

Mugo Shares Insight Into Current Kenyan Crises

BY KEONE RATH

Cultural differences are causing many of the difficulties in Africa said Micere M. G. Mugo, visiting professor of government at S.L.U., in a recent speech on "The Current Political Crises in Kenya."

Mugo, a native of Kenya, was the former dean of the faculty of arts at the University of Nairobi. Last year, political troubles in her country necessitated her departure. As she had served St. Lawrence's program in Nairobi since 1976, she had an open invitation to

come to the University.

The crisis in Kenya is a painful subject for Mugo. She said that she feels as though she is demolishing the country that she loves. That explains the hurt look on Mugo's face as she told her stories on the situation in Kenya.

During the time of the Mau Mau war, 1952, Mugo was put into boarding school. There, she and the other children were taught the ways of the British. Mugo said that they were denied the privilege of speaking their native tongue; only

English was allowed. Also, the Africans were refused the right to their beliefs, Mugo recalled. The African children were often downgraded by the teachers and other students, she explained.

Mugo told her audience about encounters the children were often made to have with corpses. Whenever they heard a battle raging outside their dorms at night, the children knew that the next day they would have to line up to see the results. Mugo said that this was the British teachers' way of

showing them how ruthlessly the British government was planning to deal with the Mau Mau freedom fighters.

Once they were made to see the naked body of a dead woman, Mugo said. This was comparable to a slap in the face for the Africans because they believe a woman's private parts should never be seen in public. Mugo said that the sight was humiliating.

In the 1960's the Africans were fighting for integration. Mugo remembers unfair treatment towards the Africans.

When playing, the white children got refreshment at breaks while the African children got nothing.

Being a guinea pig for an integrated school, Mugo explained how she was shunned by the other students yet recognized while playing sports.

"I was good at many team sports and the only time anyone would ever talk to me was on the field. When we got on the bus, everyone sat far away from me," Mugo said.

The struggle in Kenya is the same today as it was in the 60's. The people in control are not the natives, they are the ones who are wealthy. Mugo said the belief is that if you do not have wealth, you have a problem. Therefore, many children have turned to child prostitution because it is more lucrative, she said.

The people of Africa are humiliated to be treated like this in their own country. That is why they feel the need to speak out against the government. However, as Mugo said, those that do are often jailed or brutally punished. Anyone who opposes what is going on is considered a Marxist, she said. Also, since it is a one-party state, any formation of another party is considered a criminal offense.

Although she still loves her country, Mugo does not like what is happening to it. She wants her children to grow up in a safe environment where there is academic freedom.

Mugo plans to make a trip to Zambia and Zimbabwe in the spring and hopes eventually to return to Kenya.

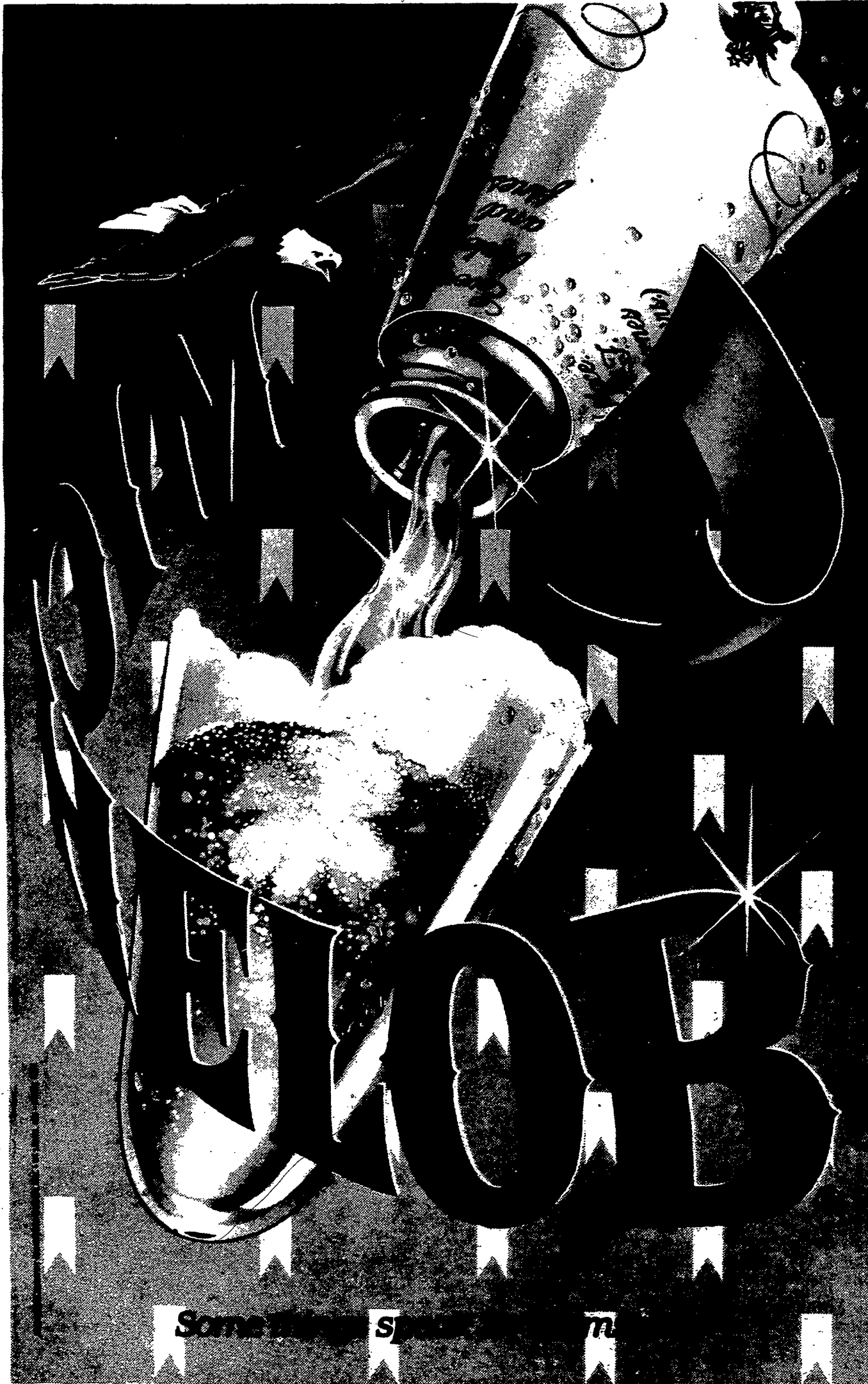
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advantages of the St. Lawrence education to the prospective student. It will present three perspectives on St. Lawrence: the freshman year, the life of the student (both at St. Lawrence and beyond), the life of the university, and incorporated into these three will be the idea of the lasting nature of the liberal arts with regard to personal growth.

The film crew will be on campus again in Feb. to get some footage of winter activities. (Fall shots were taken at the end of Sept.) Eighty-eight minutes of film have already been shot and "it is going to be very difficult to edit and cut the film to the thirteen minute time limit because everyone interviewed so far has been good," said Sharrow.

A name for the new film has not been chosen as yet. Sharrow said that after the final editing has been done, the producers will choose a phrase from the dialogue that "captures the essence of the film."



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