

# Travel

## Good experience gained by WUSC in Caribbean

By VIKI WEATHERBY

A seminar in the Caribbean for six weeks in the summer may sound like a dream holiday but it isn't always fun, sun, sand and surf. This past summer I was the participant from U.N.B. in the twenty-fifth annual seminar of World University Service of Canada and it was held in the Caribbean. WUSC is an international organization which tries to encourage awareness among students of the conditions and development of the so-called Third World countries. In an attempt to do this, groups of Canadian students are sent to different underdeveloped nations every year.

The seminar began in London, Ont., where we had an orientation session at the University of Western Ontario's Learner Centre. It was here that we were given sensitivity training, and a basic preparation for what we might experience. This orientation lasted for four days and by the end of it we were all very anxious to leave. At this point there were approximately fifty students and eight professors.

We arrived in Haiti late in the afternoon and, after being greeted by our hosts, were unceremoniously loaded into a fleet of ptop-ptops (tap-taps). These are little, gaily colored, enclosed trucks are probably the most uncomfortable vehicles designed by man. We were taken to the centre at which we staying and provided with an enormous feast. That and most other meals consisted of rice and peas, goat, fried bananas and unleavened bread. It was delicious! While we were in Haiti we spent a few mornings in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where we visited the different markets. There, bartering was the order of the day and vendors would become quite frustrated if you didn't follow through with the practice. We also spent one afternoon up in the mountains where, at long last, it was cool (about 85 degrees). For the most part it was 80 degrees at seven o'clock in the morning and the days were scorcher. About the third day in Haiti everyone started getting sick. Fever, dysentery, heat rash and sun stroke were the most common ailments. Everyone longed for a shower but there was a water shortage so showers were taboo. Even drinking water was at a minimum.

At this point those well enough to travel, those who weren't were split into smaller groups. Our group headed for a two-day sejour in Puerto Rico. Here we were treated with superb hospitality. Puerto Rico was almost a relief after the shock of Haiti. Except for old San Juan it is almost indistinguishable from any large American city. Again we encountered a water shortage - the water only being on from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Naturally we arrived at 7:30 p.m.

From Puerto Rico, our group decided to go to Guadeloupe. Thereby more good luck than good management, we spent five days living in the slums. This was truly an experience! Most of us had led a clean, sheltered Canadian life and the first night sharing the room

with rats and cockroaches was almost enough to make us pack up and go home. We had added to our group two Haitian students and they laughed at our horror of 'things that go bump in the night'.

Guadeloupe and Martinique are both departementes of France much the same as N.B. is a province of Canada. This helps to explain the very distinctive French culture - e.g. the bottled mineral water, the fantastic (but outrageously priced) clothes, the cafes and the patisseries.

While living in the house we occasionally ate there and the food was superb. Meals were a long but delightful process. Usually there were about five courses of which fish, bananas and rum would play major roles.

One day was spent touring the island with special emphasis placed on the mountainous region which, ironically, is called Basse Terre. It was in this region that we saw many volcanoes and many of the rocks on the sides of the roads were too hot to touch. The smell of sulphur was nauseatingly distinct. We stopped in several little villages along the way and wandered the streets. People were very friendly and would go out of their way to help you. After five days we packed up and left our happy little home to go to Martinique.

We arrived late at night and took a taxi to the ferry, where we waited an hour and a half. After finally getting the boat and arriving at what we thought was our destination we were sent on 'down the road' about another mile with all our luggage. We collapsed when we finally arrived at the villa (another term for cottage) and did not realize until morning that we were twenty feet from the ocean. We were in the wrong villa, however, so we repacked and walked farther til we finally hit "home". At long last we were rid of most of the cockroaches and rats and now instead there were lizards and sea crabs. These we didn't mind very much. We decided, as it was Sunday, that we would go to mass and then to dinner. We did get to church but on Sunday the churches are the only places open! We went back to the villa for a supper of bread and cheese.

Our little troupe broke up again so we could continue with the studies that each was doing. I was doing a paper on housing and thus stayed at the villa and took the ferry into the capital, Fort-de-France, every day. The people in the government offices where I was couldn't have been nicer. Often I would be waiting for a few hours for someone (this happened frequently) and the office girls would go out of their way to entertain me.

