

turkey



TURKISH WOMEN AT WORK IN THE FIELD
... veil now worn only in some rural areas

—Branny Schepanovich photo

Add to all of this heat and humidity, and it is very hard for the newcomer to get a good night's sleep.

EVERYONE SPLITS

After more than a week in Istanbul, our seminar was split up into three sub-groups. One was to go north, along the Black Sea; the second, due east, through central Turkey; the third, mine, south along the Aegean Sea and then the Mediterranean. The program called for three weeks of travel in our sub-groups, a reunion in the city of Konya, a journey to Ankara—the capital—and finally back to Istanbul, where the seminar terminated.

The sophistication of Istanbul was lost in the country. The mosques were not as magnificent, and life generally was not as hectic or varied.

In villages and towns, we witnessed what most Canadians would regard as primitive methods of production and manufacture—whether the industry be ice cream making or fruit canning.

Some of the attitudes were also ancient. A student from Toronto who was on the central tour wore Bermuda shorts in one eastern village as an experiment. He got results: the villagers pelted him with stones and dung.

TURKS START YOUNG

Child labor was accepted. In one village, girls as young as 12 were working full time at a rug factory. But in this respect, country life was no different from the city. In Istanbul, my barber was about 16, and we had dealings with many young entrepreneurs and shop-

keepers, particularly at the Grand Bazaar.

Our tour included the ruins of cities from Greek and Roman times, as well as biblical points of interest.

The ruins of Ephesus were of particular interest, with the ancient Greek brothel, hotel, and baths in relatively good condition. By comparison, there was very little left of Troy.

One of the Turkish guides told me that the shrine is visited and supported more by the Moslem Turks than by Christians. He explained that the Turks respect the Virgin Mary for her great suffering, honesty, and pure life. Therefore, he said, many of them come to the shrine for silent contemplation.

MANY SUFFER "ANGUISH"

As our tour through Turkey progressed, more students fell victim to the Ankara Anguish. In the course of the whole seminar, only a few—myself included—were fortunate enough to escape without suffering from some form of dysentery.

We were warned before we left Canada not to drink water unless it was bottled, not to eat leafy vegetables, and not to eat fresh fruit and vegetables that had not been washed. The warning extended to anything made with fresh milk or cream.

It was somewhat of a novelty at first to order bottled water and accept no other. Despite the precautions, however, the dysentery bug took its toll. But those of us who seemed to have stronger stomachs became bolder and bolder, to the extent that I drank tap

water in Ankara with no ill effects.

Water was a problem in another way. Upon some occasions, there was no water at all. Hot water was rare: even in Istanbul it was available for only a short period each day. So we became accustomed to having cold showers and washing our clothes in cold water.

ROUGH LIFE

Kleenex was unheard of, and toilet paper was at a premium. Most students, however, had stocked up on these items before leaving Canada.

Whenever someone ordered beer, it came in unlabelled quart-size bottles. Our Turkish guides told us that beer production was a government monopoly, and thus there was only one brand of beer.

The fact that prostitution is legal in Turkey inspired much interest among our students. Each of the larger cities had what was known to us as a "compound"—a section of town where the prostitutes set up shop.

Some students set out to do a comparative study of "compounds" in Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara.

21-YEAR-OLDS ONLY

I went to the "compound" in Ankara with several others. The first cab driver we hailed took us straight to the area, which was enclosed, like a fort.

Two policemen were stationed at the gate to keep out those under 21. We watched two teenagers get caught when they were trying to sneak in. The policemen mauled them and shoved them through the crowded gate while a horde of other minors looked on from outside.

Once inside the gate, we noticed

that there was a carnival atmosphere of sorts in the "compound"; it reminded me of the Edmonton Exhibition.

Great numbers of men were walking along the narrow streets which separated the bordellos. Even though the inmates are subjected to regular governmental medical inspection and supervision, the whole area appeared dirty and uninviting.

A SPECTATOR SPORT

We witnessed some of the bargaining between inmates and visitors and then left. We were convinced that most of the Turks wandering through the area were there for the same reason as us—to have a good look to satisfy their curiosities. The "compound" spectacle, then, is primarily a spectator sport.

Except for the native students and professors who were with us during the seminar, most Turks regarded us as "Americans", and were not too sure about a place called Canada.

It was very difficult to dress in

such a way that we did not appear as "Americans". Carrying a camera, for example, gave rise to a presumption that the carrier was an "American". Some shopkeepers, particularly at bazaars, tried to overcharge us "Americans" at every opportunity.

As regards the Turkish students and professors who traveled with us, it was interesting to learn that most of them were strongly anti-American. I do not think that this prejudice extends to the general population, which appears to be indifferent if not favorable to the United States.

One student, for example, who otherwise had very reasonable viewpoints, voiced his belief that most of the United States Peace Corps workers in Turkey were agents of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Peace Corps, he said, was an arm of the CIA.

When we left Turkey, we felt we had to some degree sold the idea of Canada to the Turks. Very definitely we returned home with a clearer understanding of them and their country.



—Branny Schepanovich photo

LATE MODEL CAMEL
... speeding down the Istanbul freeway