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Methodist Group Seeks Recall of Missionaries

Support for Sandinistas Discerned in Letter

By David E. Anderson
United Press International

A group of conservative members of the United Methodist Church said yesterday that Methodist missionaries in Nicaragua who support the Sandinista government "have betrayed the truth" and should be recalled.

In an open letter to the Board of Global Ministries of the 9.2 million-member church, 15 members associated with the independent United Methodists for Religious Liberty and Human Rights criticized a letter sent to the church's bishops by four U.S. missionaries living in Nicaragua.

The missionaries' letter said church life in Nicaragua remains "relatively unaffected" by the state of emergency imposed by the Sandinista government and they said religious figures having trouble with the government "have abused their freedom of religion and speech to actively work in support of the counterrevolution."

The conservatives' letter said the missionaries "condone practices that are contrary to the policies of the United Methodist Church and

unacceptable to any organization that purports to uphold a single standard of religious freedom and human rights."

The group, an affiliate of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, an anti-Marxist organization that frequently criticizes leftist governments and U.S. church bodies with liberal foreign policy positions, said the bishops should "recall the United Methodist missionaries currently serving in Nicaragua for a thorough reconsideration of the mission of the United Methodist Church in Nicaragua."

"Their poor judgment and ill-conceived response to the current state of emergency offer evidence that they may be inadequately suited to represent our church—and our Lord—in a difficult field of service such as Nicaragua," the letter said.

"The United Methodist missionaries have betrayed the truth by denying the suffering of fellow Christians trying to live their faith," the letter said, a reference to the alleged harassment by the Sandinistas of Jimmy Hassan, Nicaraguan representative of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Communist Influence Divides Church

By FOX BUTTERFIELD

Special to The New York Times

MANILA, March 1 — The creation of a small but highly active organization of Roman Catholic priests and nuns that has worked to help the New People's Army, the military arm of the Philippine Communist Party, has caused a serious rift within the church here.

There are no nationwide figures on how many priests and nuns are sympathetic to the Communists or belong to an outlawed group called Christians for National Liberation, which is part of the Communists' united front organization, the National Democratic Front.

But in this nation that is 85 percent Roman Catholic, church leaders agree that a number of pro-Communist clergy have infiltrated local Catholic organizations and set up what amounts to a secret church within the church.

"I wouldn't mind so much if they just came out openly," said Bishop Francisco Claver, who for many years worked in Mindanao, the large island in the southern Philippines that has been a center of guerrilla activity. "But they are so secret about it, forming their own church within the church, and then trying to manipulate us."

Church Programs Infiltrated

Bishop Claver, who himself was accused of being a leftist by the Government of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos because of his activities on behalf of poor farmers, charged that some Communist priests and nuns in his diocese had used church-run programs like public health care to give propaganda lectures on behalf of the guerrillas. "They would be 10 percent about health and 90 percent about colonialism," the Bishop said.

Two years ago Bishop Claver was forced to dissociate himself from the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference, a large church group he headed that worked with the poor, because he believed "it had been too thoroughly infiltrated" by pro-Communist clergy.

"We couldn't fire them all, because it is hard to prove someone is a Communist, and we were afraid if we did the military would seize them, so we just removed church sanction from the group," he recalled. "We left them the offices and office equipment."

The situation was complicated because one of the other bishops in the group, from the city of Iligan, had a brother who was the local guerrilla commander, Bishop Claver said.

Activism Under Marcos Rule

The problem has been particularly troublesome for the church because as the Marcos regime became more corrupt and oppressive and the living standard of many Filipinos fell, large numbers of priests, nuns and senior church leaders, including Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, became increasingly active in the opposition.

"Undoubtedly there is a substantial group, especially among the sisters, who developed links to the left or the Communists because they saw no other alternative to Marcos," said the Rev. John J. Carroll, director of the Institute on the Church and Social Forces at the Ateneo de Manila University, a Jesuit-run school.

"They are idealists, and feel this is the best way to serve the people, but they are also naive and simplistic," said Father Carroll.

"They are told armed struggle is the only way out, then they get pulled into seminars, and pretty soon you see a whole new subculture emerging among them," he added. "They begin to see God as a historical process, Christ as a liberator and faith becomes commitment to the Communist Party."

"Often they are the most lively, attractive people in their congregations, and they become very dedicated to their new cause without realizing they are being used," Father Carroll said.

"What is particularly objectionable is that they begin to take orders from a group outside the church," which goes against Catholic principles, he said.

With the ouster of Mr. Marcos and his replacement by President Corazon C. Aquino, a moderate with close ties to the church, Father Carroll is optimistic that some of the more radical clergy will sever their loyalty to the Communists.

As one possible indication of this, officers in the new Ministry of Defense said Friday that they had received feelers from the Rev. Conrado Balweg, a Catholic priest who has led a guerrilla group in the mountains of northern Luzon. The sources said Father Balweg, a member of the Igorot ethnic minority, had indicated he was prepared to surrender now that Mr. Marcos had been ousted.

However, such reports of impending surrender by New People's Army officers were a commonplace during the Marcos years and often proved false, breeding skepticism among Filipinos.

On the other side, a priest on the island of Negros who admits he is a member of the Christians for National Liberation still feels a need to "transform our liturgy into a liturgy of liberation."

"The condition of poverty and oppression among the people here is an undisputed fact," he said, looking out of his parish church at a row of squatters' huts. The small huts, with walls of palm mats and thatched roofs, have been built on land owned by a wealthy sugar cane planter. Most of their occupants are unemployed and live on rice donated by the church.

Lobbying Firm With Close Ties to White House Takes On Job of Boosting Marxist Angola's Image

By ROBERT S. GREENBERGER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WASHINGTON—Gray & Co., an influential lobbying firm with close ties to the White House, is hard at work touting the deep religious feelings of its latest client.

"I was very surprised to learn that everybody (there) goes to church on Sunday," says Daniel Murphy, a retired four-star admiral who now navigates Gray's campaign for the client. What's more, says Mr. Murphy, a Gray vice chairman, "at least one-third of the Politburo members are practicing Presbyterians."

Who is the client with the Politburo full of Presbyterians that Gray & Co. is pitching for? It's the Communist government of Angola.

As a result, Washington is getting ready for round two of the Angolan public-relations wars, an expensive mixture of image-polishing and partial truths.

In round one, Jonas Savimbi, an insurgent leader battling Angola's Marxists, hired another well-connected Washington public-relations firm, Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly, which for \$600,000



Daniel Murphy

made Mr. Savimbi out to be Africa's answer to George Washington. Now, the Angolans have hired Gray to counter with a campaign that will cost at least \$50,000 a month. It will feature public appearances by Angola's United Nations ambassador, congressional testimony by experts, and about anything else that might slow the drive led by U.S. conservatives to win substantial American aid for Mr. Savimbi.

Even in Washington, where unusual alliances are common, Gray & Co. and Angola are an odd couple. Robert Gray, the firm's founder, is a longtime Reagan man who was chairman of the president's first inaugural. The dapper Mr. Gray is more accustomed to rubbing elbows with Reaganites at black-tie dinners than to pitching the praises of proletarian Angola. And Mr. Murphy used to keep an eye on communists as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a top aide to Vice President George Bush.

Taking the Other Side

But now, Gray & Co. is pitted against the administration, which recently approved spending as much as \$15 million on covert military aid for Mr. Savimbi's forces.

The firm's efforts have infuriated right-wingers, who charge that Gray is turning "pink."

"If these were more sensible times, this kind of activity would lead to a trial for

treason," grouses Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus.

Adm. Murphy, who spent 35 years in the Navy, says all he is doing is engaging communism in a different theater. "Although a lot of cynics would laugh, there is a way to wear away a Marxist government from the Soviet camp," he insists, without "poking the (Soviet) bear with a big stick to see him growl." Bringing Angola and the West closer together "is something I would hope we'd help accomplish," he says.

The firm began this crusade about a month ago by giving some television coaching to Ismael Gaspar-Martins, Angola's minister of foreign trade, before his joint appearance with Mr. Savimbi on the "MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour" program. Gray & Co.'s media experts advised Mr. Gaspar-Martins to wear a conservative suit and tie to contrast with Mr. Savimbi's preference for Third World-style Nehru suits, and to keep making a few basic points regardless of the questions.

Foe Called 'Terrorist'

Mr. Gaspar-Martins performed well. He told American viewers that Mr. Savimbi was a "terrorist" and then agreed with Secretary of State George Shultz that "it is correct to combat terrorism." He also stressed Mr. Savimbi's links with South Africa's white-ruled government, which aids the rebel leader.

Angola is so eager to polish its image in the U.S. that it didn't want to wait until a 12-month contract with Gray could be signed in the Angolan capital of Luanda and returned to Washington. Thus, in January a one-month, \$20,000 agreement was signed here by Gray and John Sassi, an American consultant acting on behalf of

Angola, to begin work immediately on the account.

Mr. Sassi was employed for 20 years, until last June, by Gulf Corp., the Chevron Corp. subsidiary that owns a huge oil facility jointly with Angola. Gulf has been the target of both Mr. Savimbi, who threatens to blow up the facility, and U.S. conservatives, who want to boycott the company because its huge royalty payments help Angola pay for the war against Mr. Savimbi. Mr. Sassi insists that Gulf has "absolutely nothing" to do with the \$20,000 contract, that he will be repaid by Angola and that Gulf money isn't being funneled through his consulting firm to help promote Angola's image.

"I have absolutely no ties with Gulf," he asserts. He says he is negotiating his own contract with Angola to supplement Gray's image-building efforts.

At the same time, efforts are under way to undercut Mr. Savimbi's image. Mr. Sassi, for example, tells a reporter that he thinks the Angolan insurgent leader—who likes to call himself Dr. Savimbi—may be lying about his academic credentials. (A State Department analyst, however, confirms that Mr. Savimbi received a doctor of philosophy degree from Lausanne University in Switzerland, where he wrote a dissertation titled "The Implications of Yalta for the Third World.")

U.S. analysts concede that the Angolans are more ideologically flexible than many other Marxist regimes. Angola welcomes the benefits of Western commerce and technology; church attendance in the country is widespread; and many Angolans were educated by Christian missionaries.

Nevertheless, Angola isn't an enlightened democracy. The government is buttressed by the presence of more than 30,000 Cuban troops, and press freedom and the right to travel are tightly controlled. Moreover, the State Department's 1985 human rights report says the Angolan government "emphasizes the importance of propagating 'atheism' and has been critical of religious activities." Recently, the Angolan army has been bringing in truckloads of teen-age boys and forcing them to serve in the military, one analyst says.

As Mr. Murphy puts it, "Their image problem is that they're a bunch of communists who have a bunch of Cubans there."

