

CROSSCANADA

Trend-setting studies

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Twelve University of B.C. professors will soon begin negotiations with UBC's administration which may result in Canada's first lesbian and gay studies program.

UBC's Faculty Association Committee on Gay and Lesbian issues hopes to build on the success of this fall's UBC lesbian and gay lecture series, co-chair Douglas Sanders said.

"We're not considering the lecture series to be the end of the game — that now that we've had a lesbian/gay/bisexual lectures series we're all happy — that's not our vision," Sanders, a UBC law professor, said.

Although several Canadian universities have offered lesbian and gay courses, none have set up degree-granting programmes in the field. Gay studies degree-granting programs are currently available at the University of Utrecht in Holland, City University of New York and the University of San Francisco.

UBC's vice-president and provost Dan Birch is supportive. Although UBC's Senate would decide whether or not to launch the courses or a program, he likes the idea of lesbian and gay studies in general.

"UBC is trying to recognize the value of gay and lesbian studies in all areas of our curriculum. That's why we have funded the lecture series," Birch said.

"Maybe all of white patriarchal culture will be reduced to the status of a lowly study series with a few courses. Wouldn't that be great?"

Imagine no possessions

TORONTO (CUP) — Students at the University of Toronto can get their bike fixed, have an essay researched and edited, or get a massage, all without paying a cent of their own money, by using the Local Employment and Trading System.

LETS calls itself "a community-operated economic exchange." Essentially, it is a bartering system. It operates on the principle that all members have skills to trade for other goods and services. Money exists only in theoretical form.

Actual transactions of currency never take place. "Green cash" is only used for accounting. A group of volunteers are paid in green dollars to maintain the system, and to inform students of the LETS campus system.

The U of T system says it could still use more members in order to create more trade avenues. Members say the system has more than just economic benefits.

"What's beautiful about LETS is that it gives people an opportunity to expand their consciousness," said Ross. "From interaction with other people, you can learn more about yourself... it's a more socially-oriented system."

More rare than a Rhino

TORONTO (CUP) — After being part of the Canadian political establishment for thirty years, the Rhinoceros Party was legally erased from existence on the afternoon of Sept. 27, 1993.

But in the minds of true Rhinos across the country, they're as strong as ever and ready to put up a good fight in the upcoming federal elections.

Charles McKenzie has been a prominent Rhino for fifteen years, and has held a variety of positions within the party.

"I'm the party janitor. I was the leader of the party in the 1988 election. I went into the campaign with a one in four chance of becoming Prime Minister and I placed fifth. And during that campaign, I broke a world record for political promises. I made 54 promises in 5 minutes, 47 seconds," says McKenzie.

He wants you to listen to the Rhino platform. He wants you to know that they have plans to cut the deficit in half within a week. He wants you to join the ever-growing "Rhino-bellion" that is sweeping the nation and most of all, he's asking for your support. But Charles McKenzie does not want you to vote for him.

In fact, you can't vote for him, because he's not running. Along with every other Rhino in Canada, McKenzie is asking Canadians to write their own names on the ballot and vote for themselves.

They will consider all of these votes to be Rhino votes.

"To us, the only spoiled ballot is the vote not cast," says McKenzie.

Other parties who have also been shut down are taking the issue to court, but this process can cost tens of thousands of dollars. The Rhinos have other plans.

"We're very supportive of what the Greens, and the Libertarians, and the Communists and everybody else is doing, but we have the Rhino way of doing things. The only solution for us as Rhinos is to provoke the government into taking us to court.

"We're breaking the election law in as many ways as we possibly can. When the charges come, we'll then put the whole question before the court," says McKenzie.

So now, weeks before the election, the Rhinos have legally vanished. But, says McKenzie, "We've been part of the Canadian political establishment for thirty years and we'll continue functioning as a political party for years and years and years to come. You can be sure of that."

Peace sought for Sudan

by Meg Murphy

"Lucky are the people in Yugoslavia and Somalia for the world is with them. It may be a blessing to die or get killed in front of a camera, because the world will know."

These desperate words come from a letter that was smuggled out of Juba in southern Sudan last summer. The world is well-informed and properly unsettled by the "ethnic cleansing" atrocities occurring in Bosnia and the gradual mass starvation in Somalia. Yet, very few are aware that Sudan suffering from civil strife which, since erupting in 1988, has claimed the lives of almost a million people through battle and war-related famine.

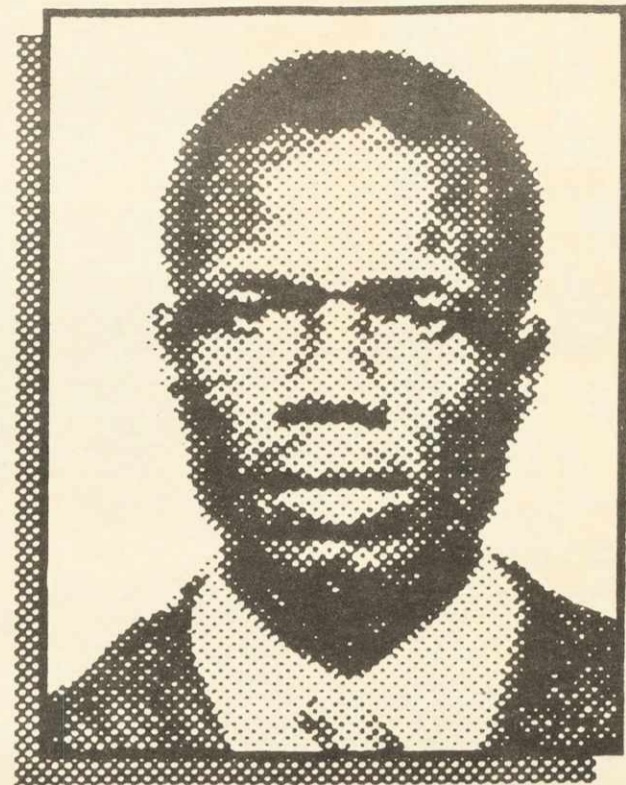
George Kiri, an emergency relief officer with Lutheran World Service/Sudan Emergency Operations, is part of a speaking tour designed to increase Canadian consciousness of the Sudanese plight. Kiri visited Halifax from October 9 to 14, and spoke at the 10am service at Resurrection Lutheran Church on October 10.

