

Find U.S. life very different

Native Somalians study in Chapel Hill

By MARYMELDA HALL
Staff Writer

Some UNC students can drive home in half an hour. For others, the trip may take half the day. But A.H. Farah and Muhammad Ali Hassan have a slightly longer journey — 32 hours by plane.

Farah, 40, and Hassan, 26, live in Somalia, a country in East Africa. Somalia is bordered by Ethiopia, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

Farah and Hassan attend UNC as part of an International Development Program sponsored by their country. Both are principals at primary health care training schools, and they were sent to the United States to study health education.

They arrived at New York June 22, then attended a short course in July at Jones Island, S.C., before enrolling at UNC.

From clothing to conversation, life in Somalia is very different from life in the United States. Almost 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas; they are nomadic people. The traditional dress for men is two white sheets, with a dagger at the side. "In the rural areas, the men always carry toothbrushes in their mouths. They are not like the toothbrushes here," Hassan explained, "but ones made from the branch of a tree. It is wet and tasty, and it contains chlorophyll to keep the breath fresh in the hot weather."

"Water is very scarce," Farah added, "and the men have to travel a long way."

Women wear a loose cloth wrap which covers the entire body, they said. Only the face is left uncovered.

Somalia is divided into two regions — North and South. Although the main dish in both regions is meat, the people in the North eat camel and sheep, while those in the South eat beef. People in both regions usually drink milk.

"Our music is also very different from Western music," Hassan said. "The music, Quaraami, is slow, mostly love songs and war songs, and it is played on an Arabian guitar."

Like the United States, Somalia now requires compulsory school attendance by those children living in the

cities. But at the age of four, the children must first attend religion school. "They study and memorize the Koran and must recite the entire Koran before they can start the rest of their education," Farah said.

American conversation has surprised Hassan and Farah. "In Somalia, people are always yelling or talking loudly, but this is not out of rudeness. A man walking a mile away could hear two people talking," Hassan said. It took time for Hassan and Farah to get used to the quiet of the American people. "Especially in the cafeteria, where so many people eat at one time," Farah added. "There is no yelling — people seem to whisper when they talk."

Although Hassan and Farah knew English when they arrived in the United States, they didn't know that much. "We have learned so much from listening and talking to people," Hassan said.

The International Center in Washington, D.C., also helped them conquer the communication barrier. "If they had not told us many things, we would have been very embarrassed here," Farah said. "In Somalia, if someone says 'Hey you!' it is very embarrassing," he explained. "And if you sit with your feet propped up facing someone, it would be better to cut them than to do that."

The climate here has also required some adjusting. Farah and Hassan experienced snow for the first time on Feb. 7, and the reactions were mixed. Farah preferred to stay inside, but Hassan was out taking pictures. "The snow, it is very great," he said. "I enjoyed it."

But snow is about the only excitement the cold weather produced. "In Somalia, the average temperature is 76 degrees all year," Hassan said. "We have never encountered such a cold climate, never. We don't much like this sort of climate."

Farah also had some problems with the food. "I cannot eat pork. It is part of the religion. I am very grateful to the Granville Food Service; I requested that they tell me what is in the food, and they always try to tell me. This gives me great moral satisfaction," he said.

Both Hassan and Farah like the freedom of the American people. "People here are very free. A person can do what he likes," Hassan said.

"Nobody interferes with anyone — you do what you want to. But the people are very orderly," Farah added. "The women in America are much more liberated than the women in Somalia," Hassan said. "In Somalia, the women work at home; they are domestic. The men go out and work; they are superior."

"Women respect the men," Farah added. "They walk a step behind the men. The woman knows where the man is all the time. She does not go somewhere without asking him first."

But Farah and Hassan do not like everything about the freedom and openness of the American people. "This homosexuality, we were shocked," Farah said. "We had never heard of that or seen it." Hassan recounted a story in Somalia: "A man came from the town to a rural area. He was talking about homosexuality, about two men together, but he said it happened in France. When an old man heard this story, he suddenly grabbed his knife and stabbed himself in the stomach. When they asked him why he was killing himself, he said, 'I will not share the name of manhood with these men.' He died on the spot."

When they return to Somalia in June, Hassan and Farah will resume their work in primary health care. "All health services are free in Somalia. The doctors and nurses are taught free in the schools and universities, so their service is free," Hassan explained.

But if you were to ask Somalians about their primary needs, the answer would not be health care. "The people depend on animals for food. And with so many nomads, the most felt need is water. If there is no water, there is no life," Farah said.

Hassan and Farah have learned a great deal in the United States, but they have even more important things waiting in Somalia — their families. Hassan is engaged, and Farah has a wife and four children, ages 13, 9, 5 and 2. "We get a lot of mail, but it takes it about 28 days," Hassan said.

