

# Counselling goes to Halls

By OBAT

The university counselling department is to be set up in the halls of residence in an attempt to reach more students. This was revealed to the Anvil by Miss Mary W. Mahihu, of the Varsity Counselling Service.

The counselling service was set up by the University after realising the counselling needs of the students. The aim is to provide an opportunity for students to discuss their problems and assist them in being realistic about themselves, their potentiality, independence and ability to solve their own problems.

Located on the ground floor of Gandhi Wing, the presence of the counselling service unit has not been felt by many students. Since 1989 June, Miss Mahihu says she has only had about 20 clients.

Miss Mahihu blames this low turn out on ignorance about the existence of these services and the general misconceptions about counselling.

"There is a social stigma people attach to counselling. To most people counselling is for drug addicts, suicidal people and the mentally handicapped," said Miss Mahihu.

Most of the cases handled by the counselling unit are students who

have been referred there by the University Health Unit or the Psychiatry Department at Kenyatta National Hospital. Hardly any students walk to the unit for help out of their own volition, the Anvil learnt.

Miss Mahihu says that counselling is not only necessary in times of problems contrary to most people's beliefs. Most people only go for counselling when things are almost out of control. She says counselling should be sought on a regular basis even in times of joy and leisure.

Asked whether these rare facilities are also extended to the members of staff, Miss Mahihu said that due to shortage of staff, they are still restricted to those who need the services most, the students. "They are the ones in a crisis," she said.

Last year, the University advertised nine posts for counsellors and it is hoped that some male counsellors will be hired to break domination of the unit by female personnel.

Miss Mahihu said that not only will the availability of more staff improve the quality of counselling, but also give the clients a wide variety of counsellors to choose from. The basic idea behind this is the fact that psychological therapy, like medical therapy, depends quite a lot on the patients or the client's faith in his or her doctor or counsellor.

Although information about the availability of counselling services is contained in the General Information

booklet 1989/90, many students are not yet aware of the existence and even the importance of such rare and useful services.

This has made the counselling service unit headed by Miss Emily Sombeiwu, plan to market these services to the students. This, they hope to achieve by physically visiting the halls, starting with Stella Awinja Hall in February, giving questionnaires from which they hope to find out the problem areas of the students and also make appointments for personal visits.

Training in counselling is still very limited in Kenya. As at this moment it is only offered in United State International University (U.S.I.U) and most still shun the profession due to the misconception that it only deals with mental cases and drug addicts. The church has helped in this area by giving spiritual counselling like that which the students get from the chaplaincy in St. Pauls church.

Miss Mahihu has a wealth of experience in counselling after graduating with a B.A. honours degree in Psychology and an M.A. in Human behaviour at San Diego University. Before joining the University on a part time basis, she was a Fine Art teacher at Pumwani Secondary School and also a part time counsellor at Mathare Mental Hospital, The Amani Centre and Jacaranda.

# University Bookshop shifts

By NJERI LUSENO

THE University Bookshop moved "houses" in mid November last year, much to the relief of many of its users. It is now located in the Gandhi Memorial Library building. The plaque on the outside of the bookshop still reads the same while on entry one still meets the imposing, albeit humble statue of Gandhi the man.

One breathes easier in here, the place is spacious and you are saved elbows in the rib when someone tries to get past you as was the case in the old bookshop. The move was timely, but the reading community still has something to say about the running of the bookshop and what it has to offer.

"The new bookshop is spacious but has no stock. They should buy more books", said a lecturer whom I stopped to talk to just outside the bookshop. He further felt that the bookshop should endeavour to also stock "casual wear such as jackets carrying a design that will identify it as being

prove this point, one gentleman, obviously mistaking me for one of the staff, strode up to me asking me to help him locate the Architectural section.

The opening and closing hours were also questioned, seeing that the bookshop serves also the Kabete and Kikuyu campuses. Students from Chiromo said that the only time they have to visit the shop is over the lunch hour and Saturday and yet it is closed over those hours and day. They requested that the hours be reviewed.

Mrs. Muriuki, the Bookshop Manager, has however some good news as she has plenty of plans for the "New" bookshop. "The lack of books has been made even more apparent due to the plenty of space now available. We have plans of expanding and certainly making available the necessary text books". She, however, requested the cooperation of those in the various departments charged with the responsibility of drawing up their book requirements. She wanted them to respond quickly to her circulars asking for these and to also try and mention alternatives to books in case of a book proving to be difficult to

# Travelling Theatre

By MANOAH ESIPI SU

The Education theatre 2, which in the 1970's was the cradle of artistic performance in Nairobi, is now destined for the same position with the "rebirth" of the Free Travelling Theatre.