BRIEFING PAPER

THE INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY

February 1986

No. 7

STATE OF SIEGE: NICARAGUA'S PROTESTANTS

a press conference with

JIMMY HASSAN

Until December 1985, Jimmy Hassan, a native Nicaraguan, was National Director of Campus Crusade for Christ in Nicaragua, as well as Associate Pastor of the First Central American Church in Managua and one of the directors of "Ondas de Luz," the evangelical radio station in Nicaragua. Although Hassan has been involved in Christian work for most of his life, he was a practicing lawyer before joining Campus Crusade for Christ. After the Sandinista revolution of 1979, he became a judge in the district of Masaya. He held this position for three years before resigning to devote himself full-time to an evangelistic ministry.

Although there have been reported instances of harassment in the past, Protestant churches in Nicaragua have refrained from speaking out in protest, preferring instead to stress their total dedication to evangelism and the apolitical nature of their ministry. However, the new wave of harassment and intimidation of evangelical Christians in the wake of the recent suspension of civil liberties has forced the Protestant community to be more outspoken about Sandinista attempts to undermine the autonomy of their pastoral ministry.

This latest attack on independent Christian witness provides a revealing portrait of Nicaragua's "Christian-Marxist" revolutionary regime. Hassan's account of the arrest and torture of prominent evangelicals by State Security officials should serve as a warning about the future of the Protestant Church in Sandinista Nicaragua.

Mr. Hassan and his family managed to escape from Nicaragua in December 1985.

The following is a transcript by the Institute on Religion and Democracy of a press conference Mr. Hassan held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on December 19, 1985. The press conference was sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals in cooperation with the Campus Crusade for Christ.

— Maria H. Thomas

STATEMENT BY JIMMY HASSAN

I would like to thank the American evangelical community for the solidarity that it has shown towards the evangelicals of Nicaragua in these difficult times.

On October 31, 1985, at six o'clock in the morning, my family and I were awakened by loud knocks on our door. Upon opening the door, we found 15 - 20 State Security officers, headed by Captain Charlotte Baltodano. She informed me that they were arresting me for possession of counter-revolutionary literature. I told her that she must be mistaken, because I have dedicated myself totally to the preaching of the Gospel and was in no way involved in political activities. As a sample of the counter-revolutionary material that I supposedly had, she showed me a booklet that we call "The Four Spiritual Laws." I must tell you that the only thing this booklet contains is the Gospel.

I was then taken in a State Security jeep to the Campus Crusade office, where I was ordered to give them all the evangelistic booklets that we had: 2,000 copies of "The Four Spiritual Laws" booklets and hundreds of books, including New Testaments and Bibles. I was then ordered to take them to the commercial printer, who was in the process of printing some more "Four Spiritual Laws" for us. The State Security officers confiscated 50,000 such booklets and warned the owner of the press that if he ever again printed something for us or for any evangelical organization, he would be arrested and his printing press confiscated.

I was then driven to the offices of the Directorate of Mass Media Communications, in the Ministry of Interior, where I was held in an isolated room for about four hours, before being called to the office of Captain Charlotte Baltodano. She, in the company of various State Security officers, warned me that if anyone ever heard about what they had done, I would be sorry, because the Interior Ministry would take measures to punish me. She put a pistol to my head and asked me if that was clear. I answered in the affirmative; however, I reminded her that they had publicized the whole incident by taking me out of my house with a large military procession to my office, to the printer, and to other places in Managua. I was released at about four in the afternoon.

That evening, several people who visited me at home said that they had been told that to be involved with me would be dangerous. At about eleven that night, the door of my house was again shaken by violent knocking. When I came out, it was another State Security officer, who handed me a summons to appear at House 50, one of the offices of State Security, the next morning at eight. Immediately thereafter a police patrol car parked in front of my house.

The next day, when I arrived at House 50, they made me go into a small room. Three State Security lieutenants entered, and said, "Let's start by establishing the rules of the game. First, you are a dog, and your life has no value to us. Any of us would kill you with pleasure, because you are an enemy to us and to the revolution." I denied the charges. Then they told me that they would not kill me if I cooperated with them. The cooperation that they requested was that I answer the questions they asked -- questions such as: "Who was my CIA director in Nicaragua?" "How much did the CIA pay me for working in Managua?" "With

which political party was I affiliated?" "Why didn't I speak out publicly in favor of the Sandinista revolution?" To all of these accusations I responded negatively, because the only activity to which I dedicate myself is the preaching of the Gospel. They then threatened to beat me and told me that they would take me to El Chipote, the State Security jail, where they would keep me imprisoned. Then a very tall State Security officer entered. When he was told that I had refused to cooperate, he put his pistol to my head and said, "With me he won't play around." A State Security officer named Luis Mendez told me that they would give me another opportunity to confess my activities. When I replied that my only activity was preaching the Gospel, the tall man took out his pistol again, put it against my forehead and pulled the trigger. The chamber was empty; that's why I'm able to be with you today.

I was then taken to El Chipote. Until that moment I had not been arrested, but had simply been in the Public Relations Office of State Security, having a "cordial interview," as they define it. I was taken to El Chipote in a jeep, with my face on the floor. When I arrived, I was ordered to look only at the floor and was pushed into a small room two feet by two feet. It was totally closed, without air or light. After approximately four hours, I was taken to another room to be fingerprinted, photographed, measured and weighed. Then they put me back into the small room.

About a half hour later, I was taken to another room, larger, but extremely cold. The first thing the officer told me was that they were going to arrest my wife immediately because I had not been cooperative. They began to question me again. They asked me about my friendship with Alberto Motessi, an international preacher, about my preaching of the Gospel among the youth of Nicaragua, about my opposition to the revolution. I continued to answer that we were not involved in partisan politics.

They took me back to the small room. Before putting me in, they opened the door, and there was a Campus Crusade staff member, with his clothing on. They shut that door and opened another with another staff member, completely naked. They shut that door and opened another with a young woman who is active in our movement, also naked. Then they took out the man who was dressed, and put me in that room. About a half hour later they put me back in the cold room. Within a few minutes I began to hear a woman weeping. The officer who was interrogating me told me that it was the voice of my wife. About 6:30 in the evening they took me out and put me in a jeep, alongside another Campus Crusade staff member. They took us to the Campus Crusade office, where for three hours they went through all of our files. They took all the items owned by Campus Crusade and released us. The others who had been arrested were released at two in the morning.

That same day they had also arrested Rev. Ignacio Hernandez, Director of the Nicaraguan Bible Society; Modesto Alvarez, Director of Child Evangelism Fellowship; Roberto Hernandez and Benedicto Hernandez, both staff members of Campus Crusade; and Maria Teresa Madrigal, of Child Evangelism Fellowship. The next day Boanerges Mendoza, Pastor of the First Central American Church in Managua, was arrested. On November 3 they arrested Juan Simon Videz, Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Nicaragua.

On November 5, they arrested Felix Rosales, who is President of the National Council of Evangelical Pastors of Nicaragua, and Saturnino Serrato, Vice-Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Nicaragua. On November 7, they arrested Rev. Gustavo Semilla, who is President of the Council of Pastors in Managua. On the same day, they arrested Rev. Manuel Duarte, who is President of the Council of Pastors in the department of Chontales, east of Managua.

After receiving permission from the government, an evangelistic campaign began on November 5, in the western part of Managua. An hour after the service had begun, a mob arrived. They struck women and children, leaving many injured. These "Divine Mobs" are groups which are directed by Sandinista organizations for the purpose of destroying, ransacking, and beating up religious and other groups whom they consider enemies. There is nothing "divine" about them, but they are definitely mobs. That same night they arrested the preacher, Guillermo Sandoval.

On November 17 they arrested Rev. Guillermo Ayala, the President of the Pentecostal Baptist Church of Managua, at the Sandino International Airport, as he was returning from the United States. On November 18 they detained Rev. Rolando Mena, President of the evangelical radio station, at the airport, as he also was returning from the United States. On November 11 they arrested Boanerges Mendoza again and confiscated his car and all his personal belongings. Based on conversations I have had with those who were arrested, I have concluded that I may have been one of those better treated.

I would like to summarize everything by saying the following: We evangelicals in Nicaragua respect the laws of the Republic. We conform ourselves strictly to what the law says. Never -- neither personally nor as organizations -- have we conspired against the Sandinista government. All the evangelicals of Nicaragua recognize our unavoidable duty to evangelize our country. And no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the threats, no matter what the tortures, no matter what the persecution, we will not stop preaching Jesus Christ to Nicaragua. Our message is a biblical message. It is not designed to create problems for the Sandinista government. We are working so that, no matter what happens, Jesus Christ may be the Lord of Nicaragua.

In the most difficult moments of persecution, it has helped us greatly that the evangelical church of the whole world has said that it is with us. The campaign of the government has caused us many more problems. They have made false accusations against us in order to justify what they have done. But none of the charges they have made are true, because the evangelical Christian leaders who have been arrested are innocent and respect the laws of Nicaragua.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Q: Have the evangelical pastors of Nicaragua ever preached against Nicaragua's Patriotic Military Service or counseled young people how to avoid the draft? Have you or has anyone else you know done that?

HASSAN: I have never preached against compulsory military service in Nicaragua, and I dare say that no evangelical leader has preached against compulsory military service. We fully respect the laws of Nicaragua. The discontent felt by Nicaraguan young people with regard to military service cannot be blamed on us, because we have not violated any law. If they had had even one person who could have pointed out that we had preached against military service, certainly they would have presented him. They didn't.

Q: I would like more clarification, because I still don't understand why they are so aggressively persecuting the evangelical church. For example, they accuse you of having CIA contacts or other connections with anti-Sandinistas. It seems to me that they have the impression that you're a serious contra-Sandinista force. I would ask you, is it just that you haven't publicly supported the Sandinistas, or do you think they have other things in mind?

HASSAN: In State Security, as I described earlier, at the end of our conversation, Lt. Luis Mendez told me: "Let's sum up everything. Your problem is that you preach to young people about Jesus Christ. And because of that they distance themselves from Marxism, and this we will never permit here in Nicaragua." On November 11, the newspaper La Prensa of Managua published an interview with Tomas Borge, who said in that interview that the Sandinista revolution was strong militarily, but weak ideologically, and this gave them problems. On the other hand, the religious people were very strong ideologically, and the Sandinistas were going to use all the power they had to overcome that disadvantage. I believe that Comandante Borge answered your question very well in that interview.

Q: Are you afraid of reprisals for what you have said here if you go back to Nicaragua?

HASSAN: We are trying to say with clarity what we have experienced, and we are also trying to say with clarity that no matter what happens, no matter what the situation, we Nicaraguan evangelicals will continue firmly to preach Christ. Our duty to preach Him is unavoidable. And from this podium we are calling upon the Sandinista government to reflect and cease this campaign. We hope that they will do so.

Q: Other religious leaders in Nicaragua, like Fernando Cardenal and CEPAD, seem to be able to get along with the Sandinista government. What's the difference between them and you?