"It is hell to be away, to them and to me," Farah said. "Sometimes at night I can't sleep — I see them. I'm counting the seconds until I return, and it is worse for them. I have spent my longest days in America."



A.H. Farah, left, and Muhammad Ali Hassan

Former Solidarity worker lives in Durham

By JENNIFER KELLER
Staff Writer

Poland, August 1980. State troops stormed the shipyards in Gdansk, armed with tear gas and guns. What began as a worker's riot escalated into a surge of nationalism and resistance that swept the country.

Jacek Ziolkowski Pole who now lives in Durham, worked with Poland's Solidarity movement on a student level. He began during the worker's crisis; he was 21 and studying at the Polytechnic of Katowice at the time. Ziolkowski was one of six people who organized a student union in opposition to the socialist one endorsed and controlled by the university.

Their goals were simple: they wanted input and influence in the decision-making of the school.

"We wanted to educate students, especially politically and historically, introduce them to many dissident writers previously banned," Ziolkowski said. Upon becoming involved politically, Ziolkowski said academics were not one of his priorities. "What they were teaching us — Marxist philosophy, history — everything was utter lies."

Ziolkowski arrived in the United States July 12, 1983, with his wife Joanna. He left behind his parents and a 27-year-old brother.

Ziolkowski said that initially, meeting always in secret, four men and two women printed by-laws and applications for memberships to the new union. Sixty percent of the campus responded, he said, adding that some were too scared.

Involvement, if known, meant expulsion from the university and danger for their parents.

Ziolkowski was elected vice-chairman of the union. They held rallies on campus, printed an underground bulletin and met daily with Solidarity workers. They also worked with Confederation for an Independent Poland, an organization in defense of political prisoners. Above all, they fought the restricted and slanted Marxist education that suffocated any freedom of thought, Ziolkowski said.

When martial law was imposed Dec. 13, 1981, Ziolkowski said his reaction was, "What will happen to me, to our union? Will I be shot?"

"Something is very wrong," he said, "when the people view the government as the enemy."

The arrest came that same day. At 7 a.m. he was picked up in his parents' home, given no explanation, just told "dress and go."

At the police station, where he was held for three weeks, he said he was stripped and searched, then put in a cell meant for four with 20 other people. His girlfriend, Joanna, who would later become his wife, lost her job as a secretary, even though she was not involved politically.

Ziolkowski said he was moved to a prison without a hearing, much less a trial. He was given an official statement of arrest for "inspiring a movement against the state of Poland." The document was printed in Moscow and dated Dec. 12, the day before the imposition of martial law, so as not to appear a direct result of it, he said.

Ziolkowski described life in Poland. "Lech Walesa and the Pope are the most respected figures. Walesa is most charismatic; he's a very humble man," he said. "You know, no one is starving to death, but the purchasing of food is a tremendous task. Queues of 100 to 200 form at 4 a.m. for bread. Luxuries are not common. A pair of blue jeans are a month's pay."

"Most young people are idealistic about America," Ziolkowski added. He explained that, fed so much anti-American propaganda by the Soviets, most do not even believe the facts of unemployment figures and the rich-poor gap.

The deep-rooted political hatred of the Soviets is now directed visibly toward General Jaruzelski. "To say leader," Ziolkowski said quietly, "is a joke. The puppet government in Warsaw is completely controlled by the Soviets."

The Polish media are controlled by the state. "The major official newspapers, *Life of Warsaw* and *Tribune of the People* are an insult to journalism," Ziolkowski said. There is one Catholic newspaper that has credibility with the people, but it is difficult to obtain, he said. It is heavily censored and barely tolerated by the officials, with white blanks where words are censored so people can literally read between the lines.

There are hundreds of underground newspapers; some come and disappear in as little as two weeks. "It is very dangerous work; just for distribution you can get four to seven years in prison, the Pope is instrumental in many of publications," said Ziolkowski, who is Catholic. Underground newspapers are even printed in prisons, with boiled shoe polish and smuggled in paper.

There are many existing communication structures outside Poland that have been set up for 200 years, said

Ziolkowski's translator and fellow Pole, Marek Maciolowski, owner of Chapel Hill's Cracovia restaurant. He explained that the Solidarity headquarters in New York prints and distributes information, as do many Polish newspapers in the U.S. and France. Censorship of local papers is so extensive that there are thick instruction books for the official censors.

"However, U.S. news coverage of Poland is not enough," Ziolkowski said. They only show news, when there is a major event, like Walesa winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ziolkowski was released from prison after eight months. He is convinced his release was a result of pressure from the Pope, just before the pontiff's well-publicized visit.