The girls live very sheltered lives in that most boys must ask the girl's parents, as well as her, before going out and ALL girls live with their parents until they get married. They were astounded by the liberty allowed to North American girls.

The government officials were very good to me. They gave me office space in which to copy over documents (no photostating equipment) and dug through their files

to give me as much detail as possible on housing and its subsidization. The plans which I saw were astounding. Already some 'apartment cities' have been built and they are truly amazing, although the lower-income families have a lot of problems just trying to get into them.

Martinique must be a male's paradise, or so the males on the seminar thought. The girls are all tall and slender with a beautiful coffee-colored skin. Their posture is bordering on regal, perhaps they are all descendants of Napoleon's Josephine - the national heroine. Beside the Martiniquaise girls, North Americans look terribly awkward and frumpy.

The climate in Martinique was almost as hot as in Haiti. As the heat drained all energy from us, the two-hour rest period in the afternoon is definitely needed! Otherwise everyone was in bed by about 8:00. It rained a few days while we were there but only a ten or twenty minute downpour and then it would be over.

Our diet was mainly bread and cheese with some fruit. There was rarely any meat. Bottled water was a matter of social etiquette and to order just a pitcher of water in a restaurant was considered totally uncouth!

We spent one day touring the island and we visited St. Pierre where there was a horrible volcanic eruption (Mount Pele) in 1901. Here there was a small museum with pictures of the ruins and a prisoner in a jail, the only

one of twenty-eight thousand to survive. Even today you can see how the mountainsides are strewn with the volcanic rock.

Eventually it was time to get ready to go to the wind-up session in Barbados. There we all sat down and discussed our projects as a whole as well as laughing, and crying, over our experiences. I decided to stay a week longer (mainly because I couldn't get a flight out) and several of us rented a moke - a kind of jeep. We toured around the island for a couple of days and were astonished to find the amazing similarities between Barbados and Canada. Even the housing, except for the structure of the windows and doors, is much the same as here.

Finally the seminar was over, however, and it was time to go home. The thought of Canada and the coolness was tantalizing but saying good-bye to the sun, sand and surf was a bit hard too!

World University Service of Canada is not going to sink into oblivion, however! In October, one and possibly two, candidates will be chosen to go to the seminar in Egypt for next summer. Further details will be posted soon.

Also beginning Sept. 23-30 is "Third World Week". During this week there will be panel discussions, speakers and movies Mon. - Fri.

The schedule of the films is:  
Sept. 23 - Tauw; Emitae  
Sept. 24 - Limits to Growth  
Katutura

Dream on Monkey Mountain  
Sept. 25 - Crowfoot  
How Death Come to Earth  
The Jackal of Nahueltoro  
Sept. 26 - Helen, Queen of the Nautch Girls  
Days and Nights in the Forest  
Sept. 27 - Jalan Jalan  
State of Seige

The above films will be held in Tilley 102 at 7:00 each night with two showings 7:00 and 9:00 on Friday.

"Third World Week" will be followed by a week of WUS crafts which are handicrafts from many Third World nations. The crafts are bought from co-operatives which have been established in the countries and the prices here are extremely reasonable. The goods from the Caribbean (which were similar to those which I have seen) are of top quality. The sale of WUSCRAFTS will be held in the SUB ballroom from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Anyone who would be willing to help with this or anything else please contact me: Viki Weatherby. McLeod Hall, U.N.B.

The Canadian Red Cross maintains sixteen blood transfusion centres strategically located throughout Canada. The staff, trained nurses and technologists are responsible for collecting, testing, storing and distributing blood to hospitals in their respective areas.

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### THIRD WORLD FILM SERIES Tilley Hall Rm. 102

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF Z. COSTA-GAVRAS



- Mon., Sept. 23: Sembene's EMITAE and TAUW, 7:30
- Tues., Sept. 24: LIMITS TO GROWTH and DREAM ON MONKEY MTN., 7:30
- Wed., Sept. 25: JACKAL OF NAHUELTORO Chile's First Feature Film, 7:30
- Thurs., Sept. 26: Satyajit Ray's Best DAYS & NIGHTS IN THE FOREST, 6:30 STATE OF SIEGE, 8:30
- Fri., Sept. 27: STATE OF SIEGE, 7:30

From the writer of Battle of Algiers, Franco Solinas  
Music by Mikis Theodorakis