HASSAN: The case of the priest, Fernando Cardenal, can be answered better by the Catholic authorities, because he is under their hierarchy. Yes, there are some evangelicals, like CEPAD, who are not suffering the harassment that we have mentioned. But, in my opinion, that is due to the partisan position that they have taken. We evangelicals have remained firm in absolute fidelity to Jesus Christ.

Q: Do you have a statement that you would like to make to American Protestants who are financially supporting CEPAD and other pro-Sandinista groups?

HASSAN: I would rather make a statement to all American evangelicals. First, I would like to thank them for the solidarity that they have shown with the evangelical church during this time of persecution. Second, I would urge them to weigh carefully the information they receive, because possibly some of them have been misinformed, and on the basis of this misinformation they have sometimes made incorrect decisions.

Q: You said earlier that you were one of the best-treated prisoners. What did you see or hear about others who were treated worse?

HASSAN: Earlier I mentioned the two persons whom I saw in the small rooms completely naked. I was dressed. Just based on that, I was better treated than they were. And many other people, according to what they recounted, were also stripped and harassed. They were stripped and made to walk in front of a row of soldiers, who made lewd jokes about them. Other leaders were stripped and sprayed with a hose and then put in the cold room. Boanerges Mendoza was detained for eleven days, with only one spoonful of beans as his daily food. Those situations were much worse than mine.

Q: What is it that you want the Christians of North America and Europe and other parts of the world to do for the Christians in Nicaragua, aside from pray?

HASSAN: In the first place, we believe that being well informed is extremely important, because then you can pray intelligently. And we think that if they are well informed, they will know how to make decisions which truly support the evangelical church of Nicaragua. And we believe that if those who for some reason have been mistaken get correct information, such as we are giving you today, they will know how to make correct decisions. And God will put in their hearts that which is right.

Q: I would like to ask you, just to get some perspective, to briefly describe government intervention, or lack of it, in your religious activities for the year prior to these events you have described?

HASSAN: In general terms, even before the state of emergency the situation had been very difficult. For example, the evangelical radio station was under complete censorship. There have been prohibitions, such as praying for prisoners. All messages given over the radio had to be approved in advance by the Ministry of Interior. A number of foreign preachers who had come to Nicaragua have been expelled. So the situation has been very difficult.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 5, 1986

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Room 450
Old Executive Office Building

2:07 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon and welcome to the White House complex. That's what we call these buildings -- the White House complex. It's also what you get when you've been around here working here too long. (Laughter.)

But I'm glad to have this chance to meet with you today. As a group of leaders deeply committed to the defense of freedom, I know you understand the truth of what Edmund Burke said over two centuries ago, "When bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."

Well, that statement has become even more urgently true today. There's a vote coming up in Congress of utmost importance and I have to tell you, I need your understanding and support. I'm talking about our request for \$100 million in aid to the democratic resistant forces in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua may seem a small country, faraway, and why, some wonder, should we care what's happening there? Why should we spend \$100 million on someone else's fight? Well, I want to talk about why we must care and why the United States has not only a moral but a strategic interest in supporting freedom in Central America.

There are many things at stake in this vote. The hopes of the Nicaraguan people to live in freedom and democracy; the hopes of the people of Central and South America to live in peace, free from communist subversion. But there's another issue that overrides all others -- the national security of the United States.

Let there be no mistake -- if we fail to provide timely assistance now, if we abandon our allies in freedom and allow the communists to establish a permanent beachhead on the American mainland, we will be living with the consequences for decades to come.

There's been a lot of misinformation floating around about the true character of the Sandinista regime.

MORE

Perhaps it would be more accurate to call it disinformation.

I sometimes wonder why people don't just listen to what these communists themselves say, because when they're not up here in Washington lobbying Congress, they're quite open about their true intentions. For instance, take their ties to terrorist groups in the Middle East. Those ties go back more than a decade-and-a-half. Thomas Borge, Nicaragua's minister of Interior, was one of many Sandinista communists to train in PLO camps in Lebanon and Syria and Libya. To quote Borge's own words: "we say to our brother Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas." Yasir Arafat returned the compliment saying, "The triumph of the Nicaraguans is the PLO's triumph."

Or listen to what the Sandinista communists say about Qaddafi whom they call "our great friend" -- Borge again: "Our friendship with Libya is eternal. Libya is a people which, in accordance with our experience, has developed solidarity without frontiers." Remember that one: "Solidarity without frontiers."

Qaddafi, meanwhile, has been openly sending them millions of dollars of arms, because, he says, the Nicaraguan communists fight with Libya. "They fight America," he put it, "on its own ground."

The Sandinistas have also drawn close to the Iranians. Just last year, the Iranian Prime Minister who's thought to control Iran's terrorist apparatus, said to Daniel Ortega, and I quote again, "We consider your revolutionary country as our own home."

The Sandinista communists have matched their words with actions, joining the PLO in terrorist assaults in the Middle East, including the attempt to overthrow the Hussein government in the hijacking of an "El Al" airliner. The Sandinista terrorist killed in the "El Al" hijacking, Patrick Arguayo Ryan, is revered as a hero by the Nicaraguan government. They even named a large power dam after him.

The Nicaraguan communists claim that they're not anti-Semitic; they're just anti-Zionist. Well, as anti-Zionists, they desecrated Managua's synagogue and drove the small Jewish community into exile. Issac Stavisky, who was there, tells of the anti-Jewish Sandinista graffiti: "Death to the Jewish pigs," with red and black FSLN initials next to it, and "Beware Sandinista justice." Well, what is the official Sandinista position on this persecution of the Jewish community? The Jews, they say, have a quote, "bourgeois mentality" that prevented them to adjusting to communism. I'll buy that kind of a bourgeois mentality any time.

Managua -- (applause) Managua has also rolled out the welcome mat for terrorists from around the world -- not just Cubans, Bulgarians, Libyans, PLO and Iranians, but members of the

Baader-Meinhof gang, the Basque ETA and the Italian Red Brigade. These criminals and lunatics now camp out on the doorstep of the United States. Let's not kid ourselves; the Sandinistas are avowed, dedicated communists, and communists since the days of Lenin have advocated terrorism as a legitimate means to attain political ends. Incidentally, Mr. Lenin's picture is quite prominent on new issues of stamps -- postage stamps in Nicaragua.

If the Sandinistas are allowed to consolidate their hold on Nicaragua, we'll have a permanent staging ground for terrorism. A home away from home for Qaddafi, Arafat and the Ayatollah, just three hours by air from the U.S. border.

The recent terrorist attack in the Palace of Justice in Colombia in which the Sandinista communists were implicated is just the beginning; the first rumblings of a communist earthquake that could overrun Latin America.

The prime ministers of nine of the Caribbean Island nations, when I was in Grenada just a week or two ago, told me that Nicaragua represented the greatest threat to their freedom and democracy, and they brought up the subject to me. They begged us to continue aiding the freedom fighters.

Some still insist that the Sandinistas are only nationalists. The Sandinistas themselves laugh at the idea. They are true international communists who talk of a revolution without borders and who have eagerly put their country at the disposal of Fidel Castro and the Soviet Union.

Everyone who is thinking about this aid package should ask themselves one question: If the Sandinistas succeed in throwing the whole of Central America into turmoil, if the United States must contend with a growing number of hostile, aggressive communist states close to its borders, how willing or able will we be able to meet our commitments to other allies?

Our supply lines to Israel and our NATO allies run through the Caribbean. The Soviets are already banking on this fact. Even some in Congress would rather ignore it. Today, Nicaragua is the focus of Soviet efforts at destabilization in the Western Hemispheres.

If we show ourselves willing to abandon our friends so close to home, how soon before the Soviets turn their full attention to Israel, that lonely outpost of democracy in the Middle East? Freedom is indivisible. The moral foundation of our support for Israel is our support for freedom and democracy. And that support must always remain rock-solid wherever freedom and democracy are endangered. (Applause.)

I want to assure you that I would not consider any measure, including arms sales to moderate Arab nations, if I thought it might endanger the security of Israel. A small, far-away country, some say, but all people that struggle for freedom are close to America's heart.

Recently there's been an intensive effort to discredit the democratic opposition in Nicaragua. Well, let me say a few words about disinformation.

Some of us have been around long enough to know that disinformation has a long history. I remember the reports of Walter Duranty from Stalin's Russia who denied the existence of the forced famine, even though he had witnessed first hand Stalin's genocide. I remember Lincoln Steffens' famous remark when he returned from that land of slaughter and declared, "I have been over into the future and it works." I remember Herbert Matthews' reports on Castro before he came to power, calling him a Democrat and the "Hope of Cuba." And to some of you who are really too young to remember this, even people around our country were calling him the "George Washington of Cuba." And George rolled over in his grave.

Those reports helped shape the climate in Washington in which we cut off aid to Batista and facilitated Castro's march into Havana. And then you remember, once in power, Castro declared -- voluntarily -- yes, I'm a communist, I've always been a communist. He didn't say that until after he was there and in power.

Likewise, we were told that Ho Chi Minh and Pol Pot were nationalists, and this was before the mass exodus of boat people and the murder of a third of the population of Cambodia. History moves on. The smoke screen of lies and disinformation vanishes, and the brutal reality of communism is laid bare, but then, it's too late.

So today we see an orchestrated campaign to slander the freedom fighters. But who shall we believe -- dedicated communists who call American supporters "useful fools?" Or democrats like Adolfo Calero, Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Rebelo, who oppose the Somoza dictatorship as they fight the communist tyranny today? Shall we believe communists, whose definition of morality is what furthers their political ends, who have systematically attacked religious denominations; extinguished civil liberties, and waged an inhuman war against Miskito Indians? Or, believe the people putting their lives on the line for the values that we hold sacred: democracy, freedom, and human rights.

On national television the other night, Jim Wright said that at one time, the revolutionaries in Latin America -- men such as Bolivar and San Martin -- emulated our democratic revolution. Well, some still do. The freedom fighters in Nicaragua fight for democracy, too. They, too, are the moral descendants of men at Morristown and Valley Forge, though the tyranny they fight against is more brutal than anything our forefathers could have imagined.

Soon, Congress will be making the historic decision whether or not to help these brave men and women. The ranks of the freedom fighters continue to swell. If we give them the aid they need, the Nicaraguan people can win this battle for freedom on their own. American troops have not been asked for and are not needed. We must make sure they never are needed. We send men and -- money and material now so we'll never have to send our own American boys.

But if the members of Congress hide their heads in the sand and pretend the strategic threat in Nicaragua will go away, they are courting disaster and history will hold them accountable. If we don't want to see the map of Central America covered in a sea of red, eventually lapping at our own borders, we must act now.

With your help and the help of other freedom-loving Americans, we can succeed in turning the tide to democracy in Nicaragua. We must succeed. Nothing less than the security of the United States is at stake.

Thank you all and God bless you for letting me talk to you. (Applause.)

MR. BIALKIN: Mr. President, you have in this room representatives of the entire organized American Jewish community. We asked for this meeting and for the opportunity to meet with you because we wanted to come here and express to you our admiration and our appreciation to you for being what it is you are.