It is usually presumed that a relief worker from a devastated area would be touring an affluent country in the hopes of rousing sympathy, and thus handouts, for his people. Yet in Kiri's case nothing could be further from the truth. His message moves far beyond any attempts at a quick-fix, temporary solution.

Instead, he focuses on the long term ideal of restoring pride and unity to the Sudanese people. First, he expresses his gratitude to Canadians, and the Lutheran church in particular, for the help they have already provided. But, he then goes on to passionately speak about the importance of returning his people to some form of self-sufficiency. Handouts are just not cutting it.

"The Canadian tour is to tell them how much assistance, a help to us, they have been in keeping people alive," says Kiri. "But [it is] also to tell them it is not only food that we actually need. We need some developmental activities, because at the moment we are trying to develop ourselves with little success. We can still do very well if this type of help comes. But, we will not seek out for handouts only. We will do something for ourselves."

Through developmental activities he not only hopes to bring greater prosperity to southern Sudan, but also to provide these afflicted people with a renewed sense of pride.



Kiri then points out the major flaw in western media coverage, when there is any, of the civil war in Sudan. In most coverage it has been depicted as a religious war. The northern Islamic fundamentalists against the south African predominantly Christian sect. He finds this definition both inaccurate and extremely detrimental to his country.

Nothing is ever that black and white, and in the case of the Sudanese war and famine, the attempt to pack it away neatly as another "religious war" is ridiculous, says Kiri.

It is only since 1972 that the northern and southern Sudanese governments were 'merged,' although they obviously haven't achieved that goal. In any case, due to British rule, the north and south had been completely divided for centuries. They each developed their own cultures. The north thrived, while the south remained largely underdeveloped. So, when the decision was made to mesh the two together, southerners began to feel very threatened. They did not want to sacrifice their culture or political powers to the more powerful north.

Emotions eventually reached boiling point, exploding into the rebellion staged by southern guerrillas, who began fighting in 1988. Of course, religion does come into play a bit, but the main purpose of this war is political, not religious.

The inaccuracy of western reporting would seem simply a casual frustration to the people of Sudan. Unfortunately, it has a much graver impact than mild annoyance on these people. They desperately need peace to come soon in order to survive. Reporting like that, which neatly divides the Sudanese people, further promotes the sense of separation and alienation which is the cause of the war in the first place.

"There is no 'north Sudanese people' or 'south Sudanese people,'" says Kiri. "We are one people, one country." Western media coverage works directly opposite of this concept. So, ironically enough, the little media attention they do receive usually only serves to multiply the desperation of their plight.

George Kiri will continue his tour around Canada until October 25, at which point he will return to his work station in Juba, southern Sudan. His aim is to bring hope to his people. Yet, when asked about the level of hope his people hold for their country, his answer is sobered with the long years of suffering the Sudanese have experienced.

"We have a long way to go. Hope depends on past experience. The Sudanese people have seen a lot, and nothing done to end it. Human beings get fed up. Now, people say just give me my daily bread...I will continue until tomorrow."

Science bias behind cuts

by Neil Donald

The arts are not being fairly treated by highly-placed scientists, according to Dalhousie Student Union President Jefferson Rappell and NDP Education Critic John Holm.

"After having spoken to Dr. Halliwell I can say that in her approach there is a definite bias towards a 'techno/job' conception of the University that hangs the whole idea of the validity of a liberal arts education out to dry," said Rappell, referring to Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education (NSCHE) Chair Dr. Janet Halliwell.

"Her fellow scientist [Dalhousie] President Clark has publicly said he has very little connection with the arts community, and he definitely shares Halliwell's conception of the university," said Rappell.

When Education Minister, and one-time physics and math teacher, John MacEachern was asked if the positions,

backgrounds, and attitudes of Clark and Halliwell might adversely affect the ability of the arts programs at Dalhousie to defend their interests, he said, "I would have to see what the internal structure is."

MacEachern said he was aware that both Clark and Halliwell had served on the Science Council of Canada, but said he was unaware that the NSCHE publication on rationalization, called *Opportunities*, was produced by a one-time Tory Federal Minister of Science. When asked if he found it odd that a former Tory minister was the publicist for his Liberal government's advisory body on higher education, he said that he did not.

"So far, in education and in most other areas, the Liberals appear to be following the Tory agenda," said NDP Education Critic John Holm. "As the government shrinks the amount of funding to universities they appear to

want the money to be given to the sciences. This tends to come out of liberal and performing arts budgets."

According to Holm, "We have maintained, to the new Liberal government and the old Tory regime, that the government should advise Dalhousie to hold back on cutting programs, many of which are unique, until the rationalization plan is put on the table."

"It's terrifying that rationalization seems to be proceeding full speed ahead at Dalhousie while to date nothing concrete has been put forward for discussion," said Rappell. "Either the NSCHE has been doing very little since Halliwell came on board over a year ago, or they are being very secretive in their approach. Judging by what is happening at Dal, it seems the latter is true."

President Clark and Dr. Halliwell could not be reached for comment.