

# Trudeau now a Dalhousie graduate



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by Andy Knight

Is Prime Minister Trudeau about to resign? According to Pierre Elliott himself, not "... for the next 15 years." It was difficult to tell amidst the roars of laughter and the enthusiastic applause, whether the large audience present at the special convocation celebrating Dalhousie Law School's centenary, actually thought the Prime Minister was joking or genuinely wished that Trudeau would continue in the country's top job.

Several Dalhousie Law School graduates, who are now scattered all over the country, were on hand on October 28 to see Trudeau receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from President and Vice Chancellor of Dalhousie University Dr. W. Andrew MacKay. Trudeau gave a fairly low-key address, punctu-

ated by typical Trudeau humour.

Honourary degrees were also conferred by Dalhousie's Law School on Taslim Olawale Elias, president of the International court of justice; Robert Dickson, a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada; Ralph Gibson, a High Court judge in England and Chairman of that country's law commission; and Constance Glube, Chief Justice of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court—the first woman to serve in that capacity in Canada.

Each of the honoured recipients was presented with an album containing copies of the commemorative stamp officially launched by Canada-Post to celebrate the Law School's centennial.

He said, "... few people realize how difficult it is to be prime

minister of this country for 15 years and not be a graduate of Dalhousie Law School."

He was referring to the fact that many prominent politicians including Nova Scotia premier John Buchanan, who was also present at the ceremony, are graduates of the law school.

Trudeau put all joking aside when talking about the new peace-keeping role which he is about to play on the international political scene. Although he did not refer to any specific world problems, it was clear that Trudeau had those in mind when he said that he was committed to work towards the goals of disarmament and world peace "... because the dangers of nuclear war are far too great not to do so."

Trudeau added, "those in public life should make an effort to inject a greater level of participation" in an attempt to ease the East-West tensions, and continued that "... military strategy should also be accomplished by political strategy." He concluded that East-West relations were too important to be left up to the superpowers alone.

During a short reception in the Sculpture Court after the ceremony, Trudeau was surrounded by several well-wishers and autograph seekers. Outside he was greeted by two or three demonstrators from the Halifax Committee Against Imperialist War.

Trudeau went on a whirlwind tour of Nova Scotia before heading back to Ottawa, where he learned of the first official U.S. response to his peace initiative. This response was in the form of a caution not to meddle too much in the nuclear arms negotiations between the superpowers.

## Nicaragua shows church influence

by Tarra Kongsrude

"Christianity is a greater threat to the U.S. control in Central America than Marxism." This is the view of Margaret Randall, an American-born author and poet living in Nicaragua who recently gave a series of lectures in Halifax. She is on a North American tour to promote her new book *Christians in the Nicaraguan Revolution*.

"Nicaragua is not a Marxist project," she said. It is a politically plural country which draws some of its doctrines from Marxism, Catholicism and Sandinismo (nationalism).

She said the U.S. believes Nicaragua poses a threat to its domination in Central America because the small leftist country has made great social reforms with strong support from the clergy. The U.S. fears that if religious leaders find no contradiction between Christian and Marxist doctrine then neighbouring countries may follow Nicaragua's lead.

John Kirk, head of Latin American studies at Dalhousie, attended the lecture. He agreed with Randall's assessment.

When Sandinista forces overthrew U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza in July, 1979, they set up a six-party coalition government with themselves

making up the majority, he said. However, other factions hold important posts in the Cabinet. For example, the minister of labour is a liberal and four other cabinet ministers are priests.

During the last four years, the Sandinista government reduced illiteracy rates from 50 per cent to about 12 per cent and built 1200 schools. It provided free health care for the first time in the country's history and it also offered subsidies on food and travel expenses, said Kirk.

The clergy is heavily involved in these reforms, Kirk said. "In U.S. eyes, Nicaragua is a bad example for other Central American countries."

Randall said the clergy became involved in social change in Nicaragua long before the 1979 revolution. Many nuns, priests and lay Christians who worked among the poor supported the armed revolution when they decided there was no other recourse.

Randall said "everything isn't rosy and there is still some opposition to the new government among the rich and from the Church." Although the general clergy back the Sandinistas, church officials such as Archbishop Orlando y Bravo support U.S. intervention in Central America.

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