We have so many things to express our thanks to you for. Most recently, as the leader of this country, in so skillfully managing the transition in the government of the Philippines, we think that we, as all Americans, join with you and the leadership of this country in managing to maintain a friend and preserve freedom and democracy. And we want to express that to you as openly and as firmly as we can. (Applause.)

I have a list which I hope you don't think is too long, Mr. President, but we like you an awful lot. So I'm going to say one or two things. I want to say that we know that the freedom of Anatoly Shcharansky, which you advocated for years and which you urged with Mr. Gorbachev, is due to -- primarily, if not exclusively, to the continued efforts of the United States in support of Avital Shcharansky and her movement and the movement of all freedom-loving people. Anatoly Shcharansky is free. We thank you for that. (Applause.)

We want to assure you, however, that we are not summer soldiers and we know that you're not a summer soldier. The fight for human rights, for freedom in the Soviet Union, indeed, for freedom the world over will go on. We'll be there and we know that you will be there leading us and helping us.

I do want to say that we admire your defense of freedom and your condemnation of terrorism. Your eloquent plea for the Contras to support freedom and democracy in Central America, to preserve the ability to maintain a decent and balanced society, to keep Central America in freedom's camp has touched many of us and will find residence in our community.

As the Chairman of the Conference of Presidents, I would lose my job if I said the whole Conference of Presidents speaks as one in supporting you. But I do know from my own experience and my own expression that while there may not be unanimity -- there never is in a democracy and I assure you we're a democracy -- I believe that the overwhelming sympathy and support of the American Jewish community rides with freedom, rides with the defense of those who wish to fight for their freedom and would support you in your interested and objective and principled effort in that end. (Applause.)

We appreciate and support your strong condemnation of terrorism and your support for the right to react to terrorist outrage is appreciated by all of us, as is your principled and moral and sentimental support for the state of Israel.

We know that the fight to repel terror, to defend Israel and to promote peace leads to concern -- and you know that we have a concern -- about further arming Arab countries, even those who call themselves moderate who do not support the peace process. We recognize it's a complicated issue. We do urge that if arms are to be sold they should be sold only under circumstances where you have reasonable assurances and are fairly confident that the recipients of those arms will move in the direction of peace.

The time has come for the abandonment of the rejection of Israel. That is, the Arab countries, including the moderates, stand on a rejectionist platform. We hope that with your effort and with the pressure and enticement that arms may involve, Mr. President, that you can get them to move toward abandoning their rejection of Israel's right to exist and move toward negotiation. (Applause.)

The principal barrier to peace is that rejection. The threat of assassination and terrorism is something we can't stand. Respectfully, we urge that the time has come in the Middle East for emphasis on economic development and on positive measures to live together. If Egypt and Jordan and Israel can develop a joint economic plan, that may bring peace faster than the sale of arms.

Mr. President, I want you to know that you have here in the entire Jewish community the admiration, to a man and a woman, extensively in every aspect of your quest for freedom. You have our love, our appreciation and our support for all that you do. And we're grateful -- (applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much for those very generous words and thank all of you for this warm welcome. And let me just say that with regard to your one sub-point there of -- with regard to arms and to Arabs that are, in that regard, always in our mind -- that is predicated upon our belief that it can further the cause of peace which we're trying to bring about in the Middle East and that we are pledged to the fact that we will never allow Israel to lose its qualitative or quantitative edge by anything we do in that regard. (Applause.)

And you've all been so nice, I can't leave without telling you one little goody. I happen to have a hobby of collecting stories that I understand are told in the communist countries among themselves which reveals the cynicism of their own people. And George Shultz brought me back one from the Soviet Union the other day. It seems they went into the General Secretary and told him there was an elderly lady there at the Kremlin that wouldn't leave without seeing him. And he said, "Well, bring her in." And they did. And he said, "Well, Mother, what is it? What can I do?" She said, "I have one question." She said, "Was communism invented by a politician or a scientist?" And he said, "Well, a politician." She said, "That explains it. A scientist would have tried it on mice first." (Laughter and applause.)

END

2:20 P.M. EST

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East-trained Nicaraguans come home to discontent

By JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK
Special to The Herald

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Luis Salazar, returning from technical study in Moscow, found a drastically different Nicaragua than the country of euphoria and peace that he had left shortly after the 1979 Sandinista revolution. He returned to a Nicaragua of discontent and war.

"I just felt out of place," Salazar said. Like thousands of other Nicaraguans who have returned from overseas training in Cuba, the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, Salazar has had difficulty readjusting to Nicaragua.

Returning students report problems in applying high-tech socialist industrial skills to Third World Nicaragua. One student returned to tropical Nicaragua well-versed in the latest Soviet techniques for manufacturing winter overcoats. Others find that older Nicaraguan workers resent their new zeal, inspired by the work ethic of Eastern Europe.

Hundreds of students were sent home early from Bulgaria recently, after a mini-riot followed Nicaraguan complaints that they had been shoved around like servants, mistaken for the country's dark-skinned and mistreated Gypsy minority.

"There are lots of adaptation problems," Salazar said. Production manager at a state-owned Managua textile firm, Salazar, 27, studied five years at the Ivanova Institute in Moscow, returning to a drastically different Nicaragua in March 1985.

"Everything had changed. Besides, everything I learned in the Soviet Union had to do with high technology. Here, the machinery is obsolete and rundown," he said. He said he has not lost his revolutionary enthusiasm, but concedes: "It's very hard at first."

Salazar is one of thousands of Nicaraguans who have taken technical or professional courses in socialist bloc countries. Several thousand have gone to Cuba. About 1,700 Nicaraguans are studying in the Soviet Union, 350 in East Germany, 300 in Czechoslovakia and a few are scattered in other Communist countries. About 800 Nicaraguans were studying in Bulgaria until the recent exodus from that country.

Nicaraguans trained under the Sandinistas' ambitious program to educate socialist technicians and professionals have begun to return — with mixed

success. Mariano Vargas, 33, has come back from five years studying the sugar industry in Cuba's Camaguey province to be a centrifugal operator in Nicaragua's mammoth state-run, Cuban-built July 19 Victory sugar mill.

"The Cubans are our brothers, disciplined and loving," he said. "They appreciate the role of work in a socialist revolution." Like hundreds of others, Vargas has found his Cuban-acquired discipline and knowledge can cause him problems at home.

In Cuba, for example, when sack manufacture lags behind sugar production, sugar is thrown onto a hygienically covered floor, he says. In Nicaragua, sugar production stops until there are enough sacks to pack it. Sugar processed at Vargas' mill has fallen short almost 100,000 sacks from the expected 300,000 sacks, he said.

A leftist Latin intellectual close to the Sandinista government notes tensions among returning students. Mechanics who study how to repair East German IFA trucks return to Nicaragua to find army IFA drivers using the wrong gears, abusing the brakes and even tanking up with the wrong kinds of fuel.

Older workers with long hands-on experience, he says, resent the younger technicians. Students who return with a strong work ethic find many Nicaraguans simply do not share their ardor, he said.

Some Nicaraguans find themselves in trouble even before they return home.

"They promised one thing and gave us another," griped Oscar, 22, who had studied in Bulgaria. He, like three other youths interviewed, asked that his last name not be used. The students went to Bulgaria in 1983, hopes high, prepared to spend five years to learn advance machine mechanics. The first three months were spent among Nicaraguans, learning Bulgarian. As soon as the Nicaraguans were placed in factory jobs they found out about the Gypsies.

The Gypsies are, like many Nicaraguans, dark-skinned. A racial minority in Bulgaria, a group of about three million, Gypsies face discrimination. So did Nicaraguans, the students said.

"They treated us like slaves," said Pedro, 19, another of the students. They told of doing practice work in Bulgarian factories, handing Bulgarian workers tools — but not receiving either classes or on-the-job-training. They wanted to go home.

Yet, listening to Oscar, Pedro, Francisco, and

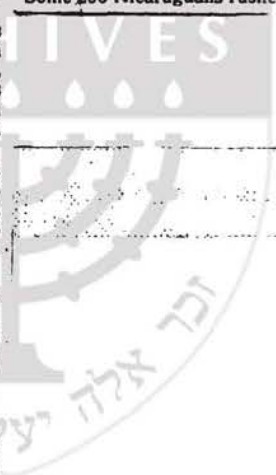
German, one wonders if the Bulgarians gave the Nicaraguans as hard a time as the Nicaraguans gave the Bulgarians.

One evening, a young Nicaraguan went to the Gypsy neighborhood in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, to listen to lively Gypsy music. Thinking he had dollars, toughs robbed and beat him. He stumbled back to his dormitory to tell his Nicaraguan friends. Some 200 Nicaraguans rushed to the neighborhood to

battle the Gypsies. Police showed up in 15 vehicles, and soon the police vehicles were being smashed.

Pedro and Oscar described the event as a mini-insurrection in behalf of Nicaraguan revolutionary dignity. In any other country, it would be a teen-age riot.

As a result, 350 Nicaraguans returned prematurely after about 18 months of a projected five-year program. Five hundred others are to come home soon.



ADDRESS OF AMBASSADOR FERNANDO BENAVIDES,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COSTA RICA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, DELIVERED BEFORE AN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS SESSION ON "CENTRAL AMERICA"
NOV. 1985, MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. I want to thank the American Jewish Committee for this invitation and for the opportunity that is given to me to be able to talk about the situation of Central America and the future of the democracy in this region, vital for the world and for the interests of the West.

2. First, I would like to make a parenthesis to unite my voice to those who today, in many parts of the world, will protest because of the absurd resolution taken by the United Nations ten years ago, comparing zionism with racism. My country, Costa Rica, 10 years ago voted against this resolution and today I reaffirm before all of you this criteria that is shared by all free men, independent of their race or religion. Only the intolerance by a small group of countries and the fear by others, made the United Nations commit such a grave error. The friends of the state of Israel unite today with the ideals of liberty and fraternalism of the jewish people and the jewish communities all over the world, to protest against this resolution.

Central America is not a unity:

3. Now I will talk about Central America: The error is usually made, in the United States as in Europe, of seeing Central America as one, with no differences. The truth is very different. The five countries that integrate Central America - Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica - as well as Panama on the South, each of them has its own historical characteristics, its own differences in social and racial integration, different variations in their economic development, and different appreciation concerning problems like militarism or the real and effective exercise of democracy.

4. The historical experience of Costa Rica is not the same as that of Guatemala, nor el Salvador's is the same as Honduras and much less that of Nicaragua. As an example, Costa Rica is a socially and racially integrated country. Guatemala, on the other hand, which is the biggest country in Central America, isn't. While Costa Rica has 100 years of democratic existence, and each four years the people freely elect their President and the members of Congress, Nicaragua, as another example, suffered 35 years of family dictatorship - first the older General Somoza

.../...

