

WUSC-UPEI Program

By Sam Okello

A program enabling student refugees from Third World countries to continue their studies in Canada has been established at UPEI.

Ian Hogg, the newly-appointed President of the World University Service of Canada-UPEI program said that the program at the Island's university is conducted under the auspices of WUSC with the cooperation of the Federal Department of Employment and Immigration and External Affairs.

"It is becoming increasingly difficult for foreign students to come to Canada to study," Hogg told WUSC staff members. "Such developments as the establishment of differential fees and the proposed changes for student visas have produced for these students financial difficulties and a demoralizing psychological climate." Differential fees affect foreign students who must pay a higher tuition because they are not Canadian citizens.

Hogg pointed out that the objective of the program is to provide post-secondary education opportunities to a student refugee who is recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

"We need your efforts," Hogg said. "World University Service, along with other organizations like the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Canadian Federation of Students, are attempting to counter this trend," he added.

Hogg noted that the refugee is given a chance that he/she would not otherwise have. He indicated that the program has been in existence for more than six years and at present there are refugees at 23 Canadian college and university campuses with at least a dozen more schools planning to become involved within the next two years.

"The dual purpose of the program is to provide an education to the refugee student and to give Canadians an opportunity to increase their awareness of the international scene."

Hogg mentioned that the role of the WUSC-UPEI program is to provide all necessary financial support to a sponsored refugee student for one full academic year and to provide moral and psychological support for the duration of his/her stay. He said the support also enables the refugee to get involved in Canadian culture.

"Through the cooperation of the government of Canada, the refugee is given a loan to come to Canada and is granted Landed Immigrant status," said Hogg. Such assistance allows the sponsored students to become eligible for employment and government loans/bursaries. After the first year, it is expected that the refugees will become self-sufficient. Hogg also noted that the local WUSC committee continues to give moral support and acts as a resource group.

"Refugees sponsored through this program have fled their home country because of fear of persecution due to political, religious or tribal nature." He said that the

program enables these people to escape a miserable situation of poverty and chronic unemployment.

Mr. Hogg stated that the penalty to refugees in case they return home, is most likely imprisonment or death. "The situation is further exacerbated by the phenomenal numbers of refugees fleeing into border states that are not equipped to cope with the tens of thousands of these people."

He explained that the response of the governments who accept refugees is to gather them into refugee camps and subsequently restrict privileges and limited opportunities. "They then become third and fourth class citi-

zens and their prospects for escaping this type of existence are bleak and almost non-existent unless they can receive aid from an external and benevolent source."

Hogg said WUSC has hundreds of files on people who would like to be given a chance to escape their desperate situation. He mentioned that upon reading the files one realizes that each refugee speaks of different difficulties he/she has encountered. He said that the "common thread" throughout is chronic unemployment due to government restrictions, poverty, privation and a hope against hope that their situation might change. Hogg

added that the UNHCR does its best to help these people, but the funding is limited and there are so many refugees who need help.

"The cost of maintaining one person for one calendar year was in excess of \$3000." He said that to maintain this very worthwhile program, the members would like to set up a permanent funding structure to guarantee its existence. Hogg asked the Island community to help the members of WUSC-UPEI by participating and getting involved with international cooperation and development. "This will make a large difference to many future lives."

Manhattan Autumn Saturday

By Robert Bodrog-Goodland

It was a lovely autumn morning. She lay beside me sleeping while I held her. Her dark hair fell, covering one side of her face. She was soft, warm — beautiful. It felt wonderful under the comforter; but suddenly I sensed a chill coming on.

I had made love to her the night before. She said that she loved me. I told her that I loved her too. I wasn't lying. I don't know if she was. Because her's face lit, people lie all the time — about themselves, about their feelings — about anything. So what's a person supposed to do if you can't trust anyone? I know what you're thinking. You're probably saying "but she's your lover; surely you must be able to trust your lover?" Well, with all due respect, you must be pretty naive if you believe that. After all, what more is a lover than someone you've had sex with? Forget all that stuff about emotional bonding, attachment, commitment; it just doesn't work like that. I should know. Don't feel bad about it — I used to believe in all that nonsense. But that was before. Before that Saturday in September.

