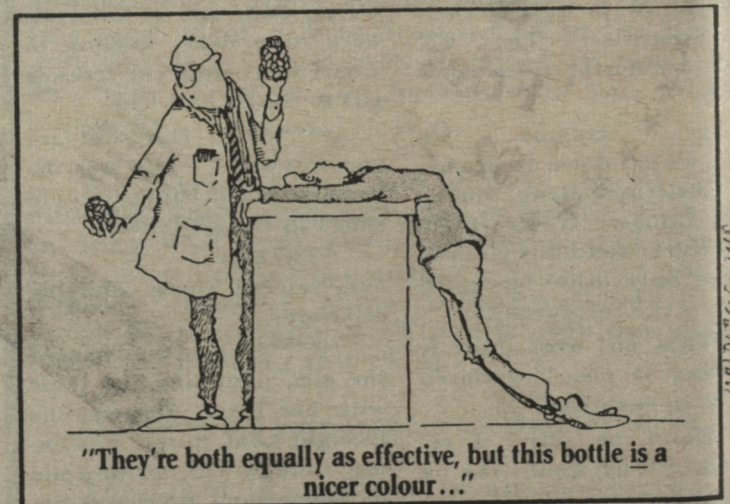
In reality, Prof. Hanic, a marine botanist in our sci-

ence department was cold, soggy and a tired man after having spent an entire night waiting while Department of Fisheries (Federal and Provincial) technicians made 35 trips to get 2000 gallons of water out of the Cardigan River to Halifax before an impending storm.

Wednesday, December 3, Prof. Hanic received a call from the Dept. of Fisheries who were looking for a phyto plankton net. Prof. Hanic got hold of a boat owned by Russel Dockendorf and after pushing and shoving for 2 hours finally got out into open water. Prof. Hanic had his microscope aboard and could see an abundance of diatoms, a type of plankton, in the water samples right away.

The crew tested the water all along the Cardigan River every 1/2 mile. Prof. Hanic said he even noticed the water looked strange on the surface. It was calm and looked as if there was a film of soap on the surface which swirled around in patterns. These were the thick concentrations of diatoms.

In a beaker held up to the light one could actually see the beauties—chains up to 16 cells long, overlapped



and thin as a spider's web thread. These diatom chains actually reflected light similar to a spider's web.

The waters around Boughton Island and Murray River exhibited the same diatom, called *Nitzschia*, but less in concentration. It took 12 hours to extract the first sample which was then frozen and sent to Ottawa.

There the sample was tested on a mouse which subsequently died in 40 minutes with the classic symptoms of scratching and boxing of the form of poison. Now it became urgent to get samples while the beauties were in bloom (full force).

Tuesday, December 8, 4:00pm, the department Fisheries had 2 alternat-

Cont. on page 12