

# THE GAZETTE

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## US blocks Caribbean speakers from attending SMU conference

By RICK JANSON

The U.S. State department is putting up roadblocks to prevent a number of Caribbean academics and political leaders from attending a conference at St. Mary's University.

About four or five delegates to a conference on Canadian-Caribbean development have been told that they cannot have transit visas to change planes at a U.S. airport en route to Halifax. No reason has been given by the State department for the refused transit visas.

"This verges on a restriction of our sovereignty," says Michael Clow, a sociology professor and a conference organizer. "The U.S. is expressing a unilateral veto over what you and I can hear. It's a very political thing. Our suspicion is that it's either because of their opposition to the Grenadian invasion or their general political views."

Conference organizers are trying to reroute as many of the delegates as possible to circumvent the U.S., but time and money are working against them.

"It's a deliberate attempt to raise the ante so that we can't afford it," says Clow.

So far only one delegate has

been confirmed as unable to make it around the logistical roadblocks. Trevor Munro, leader of the People's Worker's Party in Jamaica could not be rerouted in time.

Ken Persau, another organizer, says the conference is working on an extremely tight budget and the extra costs will add thousands of dollars in flight costs, hotels and other related expenses.

"It's kind of insulting for the Americans to be preventing them from coming to our country at the last minute," says Clow. "Not only does the Canadian government not consider these people to be a threat, but they're paying for them to come here."

The conference is receiving grants from the Canadian International Development Agency and the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada to fly in the speakers.

Dr. Henry Veltmeyer, chair of the St. Mary's sociology department, says that it comes down to a "question of free speech."

Organizers have notified the Canadian department of external affairs and hope they can lobby the American government to allow passage.

The conference opens tonight at St. Mary's university. □

## Appeal to save historic property

By MICHAEL DANIELS

New Democratic candidate for Halifax Cornwallis, Tim Hill has been joined by Dale Godsoe, Liberal candidate in this riding in making a non-partisan appeal to save the Hart House.

United Equities, a local development company, acquired the land which the Hart House is part of a year and a half ago. Last month, they began demolition of another building on the property, the Philae Temple. On Nov. 1, United Equities will be able to demolish the Hart House.

Hill says it might be persuasive if the opposing candidates in this riding made an appeal together.

"It is an act of vandalism to destroy a historic building," Hill said.

Godsoe says she is joining in the appeal as a concerned citizen, rather than a candidate in a provincial election, and she would not

like to see this become an election issue.

"I'd like to make it perfectly clear that it isn't within the provincial jurisdiction; it is a municipal decision," said Godsoe.

She says the provincial government should not get involved in municipal disputes.

Hill says United Equities' destruction of the Philae Temple building seemed to him to be an act of vindictiveness.

"They're upset about the successes of groups opposing them," he said. Friends of the Public Gardens have opposed United Equities since that company acquired the property. Recently, the Supreme Court ruled that United Equities' proposal would have to go through city council again.

Tim Hill presented his idea for a non-partisan appeal at an assembly of students at Beaufort School on Oct. 22, where the three candidates for Halifax Cornwallis were

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Chilean exile Elias Letelier-Ruz says he has nothing to lose as he enters what is now the 19<sup>th</sup> day of his hunger strike for political prisoners in Chile. "Maybe a few pounds, maybe my life. You have to sacrifice for others and sometimes you lose your life doing it." Photo: John Davie, Dal Photo

## Chilean starves for justice

By ERIN STEUTER

With gaunt cheeks and shining eyes, a young Chilean exile marks the 16th day of his hunger strike on Oct. 22. Spending his hours reading poetry and sleeping, he holds his vigil in the serene sanctuary of a local church. He is nourished only by water and the intensity of his commitment.

Elias Letelier-Ruz is protesting against the planned execution of 13 political prisoners in Chile. He says that he will continue his hunger strike until the Canadian government intervenes on their behalf.

The Chilean prisoners, ten men and three women, have confessed to participating in terrorist activities but Ruz says that they have confessed under torture.

"Any confession extracted under torture," he says, "is not acceptable. If I torture you, you will tell me anything; even that you see a witch flying at night."

But Ruz isn't concerned with whether the political prisoners are guilty or not. What he is concerned with is that justice is done.

"They must be given a fair trial—without torture," he said. "And if they are responsible for criminal activities they must be put in jail. But under no condition can we allow them to be killed." As far as Ruz is concerned, "all that comes from blood is more blood."

He's spent a long time thinking

about his decision to stage a hunger strike.

"If I send a pamphlet or letter to people it will just be a piece of paper," said Ruz. "This is an emergency action. We have to save the lives of these people."

Ruz says that he has nothing to lose. "Maybe a few pounds, maybe my life. You have to sacrifice for others and sometimes you lose your life doing it."

"I know what I am doing is right."

Ruz held an eight-day strike last year to protest the sale of Canadian military equipment to Chile—equipment that Amnesty International claimed was being used to torture Chileans. Ruz ended the strike when he was contacted by External Affairs Minister Alan MacEachen. MacEachen reportedly wrote to Ruz saying that Canada was condemning Chile's human right violations by way of diplomatic channels and through

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## Pink Triangle symbolizes gay pride

You've probably noticed by now the two pink triangles decorating the cover and centrespread of this week's *Gazette*. You may have also gathered that it has something to do with the publication of our Gay and Lesbian supplement. But what's the connection?

For men and women involved in the gay liberation movement the pink triangle has come to be a symbol of gay pride. It's something you wear to proudly announce your sexual identity to the world, it's a flag you carry at marches and often a sign outside gay bars.

The pink triangle also has a special history. When Hitler sent millions of people to their death in concentration camps he didn't just send Jewish people. He also sent others who didn't fit the master race—the handicapped, the mentally retarded and the gays. Each group was made to wear a marking at the camp and gays were given the pink triangle.

Today gays and lesbians have re-claimed the pink triangle as a symbol of their heritage and wear it in affirmation of their sexuality. Pink triangles were once worn as a mark of death, now they've become a sign of pride in opposition to a homophobic society.

Lest we forget. □