Garcia, and later his two sons, Luis and Anastacio, better known as Tachito - and now a regime equally totalitarian, even though it is of a total different ideology. While Costa Rica definitedly abolished the army in 1948, the other four countries have a long and historically influential military experience. For instance, many people have forgotten, but in 1969, sixteen years ago, Honduras and El Salvador had a war, and these countries haven't even resolved their border differences. With this, I don't mean to say that some countries are better than others. What I do say is that it is not true that Central America is one unity, and this is the first point that I want to make very clear before you.

The Central American Common Market:

5. In 1961, the five countries subscribed the General Economic Integration Treaty and created the Central American Common Market. It consisted in the idea that, isolated, for being geographically small and because of the lack of a big consumer market, the five countries, individually considered, were not economically feasible. An enlarged common market was then created, with no economic frontiers, nor custom barriers, as to strenghten each of the five countries' capacity in function of Central Americas' total market. The idea was excellent and the five countries, between 1961 and 1975, had an economic development never seen before. At the same time, the Central American Common Market created enterprise and commercial bonds which exist even today, in spite of the conflicts of the last five years. So much so, using Costa Rica as an example, that nearly 25% of its exports have as destination, even today, the Central American market.

The sandinista triumph in 1979:

6. All this plan changed radically in 1979. That year the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua was overthrown. A first event that I wqnt to emphasize is that it is not true that the dictatorship tumbled because of a military triumph by the National Liberation Sandinista Front (FSLN). The military triumph was still far away when the dictator Somoza fled Nicaragua. The dictatorship fell because of the international pressure of a group of countries of Latin America, specially Mexicom Panama, Venezuela and Costa Rica, as well as the decision taken by the Carter Administration in the United States, that consisted in taking away all military and political support from the Somoza regime. What was lacking at the moment that Somoza tumbled

was, for these group of democratic countries, to guarantee a future of democracy and liberty for Nicaragua. A resolution adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS), in 1979, was not bonding enough, nor obligatory, and lacked of verification controls to assure the democratic orientation of the new government of Nicaragua. There was ingenuousness and little vision to the future. Meanwhile, Fidel Castro, the cuban comunist regime, secured the unity of the three sandinista sectors, the constitution of a collegiated administration on the top - nine comandantes whom constitute the National Directory, three of each of the original sandinista tendencies - and above all, the exclusion of all the democratic leaders from the higher levels of power in Nicaragua. The National Guard, Somozas' army, surrendered with no guarantees. The comandantes then took Managua. The triumph was apparently of the democracy and of the Organization of American States (OAS). In reality, the maximum victory was that of Fidel Castro and Cuba.

A communist revolution in Central America:

7. As of 1979, the situation in Central America changed radically. The legitimate and justified feeling of opposition to the brutal dictatorship of the Somoza family, shared by the Nicaraguan people and by the international and democratic community, made it unable to be understood, at that moment, that in nicaragua a group of people of marxist-leninist orientation were taking the power, with the purpose of communist revolution towards all of Central America. As Tomas Borge, one of the nine sandinista comandantes said, and I quote, "This revolution goes beyond our borders." The ideology of the sandinista revolution, as well, was equally determined by Humberto Ortega, brother of President Daniel Ortega, and Minister of Defense, who declared in a meeting with army and military officers that: "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our Revolution, the instrument of analysis of our Vanguard for understanding its historic role and for carrying out the Revolution;... Without Sandinismo we cannot be Marxist-Leninists, and Sandinismo without Marxism-Leninism cannot be revolutionary; that is why they are indissolubly linked and that is why our moral force is Sandinismo, our political Force is Sandinismo, and our doctrine is Marxism-Leninism." The revolutionary

internationalism, as a main political purpose of the Sandinista government is clear. As well as its marxist-leninist philosophical fundamentals. Also the facts, from 1979 until this date. It is not, then, a lie of the international press nor a manipulation by Washington.

The military situation in Nicaragua:

8. At the moment that the Somoza dictatorship fell, the National Guard or army of Nicaragua consisted of about 7,500 regular soldiers and 4,000 paramilitary troupes. Today, 6 years later, the regular troupes of the Sandinista Popular Army are of about 70,000 soldiers and nobody knows exactly the number of the paramilitary and other security forces. We also have to take into account the increase of the heavy armament, tanks, fighting helicopters and gunboats in their oceans and rivers. This military structure, the most powerful of Central America, has as professional advisors, as it is said in a 1983 report, more than 400 cubans, nearly 100 soviets, about 50 east germans as well as bulgarians. Today, the number of military advisors of the east block countries has increased. At the same time, in Nicaraguas capital, Managua, PLO offices have been opened, as well as ETA, and other terrorist organizations, to have close links and to be financed by the radical governments of Libia and Iran. All this new situation, as you can easily understand, means a dramatic and dangerous new political and military situation for Central America and also for the United States.

The Contadora Group:

9. Because of the generalization of the regional conflict, as a consequence of the strenghtening of a strong guerrilla activity in El Salvador, - supported by Nicaragua - and conflicts in the border zones of Nicaragua with Honduras and Costa Rica, a group of Latin American democratic countries - Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama - it was constituted in 1983 the Group of Contadora. Its purpose is to mediate in the Central American conflict and to procure a negotiated and political solution about the military conflict and, at the same time, create the conditions than can make possible the process of national reconciliation in the countries that are in a state of civil war - as El Salvador and Nicaragua - as well as the guarantee of democratic and pluralistic governments in the region. The Contadora Group now

has a support group, integrated by Argentina, Brasil, Peru and Uruguay. Besides, United States sustained, in 1983 and 1984, a process of bilateral negotiations with Nicaragua in the port of Manzanillo, in the Golf of Mexico. These last negotiations are today suspended and a renewal in a short term of the bilateral negotiations between United States and Nicaragua doesn't seem possible. As you know, President Reagan succeeded in getting support from the Congress for a program of humanitarian help for the contra groups, that is the anti-sandinista guerrillas, who militarily operate in various regions of Nicaragua and who procure the fall of the sandinista government through a military and political way. In this difficult context, the text of the Act of Peace and Cooperation in Central America, sponsored by the Contadora Group, is being negotiated at the present. However, in a recent speech in the United Nations General Assembly, the 21 of October, the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, conditioned dogmatically, the solution of the Central American conflict and the signature of such Act, to a previous solution of the bilateral differences between the United States and Nicaragua. Without this solution there will not be peace in Central America, said Ortega, who few days before, had suspended the civil and political guarantees in his country, eliminating with this act all possibilities of critic and opposition in Nicaragua, including the right of reunion and also of free exercise of religious activities. The sandinista government, also, has ordered a general military mobilization. You should know that nearly 100 nicaraguan refugees cross the Costa Rican border every day, and this constitutes one of our biggest problems. As a consequence, and even formally the negotiations that the Group of Contadora sponsors would be at their last stage, in the last forty five days of negotiations, the truth is that we are in the lowest point and further away than ever in achieving peace and resolving the Central American conflict. In my opinion, the Contadora negotiations are at a point where they can fail totally. What is left then? What can we hope for in the future? What will happen in Nicaragua? Which are the options?

The three alternatives:

10. As you can understand, the problem is very complex. One solution is politics. To obligate by means of democratic countries, as the Group of Contadora wants to do, that a firm and verifiable compromise is taken in favor of the national reconciliation, the democracy and

the respect for Human Rights. My country, Costa Rica, has supported firmly this alternative. We are prepared to sign and we accept any system of international verification. Besides, if peace is reached, the five Central American countries would have to receive strong international financial support to recuperate their economies and to reach higher levels of economic growth and social well-being. The other solution is a military solution. To attack the problem forwardly, and by the problem I mean the existence of a marxist-leninist regime in Central America. This alternative implies the active military and political participation by the United States in the Central American crisis. In my opinion there is not a military solution without the americans getting involved. But: Is Washington prepared for this alternative? Is Central America prepared? How will Latin American countries react? Which will be the repercussions of this decision in the top negotiations between United States and the Soviet Union? How will Europe react? What will be the public opinion in the United States? Nicaragua is not the island of Granada. Even if strategically and geo-politically the situations can be compared, in the practice a military intervention of the United States and other forces in Nicaragua would have a series of consequences much more profound and dramatic than those of the island of Granada. Some analysts will compare the Nicaraguan situation with that of Dominican Republic. In 1964 the United States, with the support of other forces, militarily intervened this island in the Caribbean, and today, 20 years later, the Dominican Republic is a democratic and politically stable country. It was avoided at that time that the Dominican Republic turned into another Cuba. The question is: Can the sandinista Nicaragua of 1985 be really compared to the Dominican Republic of 1964? Are we or aren't we living in the same world as before? All these are the complex and difficult questions that arise at the moment of thinking about a military alternative. The third option is the worst of all: Leave Nicaragua alone so it will go ahead and get deep into its marxist-leninist revolution. With this alternative we should ask ourselves: Can the Central American democracies coexist with an expansionist and totalitarian regime? My answer is categorically no. The country that would be most affected with the consolidation of the sandinista regime would be Costa Rica. We do not have an army. We practice a policy of total respect for human rights. We have been able, with great difficulties, to overcome a strong economic recession and recently, this year, the Costa Rican economy shows positive signs of a real recuperation. Costa Rica is the oldest and more stable of the democracies in Latin America. For more than 100 years, in my country, every four

years we have totally free elections. For Costa Rica, to coexist with a large frontier in between, with a communist totalitarian government, would be for us as a national catastrophe of unforeseen consequences to the future. The same is the situation of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and even Panama in the South.

The communists have to be stopped in Central America:

11. That is why this difficult and complex time for Central America is vital for us. That is also why our country, even though the Costa Ricans in our majority wish for and back a political and negotiated solution of the crisis, like the one sponsored by the Contadora Group, have to prepare, in the eventuality that this doesn't work, to ask for the support and the solidarity, even military, by the friendly democratic countries. This will be for Costa Rica, no doubt, a difficult decision, but eventually it will have to be taken. The communism has to be stopped somewhere. Cuba was lost. We can not lose Nicaragua, and much less can Central America be lost. We want a democratic, pluralistic and free Central America. We want a Central America where human rights are respected. We don't want Nicaragua to go back to a dictatorship like that of Somoza. We don't want El Salvador to return to a oligarquic and military government. We support democracy in El Salvador and in Honduras. We are happy because in Guatemala, after many years, the people go to a free election and in these days a democratic government is being elected. Neither do we want that a fascist totalitarian dictatorship be changed for a totalitarian and expansionistic dictatorship of the left, as it is happening in Nicaragua. The Central American battle is for freedom and democracy, and there is no democracy without free elections, free press, respect for human rights, national reconciliation and economic and social progress with justice for all.



Dr. Ambassador Fernando Berrocal
Costa Rica

MARCEL RUFF, OF GUATEMALA, PRESIDENT OF
FEDECO

THIS IS THE 4th OCCASION SINCE EARLY 1984 THAT FEDECO MEETS WITH
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.

