

destination...

By BRANNY SCHEPANOVICH

Delegates for the Turkey seminar rendezvoused at Dorval Airport, Montreal, on June 20. From there we proceeded to a small resort at Ste. Adele, also in the Montreal area.

Three days were spent at Ste. Adele for orientation. We learned about logistics for the seminar ahead and became acquainted with each other. Our party consisted of 51 persons: 43 students, five professors, two administrators, and the seminar director's wife.

Shortly before midnight on June 23, we boarded a Canadian Pacific Airlines DC-8 and departed for Rome, where we stayed overnight before boarding an electric train for Venice.

BE PREPARED

Prior to taking the train, most of us had stocked up with wine, cheese, and bread for the trip. This was the recommended way of tra-

background

Branny Schepanovich, students' union president and third-year law student, was the U of A scholar to the World University Service International Seminar held this summer in Turkey.

The seminar was primarily academic but Branny has submitted some of the more interesting and personal sidelights of his trip.

One of the aims of the WUSC seminar is "to provide Canadian students and faculty members with an international experience not ordinarily available to them".

In the summer of 1967 WUSC will reverse this process—inviting overseas delegates as well as Canadian to study and tour Canada in celebration of the centennial.

Students interested in attending the '67 seminar must submit applications for local review by Nov. 30. Application forms are available in the students' union office, first floor SUB.

velling by rail. Native passengers in our crowded car had similar supplies.

Eight of us crammed into one compartment, yet there was still room for a few Italian soldiers who wanted to treat us with their wines.

After a one-day stopover in Venice, we were on our way to Communist Yugoslavia via the Direct-Orient Express. Practically none of us had ever been through or near a Communist country before, so the prospect ahead was somewhat intriguing.

It was late in the evening and drizzling outside when we were stopped on the Italian-Yugoslav border for a passport check. Yugoslav officials with red stars on their caps collected our documents, and then one of them became very upset and began to shout when he noticed that almost no one had a Yugoslav visa.

KNOW YOUR SERBIAN

I acted as interpreter and—to some extent—negotiator for our group because of my working

knowledge of Serbian (Serbo-Croatian), the most-used language in Yugoslavia. In the end, it was agreed that our group could proceed to Belgrade after buying visas for all who needed them.

One of the seminar administrators and I were escorted by two soldiers to an office shack next to the tracks. We waited in the drizzle outside while the soldiers saw that the visas were prepared. After a total delay of about an hour, the train started moving again for Belgrade.

There was no real intrigue in the Yugoslavian capital, where the local WUS committee hosted a well-prepared program during our one-day stopover. In fact, our hotel accommodation at the "Slavija" was first class.

Next, we were on our way to another Communist country, Bulgaria. There was another passport check at the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border, but the trip was not too eventful until we stopped at Sofia, the Bulgarian capital.

MORE TROUBLE

Many of our group got off the train to stock up on wine and bread. When the train was rolling again, a bit of a panic developed with the realization that two of our number, girl and boy, had been left behind in Sofia.

While the seminar administrators were still pondering the development, a Bulgarian conductor and a trainman—bearing their red-star badges—brought a telegraph message they had just received saying that our two delegates would be put on the next train.

There were sighs of relief—until the kind Communist conductor announced that our car would have to be taken off the train and left on a siding. He explained that since all of us entered the country as a group, we had to leave as a group. Visions of spending the rest of the night on a siding in an abandoned Bulgarian railway car built up the tension once again, and we commenced negotiations in earnest with the officials.

RED TAPE UNRAVELS

They went away, apparently to consult with higher officials via telegraph. When they came back, they said it would not be necessary to detain our car. We could carry on directly to Istanbul, and our absent twosome would follow us the next day. After receiving enthusiastic cheers and slaps on their backs, the Communist trainmen went away smiling.

It became obvious, as our train pulled through Istanbul, that we were in a Moslem country. Throughout the city were minarets of mosques rising into the sky.

