

Send your books to El Salvador

by Ralph English

A book campaign in support of the University of El Salvador is commencing here at Dalhousie, says Spanish Professor John Kirk, the co-ordinator of the Dal campaign.

"The goal of the campaign is to collect academic textbooks and money to send to the university, which was closed down by the government and is in the process of reopening," Kirk says.

The University of El Salvador is a university which refuses to die. Shut down since 1980 by the government and occupied by the military, the University has somehow managed to survive. Its classes are held off-campus in rented or donated premises, or even in the open air. Twenty-two thousand students are currently enrolled, and sixteen hundred have graduated since the two year occupation began.

This year, under increasing international pressure, the government has agreed to allow the return of university activities to the campus. But the government may have simply replaced its military constraints on the university with fiscal constraints. Faculty salaries are frozen and

the substantial budget cuts of 1982 are to be followed by further cuts this year. It was to overcome these fiscal constraints and assist reconstruction that the University of El Salvador Book Campaign was initiated.

June 26, 1980, found helicopter gunships hovering over the University of El Salvador. On the ground below eight hundred soldiers supported by tanks had invaded the campus. As many as fifty students were murdered, although the actual figure is in doubt as many of the bodies were burned or buried on campus.

The military occupation of the university brought devastation. Looting soldiers inflicted \$20 - 30 million damage to the campus. Laboratories, offices, libraries and printing shops were pillaged.

The Rector of the university was assassinated in October of 1980 and his successor fled the country under threat of death. In February of 1981 the entire governing council of the university was arrested, some of its members imprisoned for over two months.

The campaign is taking place on campuses in every province in Canada. Here at Dal it is being

organized by Dr. John Kirk of the Spanish Dept. The Student Union has already expressed its support for the campaign by donating SUB facilities as a collection point for books and also pledging to donate books left over following the closing of the Secondhand

Bookstore.

The nation's constitution requires the government to fund an autonomous University of El Salvador. That autonomy was violated during the 1970s by a military dictatorship bent on the curtailment of academic free-

dom. In response to that oppression, the university became a signatory of the charter of the opposition Revolutionary Democratic Front. This action precipitated the invasion, despite the university's express view that only a political solution to the country's problems would be satisfactory.

Students interested in contributing are advised by campaign organizers to:

* Scour bookshelves for a donation of books or journals. Donations can be left at any of the following collection points: the SUB enquiry desk; the Spanish Dept. office at 1376 LeMarchant street; in the boxes provided for this purpose at the Killam and Kellogg libraries.

* Volunteer to assist in the collection, sorting and packing of the books. A meeting for volunteers will be held at the Spanish Dept. on Monday, October 3, at 12:30 pm or telephone and leave your name with the Spanish Dept. (424-7017) or the Gazette (424-2507, 2055).

* Offer financial support as the cost of shipping the books will be about 2 dollars per book. Income tax receipts will be issued for donations in excess of 5 dollars. Cheques should be made out to the "University of El Salvador Book Campaign". Donations can be made at the Spanish Dept. or mailed directly to: Canadian Bureau for International Education, 141 Laurier Avenue West, 8th floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5J3



Professor John Kirk of Dalhousie's Spanish Department is campaigning for books to send to the University of El Salvador.

A sea of applications

VANCOUVER (CUP)—Skyrocketing numbers of applications for student aid have created backlogs at university financial aid departments across the country.

In B.C. thousands of students had not had their applications processed as of Sept. 16. Major changes to the aid program over the summer will further delay assistance because appeals have increased drastically, said Lisa Hebert, University of B.C. student union external officer.

The UBC awards office has about 1,000 applications still to be processed while at Simon Fraser University, awards officer David Crawford said the backlog is slowly disappearing.

"Normally we're three weeks behind, but we're working on applications from July 20," Crawford said. "We're about a month behind."

A flood of applications during the summer, 60 per cent more in July than last year and 30 per cent in August, created the delay.

Crawford said the provincial government's new dependency criteria changed the minimum course load required from 60 to 80 per cent of full course load and demanded a 60 per cent average mark for eligibility.