WE HAD THE PLEASURE OF HAVING YOU WITH US DURING THE BIENNIAL CONVENTION
WHICH TOOK PLACE LAST YEAR IN ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA. IN MAY OF THAT YEAR, OUR
VICE-PRESIDENT, MOISE'S SABBAG, WAS PRESENT AT YOUR 78th ANNUAL MEETING IN
NEW YORK, DURING WHICH HE PRESENTED FEDECO'S ANALYSIS OF THE "CENTRAL
AMERICAN SITUATION AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR JEWISH COMMUNITIES." LATER ON
THAT YEAR WE WERE INVITED BY THE A.J.C.'S MIAMI CHAPTER AT THEIR ANNUAL
MEETING HERE IN MIAMI.

AND TODAY WE ARE HONORED TO BE HERE AGAIN AND THANK YOU, IN THE
NAME OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE COMMUNITIES OF OUR CENTRAL AMERICAN
COUNTRIES AND MYSELF, FOR YOUR INVITATION TO BE WITH YOU.

THE JEWS WHICH ~~FORM~~^{FORM} THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL
AMERICA AND PANAMA ARE TODAY ENGAGED IN A TREMENDOUS STRUGGLE FOR ACTUAL
SURVIVAL, CAUSED BY GREAT FORCES WHICH ARE SHAKING CENTRAL AMERICA, AND
WHICH TO WIT ARE:

POLITICAL: FROM NICARAGUA WE HAVE THE EXPORT OF EXTREME LEFTIST
REVOLUTION, INCLUDING THE PLO.

ECONOMIC: THE GENERAL RECESSION OF LATIN AMERICA, TO FURTHER THE
LOW PRICES OF WORLD MARKETS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHICH ARE CENTRAL
AMERICA'S MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME, HAVE CAUSED HIGH EXTERNAL DEBTS OF
ALL OUR COUNTRIES. THIS HAS LEAD TO DEVALUATION OF MOST OF OUR CURRENCIES,
IMPORT RESTRICTIONS, AND SEVERE FINANCIAL RECESSION IN OUR AREA.

SOCIAL: WE HAVE HAD CONTINUOUS UNREST, LACK OF PERSONAL SECURITY,
VANDALISM, AND KIDNAPPINGS.

FINALLY: FOREIGN SPONSORED ANTI-ZIONISM WHICH CAN EASITY TURN INTO ANTI-SEMITISM. ALSO,

ANTI-ISRAELI PROPAGANDA . . .

PLO AGENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA,

RECENT PALESTINIAN IMIGRANTS

ARAB EFFORTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT. . .

ALL THESE FACTORS HAVE LED TO A CERTAIN EMIGRATION OF JEWISH FAMILIES FROM THE REGION

→ WHAT IS FEDECO?

IT WAS CREATED IN 1963, FILLING IMPORTANT NEEDS: TO UNITE AND SERVE OUR SMALL COMMUNITIES, MAINTAIN COMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL OF US IN THE AREA, REPRESENT OUR COMMUNITIES AS A UNIT IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND WITH INTERNATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS, AND CREATE INTERCHANGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FIELDS, ESPECIALLY AMONG OUR YOUTH.

TODAY, FEDECO'S FURTHER MISSION IS TO ANALYZE AND INTERPRET POLITICAL SITUATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON OUR COUNTRIES AND ON OUR COMMUNITIES.

FEDECO'S MEMBER COUNTRIES ARE, STARTING AT THE NORTHERN TIP OF CENTRAL AMERICA, GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, COSTA RICA AND PANAMA. NICARAGUA HAD SOME 18 OR 20 JEWISH FAMILIES, AND SINCE THE SANDINISTS GOVERNMENT ONLY 2 OR 3 JEWS LIVE HERE.

ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS, SUCH AS RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, YOUTH AND ALIAH . . . THEY ARE MORE EASILY SOLVED BY LARGER COMMUNITIES, SUCH AS PANAMA WITH 5,000 JEWS AND COSTA RICA, WITH 2,500 JEWS. THEN WITH MUCH SMALLER COMMUNITIES SUCH AS HONDURAS WITH 40 FAMILIES DIVIDED BETWEEN TEGUCIGALPA AND SAN PEDRO SULA, AND GUATEMALA, DOW TO 210 FROM 300 FAMILIES A FEW YEARS AGAO AND FINALLY, EL SALVADOR, WITH TODAY 40 FAMILIES FROM THE 130 WHICH LIVED THERE IN 1976.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE VERY GOOD JEWISH SCHOOLS AND YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN TWO OF OUR COUNTRIES THE OUTSIDE INFLUENCE IS MAKING AN EVER-INCREASING IMPACT. THIS HAS RESULTED IN INTERMARRIAGES AND ASSIMILATION.

NAHUM GOLDMAN ONCE SAID THAT "FOR GENERATIONS WE JEWS FOUGHT TO BE LIKE THE OTHERS. . . . TODAY WE HAVE TO FIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT!!"

THEREFORE, OUR PROBLEM TODAY IS NOT ONLY ANTI-SEMITISM BUT ALSO AVOIDING OUR DISAPPEARANCE AS SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES THROUGH ASSIMILATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING, FEDECO CONTINUES IN ITS CONSTANT EFFORTS TO PROVIDE OUR COMMUNITIES WITH YOUTH CAMPS, SEMINARIES AND CULTURAL EVENTS, AND CONSTANT EFFORTS TO KEEP OUR YOUTH'S IDENTITY THROUGH INTER-RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. FEDECO MAINTAINS CONTACT WITH A.J.C. AND THE OTHER IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS.

RETURNING TO CENTRAL AMERICA'S SITUATION, WE CAN SAY THAT IN THE LAST 15 YEARS WE HAVE SEEN A RUPTURE OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS, OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. THIS, OF COURSE, HAS AFFECTED ALL OUR JEWISH COMMUNITIES. ALSO, 5 YEARS AGO, WE SAW THE PENETRATION FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE NEW LEFT MARXISTS IN OPEN FORM - FOR IT EXISTED PREVIOUSLY UNDERCOVER.

THIS PROCESS HAS PERMITTED TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS TO GET A FIRM BASIS IN NICARAGUA. THE PLO FUNCTIONS OPENLY THERE, AND THROUGH NICARAGUAN SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAVE SPREAD INTO EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA. ALSO, THERE HAS BEEN A NEW IMMIGRATION OF PALESTINIANS INTO GUATEMALA IN THE PAST 2 YEARS WHERE THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY TODAY IS LARGER THAN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. HONDURAS HAS ALSO A VERY LARGE PALESTINIAN POPULATION AT PRESENT.

ALL THIS IS A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO OUR JEWISH COMMUNITIES.

WE CAN RECALL THAT DURING FEDECO'S LAST CONVENTION IN JANUARY OF 1984 IN GUATEMALA, THE SITUATION AT THAT TIME IN TWO CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES WAS PRECARIOUS: THEY HAD MILITARY REGIMES, PROBLEMS OF SECURITY, KIDNAPPINGS AND CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY. FURTHERMORE, THERE WAS NO VISIBLE CHANGE IN THE HORIZON. TODAY, 2 YEARS LATER, WE ARE WITNESSING A PROCESS OF A NEW DEMOCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA. EL SALVADOR, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD DEMOCRATIC ELECTION LAST YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE GUERRILLAS STILL HAVE A STRONG Foothold THERE, THE COUNTRY HAS A MORE OR LESS STABLE SITUATION. WE COULD CALL IT A "STABLE INSTABILITY." GUATEMALA HAD ITS ELECTIONS A WEEK AGO TODAY. IT WAS AN UNUSUAL DISPLAY OF CIVICS, WITH 8 CIVILIAN CANDIDATES, IN A COMPLETELY DEMOCRATIC ATMOSPHERE. HONDURAS WILL HAVE ITS ELECTIONS IN TWO WEEKS FROM TODAY. THE CONDITION THERE IS CLEAR AND STABLE, POSSIBLY IN PART DUE TO THE UNITED STATES FORCES STATIONED THERE. ITS MAIN PROBLEM IS THE COMMON BORDER WITH NICARAGUA.

COSTA RICA HAS HAD A LONG HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY AND CONTINUES ALONG THIS ROAD. ~~THEY ALSO HAVE THE PROBLEM OF A COMMON BORDER WITH NICARAGUA.~~ *AMBASSADOR BERNARDI HAS GIVEN YOU A CLEAR PICTURE OF IT.*

PANAMA: ~~THEY HAD~~ HAD ELECTIONS LAST YEAR AND A RECENT CHANGE IN PRESIDENCY. THEY SEE SIGNS OF INSURGENTS MOVING THAT WAY ALSO. WITH THE US AS PARTNERS IN THE Canal, there is a continuity of stability.

HOW ALL THIS AFFECTS JEWS IN THE REGION? . . . IT IS HISTORICALLY TRUE THAT JEWISH COMMUNITIES FARE BETTER IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS.

IN GUATEMALA, THE COMMUNITY HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND GUATEMALA HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXCELLENT. IT IS WITH ~~GRATE~~ ^{WE RECALL THAT} SATISFACTION THAT ^{THIS COUNTRY} ~~BECAUSE OF IT~~ ^{WAS} THE FIRST ONE AFTER THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO VOTE FOR THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN 1948 AT THE UNITED NATIONS. TWO JEWS HAVE HELD MINISTRIES. IN THE PAST ELECTIONS, ONE OF OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS RAN FOR VICE-PRESIDENT AND ONE PROMINENT LEADER OF THE GUATEMALA JEWISH COMMUNITY, HELD AN IMPORTANT POSITION IN THE ELECTRAL COUNCIL ~~DURING THESE ELECTIONS~~.

IN COSTA RICA, JEWS HAVE PARTICIPATED VERY ACTIVELY IN THE COUNTRY'S ^{AS MENTIONED BY AMBASSADOR FERNANDO BERRIOCEL,} POLITICS. ^{THIS COUNTRY} HAS THE GREAT HONOR OF BEING THE FIRST ONE TO HAVE MOVED ITS EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM, BY PRESIDENT ^{LUIS ALBERTO} MONGE, HIS WIFE, THE FIRST LADY OF COSTA RICA, IS JEWISH.

IN SALVADOR, ALTHOUGH QUITE REDUCED IN SIZE AND WORRIED ABOUT ALL THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED BEFORE, THE SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITY HAS KEPT WELL ORGANIZED AND HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THIS COUNTRY ALSO HAS THE HONOR OF HAVING MOVED ITS EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM. THIS WAS DONE BY PRESIDENT MAGANA, LAST YEAR. SALVADOR AND COSTA RICA ARE THE ONLY TWO COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD TODAY WHO HAVE THEIR EMBASSIES IN JERUSALEM. THESE OUTSTANDING GESTURES, COMING FROM TWO VERY SMALL NATIONS IN THIS WORLD, ARE A SIGN OF THEIR PARTICULAR FRIENDSHIP TOWARD ISRAEL, NOTWITHSTANDING THE PRESSURES OF ARAB COUNTRIES. ^{BOTH} ~~EL SALVADOR~~ DESERVES THE SINCERE RECOGNITION OF ALL OF US JEWS.