Istanbul, with its Asian influence, was completely different from any other city I had seen. Yet when the train pulled into the station, the most prominent item was a huge, elevated, red Coca Cola sign. And there would be other familiar sights, such as Shell Oil service stations throughout Turkey, to remind us that the western influence in the country was profound.

AMERICAN CARS

Whereas in Rome, American cars were in the minority—yielding to Fiats, Volkswagens, and other small European models—in Istanbul the large American models dominated the scene to the extent that it was



—Branny Schepanovich photo

AUTHOR IN ISTANBUL WITH GOLDEN HORN IN BACKGROUND

... Branny Schepanovich takes in that Turkish sunshine

comparable to any North American city.

The Turks — particularly the younger ones—were dressed in western clothing much the same as ours. But there were some great differences. After eight days in Istanbul, we left for outlying parts of Turkey, and in some places we saw women dressed in black wearing even the veil—which allegedly had been outlawed by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey.

During our five weeks in Turkey, we became very aware of the country's still underdeveloped tourist potential.

Istanbul was a treasury in itself. Among the many mosques that were on our itinerary was the famous Blue Mosque, which is unique with six minarets.

The city has numerous archaeological and other museums and two famous palaces. The Topkapi Palace, with its tons of gold and jewels, used to be the imperial residence of the Ottoman sultans.

PALACES EVERYWHERE

When we were going through the Dolmabahce Palace, Ataturk's former Istanbul residence, we were amazed to find that almost every clock in the great structure was set at 9:05. We were informed that this was the official time of death of Ataturk in 1938.

One of the most rewarding trips was an uphill trek to the Pierre Loti Cafe, from which point visitors can get the classic, panoramic view of the Golden Horn. The Horn is a crescent-shaped inlet of the Bosphorus that is used as Istanbul's harbor.

One night some confusion developed when our group was about to board a boat for a moonlight cruise on the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara.

MISSED THE BOAT

The result was that our group got a boat not originally intended for us.

It turned out to be a festive excursion on the vessel-crowded waters. But the next day we were told that the boat originally reserved for us had collided with another craft and that thirteen or more persons on the doomed boat were killed.

In Istanbul, we lodged at the Hotel Saydan Palas, which had a ballroom of sorts. During the evenings, the room was used frequently for weddings and circumcision celebrations. In the mornings, we ate our continental breakfasts (buns, jam, cheese, and tea) in the room.

Most of the hectic daytime activity in Istanbul ended by midnight, but the city then was far from dead. Most delegates used the Saydan Palas as a take-off point to explore the night life of Istanbul.

Once a student from Kingston and I left about midnight with two English-speaking Dutch girls—also tenants at the hotel—to take a stroll to an outdoor tea-house several blocks away.

TIGHT SLACKS OUT

The girls were wearing form-fitting slacks—which are taboo for women in most of Turkey. As we walked along the dimly-lit streets, hundreds of passing Turks glared or stared at the girls, often shouting out something in Turkish. But

we reached our destination without incident.

Our stay at the tea house was pleasant enough except for the fact that my Kingston friend had to excuse himself periodically because he was suffering from dysentery, more affectionately known by our group as the Ankara Anguish.

About one in the morning, an elderly Turk, who called himself the "king", invited us to his one-room house for tea and sherbet. It was difficult to refuse, and we actually enjoyed the experience, because we had to work hard to communicate to the "king" through his houseboy—a young student who knew some very basic English.

The "king" escorted us back to our hotel about three or later in the morning, and it was then that we noticed how alive the city was during the night. We saw no women, but there were many Turkish men walking the streets or sitting near shops drinking tea or coffee.

About four o'clock in the morning, we heard the wailing sounds of a muezzin—a Moslem crier calling the faithful to prayer from a minaret. Shortly after the muezzin's call to prayer, the city begins to stir more and more. By six there are all sorts of vendors walking through the streets crying out their wares.

About that time, the car horns get into action. There are few if any traffic lights in Istanbul, which has a population of well over 1,500,000. So the din of beeping horns is unbearable to an uninitiated foreigner from early morning until late at night.