

Allmand condemns El Salvador elections

by Kevin Charles Little

"The El Salvador elections are a farce," said Warren Allmand, MP, addressing a packed Halifax City Library last Wednesday.

Allmand and two other members of Parliament, Joe Reid and Dan Heap, travelled to Latin America to evaluate the civil strife there.

Allmand questioned the validity of the March 28 elections when the populist opposition party, the FLMN, will not enter candidates for fear of their lives. "It would be just like signing a death list," he said. The elections include the governing Christian Democrat party under Napoleon Duarte and three

other right wing parties. Currently the leading party is on the extreme right.

Allmand supported a proposal by Mexico and France providing protection for the Revolutionaries to negotiate a compromise with the government.

The political struggle that has taken a toll of 300 to 500 lives this year and 30,000 since 1979 is not a standoff between democracy and Communism, as Secretary of State Alexander Haig contends. Most people there had never heard of Karl Marx, Allmand said, stating that he did not hear any quotes from Marx, only from Cardinal Romero, murdered two years ago. "The people are fighting on behalf of Christianity and not

communism," Allmand said, depicting the struggle as one between tyranny and the oppressed.

Allmand observed no evidence of Cuban or Soviet armies, contesting another of Haig's claims. The Revolutionary army steals most of its (American made) weapons from the government, he said.

Allmand recalled stories he had received from many sources, one of which included the plight of refugees who had fled to Honduras for protection. They were being dragged back by Salvadorean troops while the Honduran troops, with a mandate to provide protection for the refugees, merely watched

on. The head of the Honduran army said he was unaware of the situation.

Canada's policy of admitting 1000 Latin American refugees per year was taken advantage of last year by only half that number. Allmand said this is because of two reasons: a lack of awareness of the opportunity, and the fact that Latin Americans have large families which are very close and do not wish to be split up. There are between 3000 and 5000 refugees already in Canada.

The three most important things to El Salvadoreans are education, medical care and security. Allmand said Oxfam Canada has done the best job in providing these services.

Canada was criticized for its vacillating foreign policy which resembles that of the U.S. Allmand defended his government by pointing out that Mark MacGuigan fell victim to what most Canadians suffer from, namely ignorance of world affairs. However, Canada is in the process of considering the Mexico-French proposal, he said.

In his concluding remarks Allmand cited a case where an American living in El Salvador was horrified to discover the planes which were firing at her were actually made in her own country. She was there helping to improve medical care for the citizens of El Salvador.

Jewett talks disarmament at Dal

by Ken Burke

"Incredible hypocrisy" accurately describes Canada's nuclear disarmament policy," said NDP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Pauline Jewett while she was at Dalhousie recently. In the second session of an all-day workshop entitled **Nuclear War and the Future** last Saturday, at the Killam Library, Jewett focused on Canada's recent agreement to test the American Cruise missile, an about face on Trudeau's call for a test ban on strategic weapons.

Jewett said the testing agreement violates clause two of Prime Minister Trudeau's "Suffocation Strategy," a plan for disarmament introduced in 1978 in the United Nations and reiterated before parliament in the 1980 speech from the throne. That clause calls for, "An agreement to stop the

flight-testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles." Not only is the cruise missile strategic, Jewett said, but it is also a first use non-defensive weapon, something which, "No Canadian or human being should accept."

This point of view was not held by George Cooper, one-time PC member of parliament. Cooper, who was on the seminar panel with Jewett, and Professor Denis Stairs of Dalhousie's Political Science department, supported Canada's taking part in the Cruise missile testing. "I don't agree with the point that the testing of the missiles is contradictory," he said, "they aren't strategic."

Jewett found particularly distasteful the discovery that missile negotiations had been taking place since October of 1980, without the Canadian government releasing any kind of information. "We need a freedom of



Pauline Jewett, NDP Member of Parliament for New Westminster - Coquitlam, B.C.: Canada's disarmament policy symbolizes "incredible hypocrisy."

information act to cover this kind of thing," she said, "my office phones Washington all the time to find out what's going on in Canada."

She also inferred that much of the contradiction arising from Canadian foreign policy is due to U.S. influence on Canadian decision-makers. "Mark McGuigan is mesmerized by Al Haig," she claimed. "When Al says 'jump', Mark says 'how high?'"

All three speakers differed on the best means to approach the problem of nuclear arms.

Jewett wants an immediate halt in the arms race before negotiations on disarmament. She feels that meaningful negotiations are impossible until a halt is called to the military buildup on both sides. On the other hand, Cooper thought the direction to follow was a firm

military commitment. He advocated Canada increasing its role in NATO. Cooper also believes the country should support the use of nuclear arms in Europe, as, "Modernizing the tactical nuclear system in Europe is a disarmament measure in itself." He explained that peace can never occur until nuclear parity is reached with the Soviet bloc.

Dalhousie Political Science Professor Denis Stairs took a quite different view. Stairs thinks Canada can play a crucial role in disarmament through diplomatic aid in trouble spots such as Poland, El Salvador, and Afghanistan. Once these conflicts are ironed out and tensions are reduced between the superpowers, then arms reduction and elimination talks can begin in earnest, according to Stairs.

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