NOTWITHSTANDING HONDURAS' VERY SMALL JEWISH POPULATION, A JEW HOLDS THE POSITION OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT WITH THE RANK OF MINISTER. THE LACK OF JEWISH EDUCATION AND JEWISH LIFE THERE HAS MADE MOST OF THE YOUTH TO GO ABROAD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, MANY TO ISRAEL.

2 CONSIDERING THAT THE SIZE OF OUR COMMUNITIES IN RELATION WITH THE POPULATION OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND PANAMA IS EQUIVLENT TO 1/10 OF 1%.

1 IN PANAMA, the Community has always had some activity in Politics. THEY HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE COMMUNITY IS STRONG, WELL ORGANIZED, AND HAVE A GOOD JEWISH LIFE.

3 OUR ~~PARTICIPATION POSITION~~ PARTICIPATION IN THE VARIOUS OF OUR REGION IS POSITIVE.

4 TO SUMMARIZE:

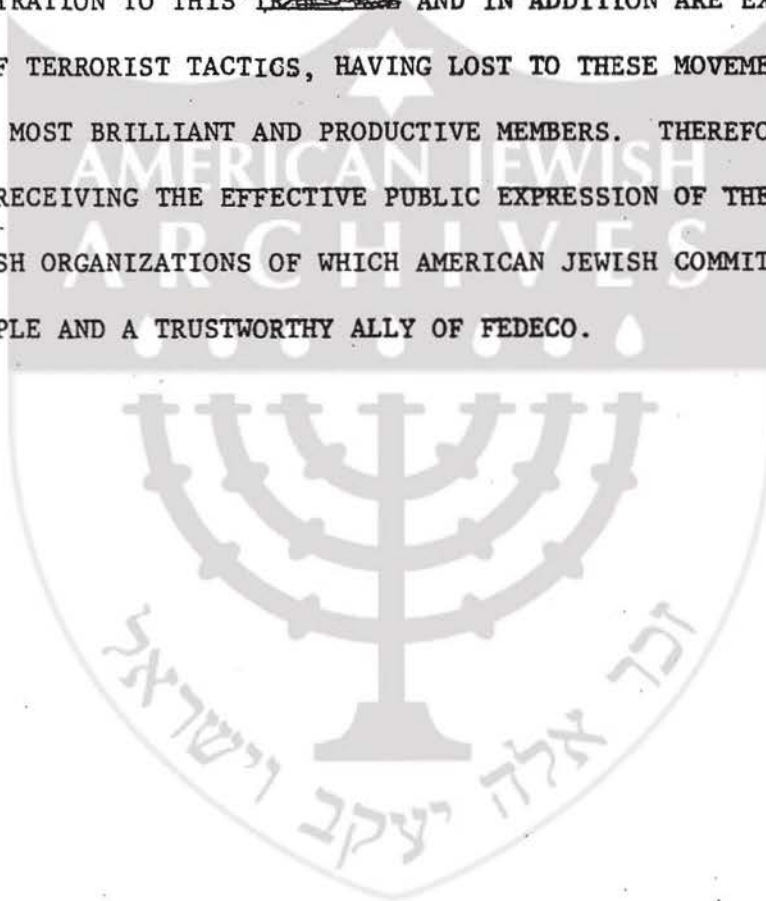
DURING MANY YEARS FEDECO HAS MAINTAINED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH A.J.C., MAINLY THROUGH ITS MEXICO CITY OFFICE.

TODAY, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE COULD MAKE USE OF EXISTING RELATIONS WITH OUR COMMUNITIES TO ESTABLISH FURTHER CONTACTS THROUGHOUT OUR REGION.

THUS, ^{YOU} ~~AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE~~ WOULD OBTAIN A MORE REALISTIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOCIAL PROCESSES WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE IN A VERY SENSITIVE REGION WHICH IS OF CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES. THESE SOCIAL CHANGES CAN LEAD TO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORMULAS WHICH COULD EVEN AFFECT YOUR COUNTRY. IN THIS MANNER, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE COULD HAVE A MORE OBJECTIVE PICTURE, WHICH MAY NOT COINCIDE WITH INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH THE MEDIA, WHICH HAS BEEN OFTEN DISTORTED. THEREFORE, VISITS TO OUR REGION FROM

LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. ~~ALL VISITORS SHOULD BE MOST WELCOME AND WARMLY RECEIVED!~~

AS IS EVIDENT, THE SMALL CENTRAL AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES ARE BY THEMSELVES NOT A "POWER GROUP", NEVERTHELESS THEY WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CREATION OF ISRAEL. THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE MOVED TWO OF THEIR EMBASSIES TO JERUSALEM, THEY HAVE SUFFERED THE BRUNT OF THE MARXIST INFILTRATION TO THIS ^{HEMISPHERE} ~~TRANSFER~~ AND IN ADDITION ARE EXPOSED TO THE DANGERS OF TERRORIST TACTICS, HAVING LOST TO THESE MOVEMENTS SOME OF THEIR MOST BRILLIANT AND PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS. THEREFORE OUR HOPES LIE IN RECEIVING THE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF THE LARGE AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IS A WORTHY EXAMPLE AND A TRUSTWORTHY ALLY OF FEDECO.



PHILLIPS - VAN HEUSEN CORPORATION

1290 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019 / (212) 541-5200

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 3, 1984

Mr. Meshulam Riklis
Rapid American Corporation
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10019

Dear Rick:

I admire your expression of your convictions. I am, therefore, disturbed about the explicit way you have equated anti-Israeli sentiments with anti-semitism.

I know that this is a very important distinction and difference, and as you have been critical of Israel, you should be particularly sensitive to the difference between anti-Israeli and anti-semitic positions.

The most glaring example of this is your accusation that the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua is anti-semitic. This accusation is not only untrue, but very dangerous. I enclose to refute this charge a study just made by a prominent group of Jews who, under the auspices of the New Jewish Agenda, investigated these charges in Nicaragua at great length. I am enclosing a photostatic copy of their conclusions and particularly call your attention to items one and two.

No other group except the ADL has accused Nicaragua of anti-semitism and I think the record should show that while they may have a very justifiable basis for being opposed to Israel's role as a major supplier of arms to Somoza, that this has nothing to do with anti-semitism. Note paragraph one on page 8.

This is no place for a political debate, but I would hope that you would consider other issues at stake in this election beyond those covered in your editorial. Such issues that would warrant the attention of an ethical Jew are Reagan's position on abortion, ERA, separation of Church and State, potential Supreme Court packing during the next four years and reduction of the budget deficit.

See you soon.

Sincerely,



Lawrence S. Phillips

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 E. 56 St., New York, NY 10022

DATE: 10/5

FROM: DAVID A. HARRIS

TO: KENNETH BANDLER
 DAVID GELLER
 GEORGE GRUEN
 ALLAN KAGEDAN
 JACOB KOVADLOFF
 SIDNEY LISKOFISKY
 MARC TANENBAUM

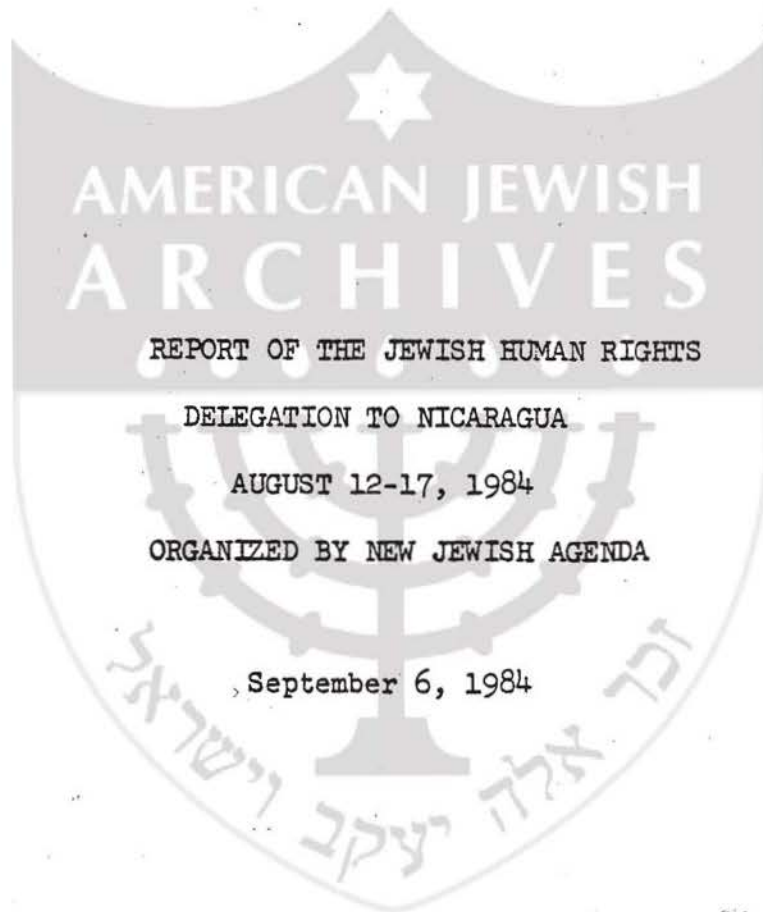
For approval
 For your information.
 Please handle
 Read and return
 Returned as requested
 Please telephone me
 Your comments, please.

REMARKS:



NEW JEWISH AGENDA

149 Church Street, #2N, New York, NY 10007 (212) 227-5885



REPORT OF THE JEWISH HUMAN RIGHTS
DELEGATION TO NICARAGUA
AUGUST 12-17, 1984

BACKGROUND

The principal aim of the Jewish Human Rights Delegation's mission to Nicaragua was to investigate allegations of anti-Semitism on the part of the Sandinista government in Managua. These charges, initially voiced by members of the Nicaraguan Jewish community who have fled to the United States or elsewhere, have been supported by a prominent Jewish organization, The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which has publicized the issue and attempted to act on behalf of a number of expatriate Nicaraguan Jews in seeking redress of their grievances with the Government of Nicaragua. These allegations of Sandinista anti-Semitism have been widely repeated by President Reagan and senior members of his administration and have become one basis of appeal for support of the administration's Central America policy within the American Jewish community.

But not all Jewish organizations or leaders have concurred with the ADL assessment. In fact, most of the Jewish groups and organizations which have independently examined this issue, including representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the World Jewish Congress, have not substantiated these charges. Further, according to press accounts, the U.S. Embassy in Managua could also find no evidence of Sandinista anti-Semitism and clearly reported this to Washington. Yet, as recently as July, 1984, Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, reiterated these charges. It was the goal of the Jewish Human Rights Delegation to intensively and critically examine and if possible, resolve this issue. The group also attempted to investigate the general state of human rights and civil liberties in Nicaragua and assess, to the extent possible, the effect of United States policy upon this situation.