The Free Travelling Theatre, formed in the department of Literature in 1977, had the gifted Waigwa Wachira and Dr. Oluoch Obura as its first Directors.

But with the government crackdown on dissidents, which invariably affected the creative artistes in the country in the early 1980's, the Free Travelling Theatre went to sleep.

Explained Mr. Gachugu Makini of the department of Literature when talking to a national English daily newspaper recently, "People became a little too sensitive that those endowed with creative talent could never quite use it for fear of their own security".

Since 1988 however, the Free Travelling Theatre has gained a fresh lease of life, particularly from Mr. Makini and the troupe's Co-Director, Opiyo Mumma.

The first results of a revamped Free Travelling theatre came in October 1988 when the first ever mini theatre festival was held in Education Theatre 2. This came as the final run after a glorious year in which quality players had graced the Education

last year. The result of the tour, which was brought about the now famed Theatre Splash of '89.

Theatre Splash '89 represents the first time creativity had been seen to be present within the student circles in the University of Nairobi.

Mr. Mumma, who received his theatre expertise from the Sherman Theatre Company in Wales (having done his post graduate work at the Cardiff University) and has had occasion to perform in Latin America and in Central Europe, is the major light behind the staging of the Samuel Beckett classic "WAITING FOR GODOT" which opened the theatre season at the French Cultural Centre. The play showed briefly at the Education Theatre 2. Earlier plans to have it staged during the Harvest of Plays festival in November were quashed after the University was closed following several days of undergraduate student unrest, last year.

The Theatre Workshop has lined up Matsemela Manaka's EGOLI - MJI WA DHAHABU (The Kiswahili version of EGOLI, The City of Gold) staged in 1988. Mumma is said to have worked on the translation of the new version. The English version had Gachugu Makini and Mumma as the stars.

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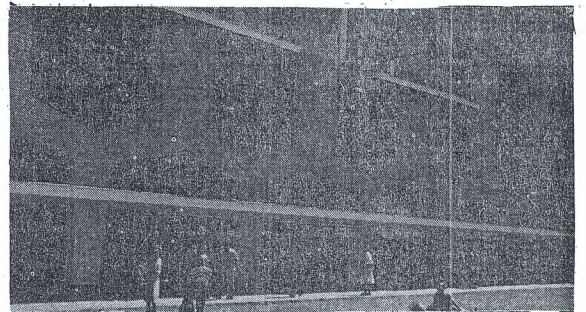
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The Free Travelling Theatre drew a lot of inspiration for its full rebirth with the tour of Uganda's NG'AALI ENSEMBEE from the department of Music, Dance and Drama of Makerere University. A return visit due to have been taken by the Free Travelling Theatre seems to have hit the rocks.

A troupe within the Free Travelling Theatre christened Theatre Workshop (the production arm of the FTT) was responsible for the tour of the Big Wheel Theatre group from Britain



Gandhi Memorial Library... houses, the Bookshop

from this University". One student whom I found browsing in the section marked "Medicine" said that a central text entitled "Text Book of Surgery" by Bailery & Love continued to be unavailable but was selling at the Text Book Centre for Shs. 800/-! The book would cost cheaper at the Campus bookshop.

The shelves looked bare. The Business Administration shelf held two copies of a text book on Statistics and Journalism only 14 books. Shelves carrying books on Architecture, Medicine, Vet Science, Law, Engineering and Literature seemed to be quite well stocked. Whether these books are "good" for the respective courses is another issue.

Another student I spoke to claimed that the shelves are usually stocked with the books they need when their "Boom" is finished, which is usually late in the term.

Issues raised also included the difficulty of finding your way in the shop; it is not easy to quickly find a section that one might be looking for. As if to

get.

The Manager emphatically agrees that something needs to be done about the hours they keep. "I know there is a demand and a need but I have a problem of staff. We are talking about a shift system if we will be expected to have people remain over lunch and work on Saturday". She also strongly recommended that the University consider establishing branches at Kabete and Kikuyu campuses.

Mrs. Muriuki wants to diversify the shop and aside from selling bags, posters, T-shirts and other related items, she has plans to stock track-suits. Even more interesting is her idea of wanting to introduce "class rings", as is found in other colleges of prestige such as Harvard.

The bookshop has suffered adverse publicity in the past, the Manager says, and trying to right things is an uphill task. She, however, says with confidence that they will manage, given time, as they are just beginning to settle in the new place.