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He is both a reluctant and an unlikely looking revolutionary. Sitting in the student council chambers at the University of B.C., wearing a tan safari suit, loafers and rectangular metal frame glasses, with a gold ring, gold pen and gold cigarette lighter highly visible, Guillermo Manuel Ungo, leader of El Salvador's Democratic Front (FDR), bears little resemblance to the stereotypical Che Guevara revolutionary commonly thought to populate Central America.

Given Ungo's background, however, this is no coincidence. His father, the late Guillermo Ungo, is well known in El Salvador as a founder of the Christian Democratic party movement in the 1960's. Ungo himself is also one of the best known politicians in the country. A professor of law at the University of San Salvador, he was one of three civilians appointed to a five-person government junta after a successful coup in 1979 by reformist army officers ended the dictatorship of General Carlos Humberto Romero.

Ungo was also the vice-presidential running mate of Jose Napoleon Duarte in the ill-fated 1972 presidential elections that resulted in a military coup aimed at keeping Duarte and Ungo out of office.

In January of 1980, after serving on the government junta for three months, Ungo became a revolutionary leader by necessity, not by choice. In his letter of resignation from the junta Ungo said that because of the independent power of El Salvador's army and wealthy oligarchy the junta "has only minimal, and essentially formal, power. It lacks the capacity to lead the process of democratization and social change. Nor can it stop the development of the various mechanisms and activities which run contrary to the objectives of that process."

In El Salvador students have a long history of involvement in attempts to introduce social reforms and end the military dictatorships that, backed by the coffee and cotton plantation owners, have ruled the country for 50 years. In El Salvador's last major uprising, the 1932 revolt that saw 30,000 campesinos (farm workers) massacred by the army, students at the University of San Salvador were responsible for publishing an anti-government newspaper. The editors of the paper and other student leaders were executed. On July 30, 1975, a student protest march from the University to the centre of town ended when the National Guard opened fire, killing at least 37

students. Two days later more than 50,000 Salvadorans walked in a procession honoring the dead students.

"You have more than 60 per cent of the population under 25 years old," he explained. "And these people suffer misery, hunger, lack of jobs, more than other people, and these people have more ideals, so every youngster is a suspect."

Suspected of being a subversive, of belonging to the mass organizations (that support the opposition), of having sympathies towards them, of helping them. You see not only in the guerilla forces but in the mass organizations, the trade union, a lot of students, high school students, university students and young people.

Most of the people killed, with their heads cut off, every day, are youngsters, because they're suspects. And to be a suspect," he concludes wearily, "is to be killed, to be dead."

In 1980, after Ungo had left the new junta because of its inability to control the army or oligarchy, Duarte returned to El Salvador to join the junta, subsequently becoming its president. We asked Ungo how he felt to be fighting someone who was once a close friend and his running mate in the 1972 attempt to

Create a country about two-thirds the size of Vancouver Island, populate it with five million people, make sure 50 per cent of the adults are illiterate, 80 per cent of the workers earn less than \$225 a year and 70 per cent of the children under six years old are malnourished, and you have El Salvador.

Add to that 50 years of brutal rule by military governments supported by a wealthy oligarchy determined to maintain the status quo of misery, and you have a country ripe for revolution.

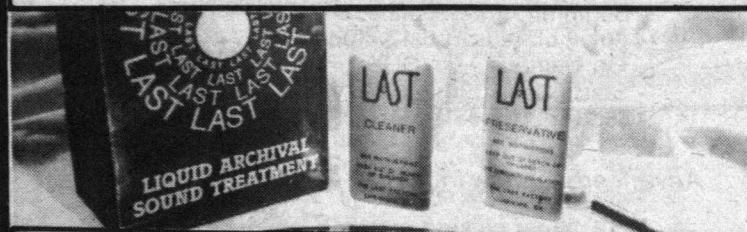
Bounded by Guatemala, Honduras and the Pacific Ocean, El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America but its most densely populated. Named after "the Saviour" by Spanish conquistadors centuries ago, the country has never lived up to its name.

The current civil war in El Salvador is not the first time violence has erupted here. In 1932 a peasant uprising led by Augustin Farabundo Marti, a communist leader, ended with the massacre of 30,000 peasants and others. In the

intervening 10 years military governments have ruled El Salvador, crushing any opposition forces that challenged their rule.

The military reign is supported financially by the Salvadorean oligarchy, often referred to as the "14 families," which owns the major coffee, cotton and sugar plantations. Despite attempts by the ruling junta, of Napoleon Duarte, to implement land reform, opposition from the oligarchy and military has ensured that little land is taken from the rich and

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