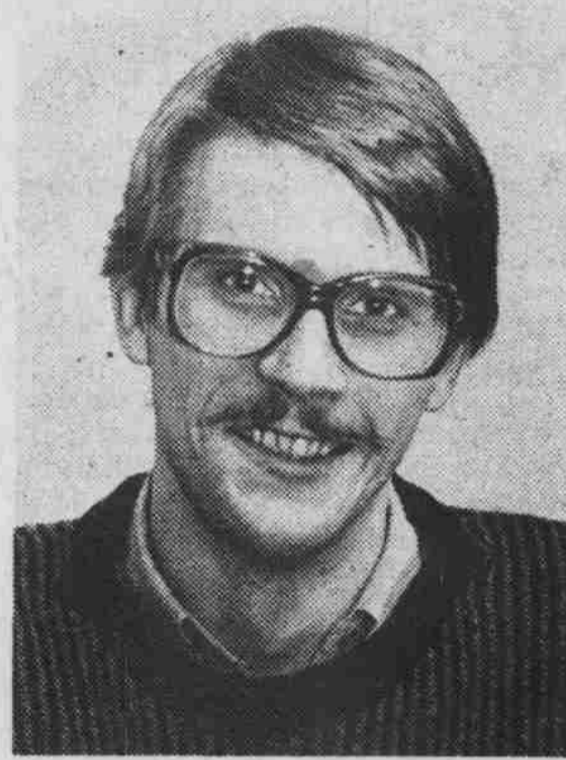
Upon his release, Ziolkowski got married and tried to return to the university. The dean there said there was no chance to continue his studies.

In the following weeks, he appealed to the American Embassy in Warsaw for political asylum to pursue the chance to live in what he termed "my dream — an open society." The Ziolkowskis were given Green Cards (permanent residency) and sent to a center in Frankfurt, West Germany, for political refugees.

A Baptist church in Durham agreed to sponsor the Ziolkowskis. The first two months in Durham, they rotated between families that had volunteered to house them. "We were so impressed by the hospitality of the families," Ziolkowski said.

"I love the independence here, the privacy," he said. "If I fail or succeed it's because of me. My life is my responsibility." He added that Joanna Ziolkowski is happy to be here, safe, and they both are amazed that "so many will do something for you for nothing."

Ziolkowski, although idealistic about the U.S., said he found too many



Jacek Ziolkowski

Americans apathetic. The Polish national character as he described it is similar to that of the Americans. "We highly value independence and resent force."

One big difference between the Poles and the Americans, however, is "the American's emphasis on money," Ziolkowski said. "Power, all American life seems to revolve around money. In Poland money is not appreciated as much. The rich are regarded as lazy. It is the intellectual circles, not necessarily the wealthy ones, that are admired."

"There is a general feeling of depression — not pessimism — in Poland today," he said. "The young will never give in. The older generation is more resigned emotionally. They've fought before and lost family and friends." Their support is tempered with a warning "not to be stupid — don't put your life on the line."

"My predictions are not to predict," Ziolkowski said. "Anything could happen — maybe tomorrow, maybe in 20 years. Nothing drastic will probably happen in the next five. If someone told me in 1980 all that Solidarity has accomplished, I wouldn't have believed them. One can't speculate, just hope and work for it."

complaints

From page 1

editor, the University editor and several staff writers. The reporter covering the forum wrote the statement in his notes, DeRochi said.

"Each and every one of us heard that stated," she said.

Manuel also objected to a statement in Monday's analysis that she "expressed political views that tend to be liberal." "I feel this is irrelevant," Manuel stated in her letter. "None of the other candidate's political beliefs were stated in the story. Political ideology as such has never been the thrust of my campaign."

DeRochi said the statement about Manuel's political views was appropriate in an election analysis story.

"There is not a newspaper on the face of this earth that would run an analysis of elections that would not try to sum up characteristics that have emerged in the campaign."

"We will not be clarifying or correcting any of that story. We stand behind the story 100 percent," she said.

Before meeting with DeRochi Monday, Sutherland said he believed Manuel had expressed a "valid concern" in her letter. But he later said there was no reason for him to mediate the dispute if the DTH had agreed to Manuel's demand for an additional letter of support to be printed.

"I don't want to incur the wrath of anybody," Sutherland said.

Meanwhile, Winstead issued a statement denying he was seeking an out-of-court settlement in his dispute with the paper.

"There have been rumors that a possible compromise will occur between myself and the dictator of *The Daily Tar Heel*," Winstead said. "This will never occur because Kerry DeRochi, the Jesse Helms of journalism, has acted in her typical stubborn, self-centered manner, and she needs to be shown that she cannot abuse the political system and misuse student funds to further her own personal goals and the goals of her associates."

Winstead is seeking four stories in the paper announcing his campaigns. DeRochi agreed to Sutherland's proposal for a single extended story on Winstead's platforms. Winstead rejected the proposal.

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