

Commentary

El Salvadorean students struggle

by John M. Kirk
Department of Spanish

Those of us who saw "Missing" last week in the McInnes Room managed to get a glimpse of life under the Chilean dictatorship. In El Salvador, unfortunately, the level of repression is far worse. Consider a country a little larger than Cape Breton, and try to imagine some 40,000 being killed in just 3 years.

Try to imagine the university situation in El Salvador. There people aren't worried about tuition increases, administrative mismanagement or fiscal restraint — they're too busy fighting to survive.

The University of El Salvador, founded some 140 years ago, has — or rather, had — some 30,000 students in its three campuses. Because students and professors cared to criticize growing government repression in the 1970's (The

military have ruled El Salvador since 1932), the University became the target for brutal attacks.

As a result, the University of El Salvador was closed down for 15 months in 1972, and for 6 months in 1976. The most recent closure — in June 1980 — has been the most tragic.

Viewers of a superb 'Fifth Estate' report two years ago called "La matanza" ("The slaughter") may remember a troubling sequence in the documentary. The occasion was the murder of a student lying prone on the floor. Despite his pleas for mercy he was coldly shot by one of the estimated 800 government troops who invaded the campus. He was one of 50 students butchered that day.

Prior to that June 26 attack there had been clear indication that the Salvadorean military were displeased with student criticism of

martial law: machine-gun attacks, bazooka shots in the Faculty of Law, and exploding bombs were commonplace events. Finally, a show of military might was decreed and helicopters and tanks were brought in. The ruling University Council (the highest administrative body) was arrested en masse, and the University was closed down.

On October 28, 1980, the Rector (or 'President') of the University of El Salvador (and newly elected International President of World University Service), Dr. Félix Antonio Ulloa was also assassinated — just two weeks before he was to start a major European speaking tour. Dr. Ulloa's successor fled the country after receiving death-threats (understandably these are taken very seriously in El Salvador), and the present Rector, Dr. Miguel Angel Parada, was jailed for almost two months in 1981 for

"anti-government plotting." If this treatment can be meted out to the President of the National University, one can imagine how much respect the *campesinos* (peasants) warrant.

Since 1980 the University of Salvador has been under military occupation. The facilities were of course ransacked. Teaching materials and scientific equipment of value were stolen, research papers and students' academic records were destroyed. Equipment and furniture were pilfered by the National Guard who, according to a recent *New York Times* article, then tried to sell them to passers-by. Stolen books were also sold, but were priced according to the thickness of the work.

Dr. Félix Antonio Ulloa, Jr., Professor of Social Security Law at the University of El Salvador, will be at Dalhousie on Thursday, Feb-

He will give a public lecture ("Repression and Education in El Salvador") on Thursday, February 10, at 8pm, in the MacMechan Room, and all are invited to attend. If you're feeling depressed at the prospect of mid-terms and assignments due, you may well want to attend: if nothing else, you'll realize just how lucky we all are, and will get a glimpse of how the other half lives.

ruary 10, to speak about the level of academic repression in his country. He is currently concluding a cross-Canada lecture series, and has spoken at ten Canadian universities. His trip to Dalhousie has been sponsored by CALACS (Canada Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies) and by Dalhousie's Department of Spanish.

Rising crime costs Dalhousie more every year

by Alec Bruce

On the night of November 5, 1982, Dalhousie University security officers tossed an unruly and drunken youth from the Student Union Building.

Later that evening the man returned a little more sober and emptied two fire extinguishers inside the building. The man, who identified himself as a St. Mary's student, was turned over to the Halifax Police Department. Charges have been laid.

Dalhousie was lucky in this case: the criminal was caught and vandalism limited. Most times things don't go as smoothly.

Every year theft or vandalism in buildings on this campus costs the university over \$50,000. Stolen items are rarely returned; building insurance hardly covers the cost of wrecked property; and the perpetrators usually get away. Dalhousie security is powerless to prevent

these crimes — so the problem is getting worse.

"Our building security staff is very limited," says Max Keeping, Director of campus security. "We employ six student guards in five major buildings. They work five nights a week. In the Weldon Law building; the Life Sciences Centre; and the Arts Centre, we beef-up security to seven nights of regular production.

This leaves the SUB and the Killam library with minimal weekend staff. With our present manpower, there's no way we can monitor or prevent most thefts and vandalism," he said.

No building on campus is less protected than the Life Sciences Centre. Not surprisingly, no building is more frequently burglarized and vandalized. According to Keeping, the LSC is where "the most frequent calls come from and where security is most powerless to

help."

In the past year thefts and vandalism there have caused \$4,000 to \$5,000 worth of damage. That's not including the losses of time and energy to scientists piecing together the remains of their destroyed experiments.

No building, on campus, is less protected than the Life Sciences Centre.

The LSC has only one official entrance which is guarded by a student each night between 6 and 12 pm. But the building has 44 exit doors which, due to fire regulations, can make the building accessible from the outside.

Since no one patrols the corridors or guards the exits, nobody really knows who is in the building

during the evenings. It was precisely this situation, a few unknown zealots abused last year during the Dalhousie Science Society's assassination game. They rampaged through the halls leaving \$800.00 in damage in their wake.

The Killam Library is another trouble spot. Dalhousie Security employs only 3 full-time commissioners to guard the front desk. Thefts of books and damage to property are discovered well after the crimes have been committed — if at all.

"The library security system is terrible," said Chris Hartt, Dalhousie Students' Council Security Committee Chair. "Security doesn't know who's in the library. The alarms rarely function; and there must be ten different ways to get in and out without being detected."

Keeping confirms the various methods people use to avoid the front desk: "Many go through cir-

ulation and exit on to the Dunn parking lot with book-bags brimming full. Some exit undetected through the loading-bay doors. Others come in and out through the Computer-Science centre."

Most appalling are the thefts and vandalism in the Student Union Building. Each year, damages range from \$12,000 to \$15,000. "It's an incredible waste," says John Graham, manager of the Students' Union.

"It's one student wasting another's money. The green room is full of slashed chairs; and the men's washrooms are horrendous. In one washroom, we simply gave up trying to repair the stalls because we were certain they'd be destroyed," he said.

To date, most officials remain undecided about what to do with thefts and vandalism at Dalhousie.

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