She woke up and stretched her arms. She turned to face me and smiled. "Good morning," she said softly, brushing her long supple fingers down my cheek. I held her in my arms and kissed her forehead. She was absolutely stunning, even first time in the morning. She pressed her head against my chest and looked sad. But I did not feel for her. It was not my fault. She had brought this all upon herself, and no one else was to blame.

She kissed my cheek as if to make up for something. I smiled, but I was not moved. No; it was much too late for that. I think she knew that, too. She sunk back with her head on my chest. I could have kissed her, but I didn't. I didn't feel like it. Six hours ago it was a different story. Sonnets, candlelight; a passion so intense it scared us at times.

The city was just starting to wake beneath us. Before long a steady murmur of activity could be heard thirty stories up.

"Are you hungry?" she asked.

"Not really," I said, "but get something for yourself if you like; I'm sure room-service is serving by now."

"Maybe later," she said.

We lay there in silence as the minutes passed.

"What time do you have to be there?" I asked.

"Well, it starts at two-thirty, so I really should be at Mom's no later than noon."

"So; the whole family's coming in, eh?"

"Just about."

"So how many people you expecting all together?" I asked.

"Around two hundred, I guess."

"Two hundred. My; must be nice. I wish I could get that many on opening day at one of my exhibitions."

"Don't be sarcastic; you know it's not the same. It's not an exhibition."

"No, I guess with your family it would be more like a circus."

She said nothing. She knew it was an accurate description. There was a long pause.

"Do you remember that time you painted my portrait," she said,

"and put it in the show just for fun —"

"And that Arab sheik saw it, and offered me ten thousand dollars for it."

"And he was so mad when you told him it wasn't for sale."

"And then he called me a pretentious bastard."

"And you told him he was a fat asshole."

We laughed for a moment, then it was over. After awhile she spoke again.

"It's still hanging in the gallery?"

"You bet it is."

"Why have you kept it up after all these years?" she asked.

"To drive people crazy."

"Whaddya mean?"

"By keeping that painting up I'm telling all those phony bastards that come in day after day trying to buy culture and class than there's at least one thing in this world that they can't have — that painting. And I swear, I've had more offers on that one item than any other piece in the shop. In fact, a fat woman with a poddle offered me fifteen-five last week."

"Fifteen-five?"

"Fifteen-five. But I'm not selling it. I'll burn it before I let one of 'em have it."

"She took my arm and I placed my hand in hers. We looked into each other's eyes. That had always been one of our favorite things to do; we'd lounge on the couch for hours, just the two of us, holding hands. We never tired of looking at each other. A simple pleasure perhaps, but I think we learned more about each other that way than we ever did by talking. That's what made her different. I could never do that with any other woman. She was unique; just looking at her face in those days was enough to make me smile. And very little in this world makes me smile. I'd look and smile; then she'd look at me and blush embarrassingly like a school girl."

"Why do you always stare at me," she'd say.

"Because you're beautiful," I'd say.

And so it would go. Oh, how many nights the two of us stared away together, each attempting to behold the other entirely; trying to pierce inner depths, secret buried treasures; untapped sensuality. Two love struck souls in earnest, each trying so desperately to penetrate the other. I don't think we succeeded. There was a time when I thought we had — we both did. But despite the love between us all that we shared, it was not enough. We might have carved our initials in each other's garden but unfortunately it was within a tree whose shade was temporal and whose pluck green sanctuaries was finite, shrinking in the cool air, thinning daily with each hint of autumn's inevitable onslaught.

Suddenly the words of Hegel came back to haunt me "When philosophy paints its gray in gray, the Isle of Minerva spreads its wings only at the falling of dusk....."

There was nothing more to do, so we just lay there holding hands, savoring the last precious drops of intimacy, as one might savor the last colorful, shining jellybeans from a treasured crystal decanter. For it is so often finitude and finitude alone which lends value to anything.

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