

Metro's lost horizons

by Alex Boston

Haligonian shoppers are losing opportunities to support fair trade and fair wages. Horizon Trading Company which sells crafts, food and clothing from non-industrial countries is closing its doors after the shopping season. In contrast to most import knickknack stores, or Sobeys and Co., Horizon gave decent dollars to the farmers and craftspeople whose products they sold.

The Dartmouth-based Self Help store shares a similar philosophy and the same fate. Both stores partially attribute their closures to a shortage of volunteers. Ian Patton, Self Help manager, explained they are intending to re-open in the spring once they have managed to generate further support.

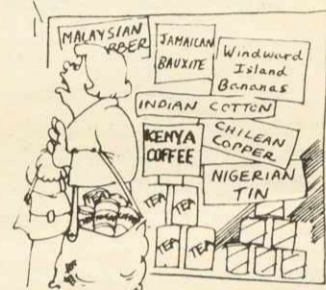
Horizon's big sellers were Bridgehead coffees and teas. Through Bridgehead, Horizon and its customers support democratically run producer groups which have a concern for health and safety standards and frequently offer social programs and health care for their workers. The producer groups equitably share their profits amongst members.

Such achievements are remarkable for industries where workers are normally exposed without protection to carcinogenic chemicals and toxic supervisors for ten hours a day. In Guatemala, which is perhaps one of the worst examples, adult workers earn about \$1.50 a day plus six tortil-

las and a small portion of beans. They often sleep on cardboard boxes in shelters, galeras, which have no walls and thus are unprotected from the rain. Their drinking water is often plagued with parasites because of an absence of latrines.

The North American Free Trade Agreement will perhaps worsen conditions as it will probably smash a coffee cartel which was expanding and threatened to eventually force Canadian and American coffee drinkers to pay a fair price for the commodity.

NO! I FIRMLY BELIEVE THEY SHOULD DEPEND ON THEMSELVES, AS WE DO.



The craftspeople at the other end of Self Help get about 70% of what customers pay. Yet according to Patton, the sales are not the most important thing, "it's that they appreciate the philosophy."

Paul Richard, Horizon co-manager, explains with dismay that Halifax was not politically aware enough to support a philosophy of economic justice. "We need broader participation from the community," he says.

Richard points to a Saint John store which is thriving because of a committed group of volunteers and an array of church congregations and social justice groups which buy their products.

Nevertheless, he says there have been major breakthroughs. A couple of teachers in the Annapolis Valley use Bridgehead and Rainforest Crunch as fundraisers and educational tools. A United Church in Waverly, several university departments, and a number of other groups consistently support them. They also have quite solid sales on Saturday mornings at the farmers' market in the Brewery Market.

Coldspring Farms has offered to continue selling the coffee, tea and Rainforest Crunch at the market and to wholesale buyers. Gragaron Farms will also continue selling Horizon's line of wild rice and wild blueberry jam.

This week at the SMU students' centre, the International Development Association brought together Horizon, Self Help and some local craftspeople to offer students a choice when they are doing their seasonal shopping rituals. On Monday and Tuesday of next week Dal Christian Fellowship is bringing Self Help crafts to the Dal SUB.

Horizon Trading Company is open seven days a week at Historic Properties. Self Help is located on Portland St. in Dartmouth and is open Monday to Saturday.

Shaking the foundations

by Emily MacNaughton

Idealists are at work on Dalhousie's campus. The United Nations Discrimination Obliteration (UNDO), a small body of committed members funded by the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NS-PIRG), is campaigning the UN for a revision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The group was formed following a trip to New York City, where the Dal-Kings University Model United Nations Simulation participated in a conference with students from Canada and the U.S. last April. Members of the International Committee for Social, Cultural and Economic Rights who reviewed the declaration were incensed by its content.

The UDHR uses words such as "brotherhood" and "mankind", which the students consider to be sexist.

"It doesn't represent me as a woman," says Miriam Korn, a Dalhousie student and current member of UNDO, who participated in the discussion last April.

Women are not the only ones who feel excluded by the declaration. UNDO does not address the rights of bisexuals, homosexuals, the

mentally ill, the physically challenged, the mentally challenged, and the aged.

"Language shows who's in power," says Derrick Higginbothan, another UNDO member. "It can create biases." However, he maintains that language "can also be very positive."



A revision of the UDHR would be a positive use of its power, he states.

UNDO has not been amended since 1948. Times have changed, and "issues that have been ignored for a long time should now be addressed," says UNDO member Kristine Anderson.

Since the UDHR is the foundation of many countries' constitutions, UNDO believes that it should represent an ideal philosophy. As Higginbothan says, "if you change

the foundation, everything should go from there."

UNDO has developed an information package available at the NS-PIRG office on the third floor of the SUB.

The group invites people to get involved in petitioning the UN for change. "Even if you have a small interest, put your hand in somewhere," says Higginbothan.

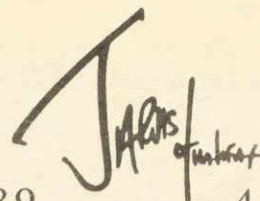
The reforms appealed for are: 1) gender neutral language, 2) the protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and 3) a specific reference to individuals with mental health disorders, the aged, the physically challenged, and the mentally challenged, to emphasize their rights.

"If people feel that there is something more that needs to be addressed, they should drop by PIRG and tell us," says Anderson.

"There's no reason to accept injustices just because it's too much of a hassle," says Korn. "People should attempt to realize their ideals."

In the words of anthropologist, Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

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