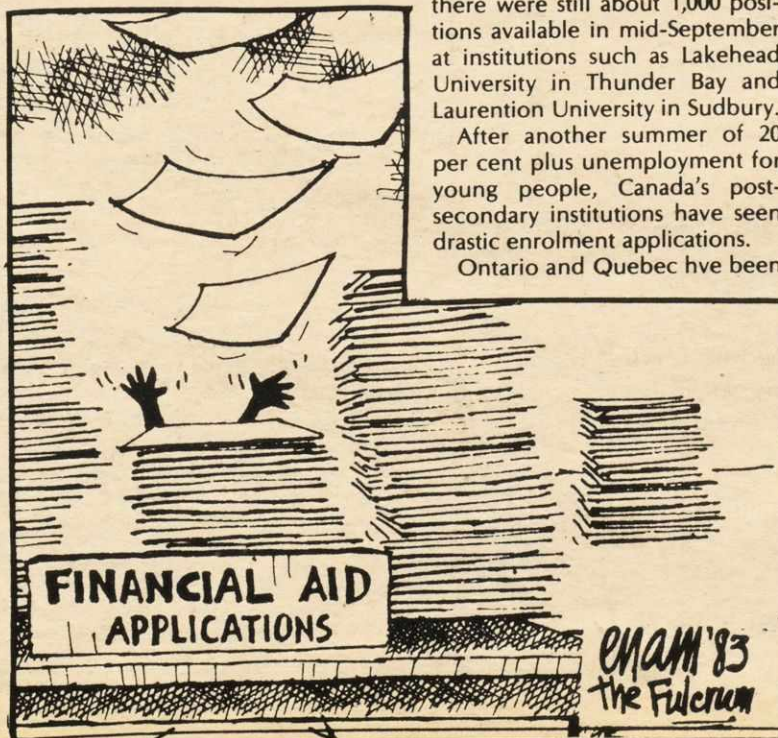
The changes have left students uncertain about how to fill out applications.

UBC financial director Byron Hender said 30 per cent of applications had to be returned because they were filled out wrong.

"We need to hire more people," said Hender. "But there's a freeze on hiring, so that doesn't help."

At the University of Alberta, loan applications are expected to be up 24 per cent this year, and the percentage of students applying for loans is expected to rise from the historical 30 per cent level to 60 per cent this year.

"This is probably a reflection of the economy, fewer parents can afford to send their children to school and there are definitely less jobs available for students," said U of A Finance Board representative Gay Mathieson.



Enrolling over the hill and far away

TORONTO (CUP)—They may be out of the way but there are still openings for students at some Ontario universities, says the Council of Ontario Universities.

William Sayers, the council's communications director, says there were still about 1,000 positions available in mid-September at institutions such as Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury.

After another summer of 20 per cent plus unemployment for young people, Canada's post-secondary institutions have seen drastic enrolment applications. Ontario and Quebec have been

hardest hit with institutions rejecting thousands of students. But while the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute has turned away about 7,000 students, the University of Ottawa turned away 2,000, York University 1,400 and Carleton 1,000, remote universities still have room.

It is not yet known how many young people have been denied an education because some may have been accepted at institutions that were not their first choice. But COU figures indicate some qualified applicants simply could not attend university.

According to an Aug. 22 report to COU from the Ontario Universities Application Centre, applications have grown faster than acceptances. The report says offers of admission have grown 3.6 per cent this year, while the number of applications grew 4.4 per cent.

But Laurentian's admissions director says, "a few hundred places" were still available despite a 9.8 per cent increase in admission applications to the university.

The situation is similar at Lakehead University where enrolment has increased 17 per cent in the arts programs.

While overall demand for university education in Ontario continues to grow, some programs have seen declining demand, says Sayers. Agriculture, business administration, engineering, environmental studies, forestry, landscape, architecture, mathematics and a few other programs have received less first-choice applications than last year according to Aug. 19 data from OUPA.

The decline is most dramatic in engineering, where the number of first-choice applications to Ontario programs dropped to 4,857 this year from 5,322 last year.

But Sayers said the decline in demand for some professional programs is due to students' evaluation of the market for jobs in those areas and rising admission standards.