

Canadian aid for El Salvador

by **Randall Sommerfield**
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In an effort to alleviate the desperate conditions under which hundreds of thousands of El Salvador's desplazados, or displaced persons, live, Salvadoran refugee communities across North America have banded together in an unprecedented show of solidarity to organize a massive caravan of aid to that war-torn Central American country.

Fifteen trucks loaded with food, medicines, tools, and clothing departed from nine major U.S. cities last week and will converge in San Antonio, Texas, later this week. From there they will be joined by a truck from Western Canada which left Vancouver on February 25.

According to Erick Guevara, a caravan organizer and representative of the Oscar Arnulfo Romero Central American Refugee Community here in Calgary, Western Canadians donated nearly two tons of food and medicines to the aid effort.

The caravan is expected to arrive in the Salvadoran capital of San Salvador in the middle of March where it will be met by representatives from various church organizations, the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers' Union (FENASTRAS), the National Union of Earthquake Workers' Union (UNADES), and

the Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, Disappeared and Assassinated of El Salvador (COMADRES). Distribution of the aid will be overseen by teams of volunteer workers from these organizations and will be primarily directed towards the poorest of the estimated 500,000 desplazados living in the crowded refugee camps and shanty towns around San Salvador.

As well, a portion of the aid has been designated for a number of new resettlement communities in the northern provinces of Chalatenango and Copapayo. These communities of repatriated Salvadoran refugees, who have recently returned from neighboring Honduras where they fled in the early 1980's to escape a brutal counter-insurgency campaign by the Salvadoran Armed Forces, are facing severe shortages of food, medicine, and basic tools needed for construction and farming. Government troops also continue to harass the campesinos (peasants) living in these repopulated communities, despite strong international pressure from church and other aid organizations to end the repression.

The caravan aid is expected to contribute urgently needed supplies to the repopulated communities as the former refugees make an effort to rebuild their lives in the face of the ongoing civil war which has already claimed more

than 70,000 victims — most of them civilians. With the arrival of the caravan, timed to occur just days before the scheduled March 19 elections, there is international attention once again focused on this tiny violence-wracked Central American nation. Organizers hope that the aid will reach its intended recipients with a minimum of interference from government and military authorities who in the past have demonstrated considerable reluctance

Grapevine

Managing the Stress of Illness

"Will illness run your life, or will you run your illness?"

The University of Alberta Faculty of Extension is presenting a workshop entitled "Managing the Stress of Illness" from April 14-16, 1989.

Nurturing Self-Esteem in Self and Others

The University of Alberta Faculty of Extension is offering a weekend workshop on "Nurturing Self-Esteem in Self and Others" on April 14-16, 1989. This workshop is a personal experience at a beginning level.

Pressure to abolish differential fees

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thought, at the moment, of doing away with differential fees because they ensure that there are spaces for Canadian students at the University," she said.

Yet the U of A administration is against differential fees.

One of the objectives of the U of A's International Student Policy, adopted by General Faculties Council and the Board of Governors in 1986, was "to work towards the abolition of differential fees for international students" in order "to promote international

said. "The government has no stats to back up their [the differential fees] utility; they're only a political response to Albertans who feel pressured by foreign students."

The U of A's SU is supported by the student councils in Calgary and Lethbridge and by the Graduate Associations at the U of A and U of C.

According to Wilfred Allan, Director of the International Centre, only 3.5 per cent of undergraduates are foreign students and approximately 28 per cent of graduate students.

"Education is universal — it's to our benefit to encourage foreign students to attend the U of A," said Allan. "We either have a responsibility to foreign students or we don't."

Allan also explained that a change in the system of charging differential fees would have to be made in the provincial legislature, on the advice of the Minister of Advanced Education.

One of the international students studying at the U of A, Alik Mac Pherson from New Zealand, commented, "The fees make it tricky — I'd rather not pay them but I understand that the U of A was forced to place the fees on international students because of the local reaction to overseas students."

"The government has no stats to back up their (the differential fees) utility"

understanding and good will by being a generous host to international students and making them full participants in the University community and in Alberta society."

The SU has also committed itself to abolishing differential fees by passing a motion opposing them at a recent council meeting — external Dave Tupper, who initiated the motion in council,

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