The delegation was organized by New Jewish Agenda, a national organization concerned with human rights, disarmament, and the promulgation of progressive Jewish values. This report represents the views and conclusions of its signatories only and does not reflect the views of New Jewish Agenda. Delegation members, all of whom have been active in human rights efforts and who have strong organizational ties within the Jewish community around the country, include business people, an attorney, writers, and human service workers. Of particular note are Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer (Los Angeles, Buenos Aires) and Hector Timerman (New York). Rabbi Meyer, a renowned human rights activist is vice president of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, California and founding Rector of the Latin American Rabbinical Assembly in Buenos Aires. Rabbi Meyer, who has lived and worked in Latin America for more than twenty-five years is a member of

the President of Argentina's Commission on the Disappeared. Mr. Timerman, a long-time champion of human rights in Latin America is a founder and member of the board of Americas Watch, a prominent human rights organization.

The delegation's itinerary in Nicaragua included meetings with key government officials, representatives of in-country human rights organizations, representatives of opposition groups and parties, members of the press, the United States Ambassador, members of the Nicaraguan Jewish community and others.¹ The delegation was able to meet with knowledgeable individuals representing virtually all sides of the issues under investigation, and to engage in frank, free-wheeling and intensive discussions, exchanges of viewpoint, and debate. We are appreciative of the willingness of all of those with whom we met to take time to answer our questions, provide documentation, and help us to understand their views.

Special mention must be given to a meeting held in Miami prior to our departure for Managua with three expatriate Nicaraguan Jews who now reside in the United States. While not in complete agreement on all matters or details, the three concurred in expressing the belief that the Sandinista government is anti-Semitic, that Nicaraguan Jews had been threatened and coerced, that they and other Jews were treated in a discriminatory harsh manner with regard to issues of detention and confiscation of property. They acknowledge that a handful of Jews remain in Nicaragua. These individuals, they believe, are either conducting business essential to the government and are therefore tolerated, or are in fact assimilated--Jews in name only. Their existence per se, we were told, does not constitute in itself a refutation of the charges. The delegation took careful notes on the specific incidents and events related to us by the expatriates, as well as to their interpretation of events as they affected Jews in Nicaragua. These specific issues and allegations were raised by delegation members during the course of our meetings in Managua and became an important point of focus for our investigation.

1 A complete listing of meetings and activities is appended to this report. Also included is a press statement issued by members of the delegation prior to its departure from Nicaragua.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Charges of official or government-sanctioned or condoned anti-Semitism have clustered into four general areas:

- 1) Expropriation/confiscation - Were laws or procedures governing the expropriation or confiscation of private property applied to Jews in a discriminatory manner?
- 2) The Managua synagogue - What were the circumstances surrounding the confiscation of the synagogue? Was there a campaign of concerted action undertaken against the synagogue? What is its current status?
- 3) Press reports/official communiques - Do written reports in the official or semi-official press or government communiques reflect an attitude of anti-Semitism or evidence an attempt to malign or slander Jews in Nicaragua or elsewhere?
- 4) Israel - Do government of Nicaragua actions vis-a-vis Israel, as compared to its dealings with other nations, suggest a pattern of anti-Semitism? How significant is PLO involvement in Nicaraguan political, economic and military life?

Each of these issues was examined by the delegation and our findings and observations are presented below.

Confiscation/expropriation - The question of whether property was confiscated because of its ownership by Jews, or whether regulations governing confiscation were applied to Jews in a discriminatory manner, lies at the heart of allegations of anti-Semitism on the part of the Sandinistas. Following the overthrow of Somoza, decrees were promulgated which allowed for the confiscation of properties of individuals who could be shown to have close or significant economic ties to the Somoza regime or family. Abandoned property or property of individuals shown to have decapitalized their assets - attempted to transfer economic resources out of country - could also be seized. Individuals could also be prosecuted for other "economic" offenses such as income tax evasion. All areas of confiscation are, in principal, governed by due process and are subject to judicial review and appeal.

Immediately following the Sandinista victory there were many instances of seizures of property, and/or the detention without due process of Nicaraguan citizens suspected of being "Somocistas" - i.e., close allies of the deposed dictator or those who significantly profited from economic ties to his regime. While this did affect members of the Jewish community, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of such actions were directed against non-Jewish citizens. As a judicial infrastructure has begun to develop following the Sandinista victory, these

confiscations are being adjudicated. While most have withstood scrutiny, there have been reversals of seizures judged to have been illegal.

In examining this issue, intensive meetings were held with representatives of the Government of Nicaragua including Dr. Roberto Arguello, President of the Supreme Court, Ms. Alba Luz Ramos, Vice-Minister of Justice, and Mr. Sergio Ramirez, member of the Junta of government. Discussions were also conducted with representatives of both the "permanent" (non-governmental) and government affiliated human rights commissions as well as with opponents of the Sandinista government. At these sessions the delegation raised the issue of confiscation, pressed for specific criteria for seizures and for the designation of an individual as a "Somocista," and searched for any evidence to support charges of anti-Semitism. None were found. No one with whom we met in Nicaragua, supporters or opponents of the FSLN, expressed the opinion or could present evidence which supports the allegation that confiscations were applied in a discriminatory manner against Jews. According to the Vice Minister of Justice, of thirty-six Nicaraguan Jews on whose behalf the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has requested clarification of legal status, criminal charges only two (Abraham Gorn; Laslo Pataky) face for alleged tax violations. Seventeen have had property confiscated by government decree. We were informed that all individuals, with the exception of the two mentioned above are free to come and go in a normal manner in accordance with Nicaraguan law. Mr. Ramirez informed the delegation that the Minister of Justice will reopen and review any case of confiscation raised by any affected individual in the Jewish community to ensure that due process has been observed and that the law has been fairly and properly applied.

Members of the delegation were also troubled by the oft-repeated and widely-held perception that members of the Nicaraguan Jewish community had served as intermediaries in the arms trade between Israel and the Somoza government. We could find no Nicaraguan official or opposition spokesman who could offer proof to substantiate these charges, and were also informed that no formal charges of this nature had been filed against any member of the Jewish community.

The Synagogue - The delegation heard numerous and contradictory accounts of the events which resulted in the closing and confiscation of the Managua synagogue. It seems clear that during the years directly preceding the overthrow of Somoza, the Nicaraguan Jewish community, never large and rapidly declining since the earthquake of 1972, shrunk to fewer than fifty individuals. According to Nicaraguan Jews now living in the United States, sometime during 1978-79 an incident occurred in which a fire bomb or similar incendiary device was hurled against the synagogue. According to these accounts, the congregants in attendance were threatened with physical attack by the assailants - presumably Sandinistas. Most of the people with whom we met

believe that such an attack did in fact occur, although no complaint was lodged at the time with the Permanent Human Rights Commission or other appropriate body. Whether this attack was the work of Sandinista armed fighters (the FSLN has never claimed responsibility for this act), or, as is suggested by supporters of the Sandinistas, was instead attributable to Somoza provocateurs is a matter which we could not satisfactorily resolve. Such an attack can only be deemed an attempt to instill terror within the Jewish community and must, of course, be condemned.

According to persons in a position to know, the synagogue was last used for religious purposes during High Holiday services in 1978. Before that time the synagogue also functioned as a recreational and communal center for the Jewish community.

It is clear that during the insurrection and in the immediate aftermath of the Sandinistas' taking power, the Jewish community in Nicaragua dwindled to perhaps a dozen individuals. What is less clear is the sequence of events relating to the synagogue at that time. According to Nicaraguan Jews living in Miami, the synagogue was left in the hands of a caretaker who was forced out when the Sandinistas confiscated the building. According to accounts pieced together from Jews still living in Nicaragua as well as from Sandinista officials, however, the synagogue had been abandoned by the Jewish community and its caretakers by the time it was taken over by the government and turned over to Sandinista Children's Association (ANS), for its national headquarters. Homeless families which had moved onto the synagogue premises following its abandonment were relocated elsewhere to make way for the Children's Association headquarters.

When the issue of the de facto confiscation of the synagogue was publicly raised by the ADL and others, the Nicaraguan government claimed quite erroneously that the synagogue had been taken as part of the estate of Abraham Gorn, in whose name, the government asserted, it was registered. This issue was investigated by the Nicaraguan Commission for Human Rights, a government-sponsored organization, which found that title to the synagogue was in fact, in the name of the Jewish community and that the confiscation was illegal. For the past year the Government of Nicaragua has offered to turn over the synagogue to any in-country Jewish group. The handful of Nicaraguan Jews remaining the country have stated that they lack the funds to support the synagogue's maintenance and operation. The government offer has thus far not been accepted. In keeping with its stated intention to return the synagogue, the government is

securing new facilities for the ANS, leaving the future of the building in question.¹

In discussions with several government officials, support was generated for consideration of alternative uses for the building. These include its utilization as a Jewish library/cultural center, a site for religious/communal activities for the several hundred non-Nicaraguan Jews currently working in or visiting the country, or as a headquarters for Jewish sponsored humanitarian or development assistance projects. While each of these approaches seems feasible and appropriate, it remains for an organized Jewish group outside of Nicaragua to take the initiative in this regard. We hope that the synagogue building can become once more an independent living Jewish institution, contributing to the life and well being of the Nicaraguan society.

Press Reports/Official communiques - Allegations of a government policy of anti-Semitism have been buttressed by accounts of crude, derogatory, stereotypical references to Jews appearing in official or pro-government newspapers. In our meeting with journalists, government officials and human rights groups, the delegation raised its concern about the occasional appearance in the press of such statements. Some, such as the headline "Jews bomb Beirut," would seem to reflect sloppy journalism rather than malevolence. Others however, such as a reference to supposed Jewish control of world finances appearing in Nuevo Diario cannot be viewed as the product of simple ignorance. While such statements are distressing and must be clearly condemned, the delegation did not find any evidence of frequent negative statements concerning Jews or of a systematic campaign of anti-semitic sentiment appearing in the Nicaraguan press. The country has had, we were told, a history of sensationalistic, yellow journalism. We hope that by raising this issue we have contributed to heightening the journalistic awareness of, and sensitivity to anti-Semitism and that such statements will disappear from print.

Similarly, Sandinista replies to charges of anti-Semitism have only served to add fuel to the fire. This was particularly true of the official assertion that the presence in key government posts of individuals of Jewish ancestry, some of whom are in fact practicing Catholics, is proof that the Sandinistas cannot be anti-Semitic. While such a statement may seem reasonable and innocently self-evident from the perspective of a

1 The delegation's unannounced visit to the synagogue site showed no evidence of anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic or pro-PLO propaganda on the premises. A similar unscheduled visit to the Jewish section of the National Cemetery revealed it to be properly and respectfully maintained.

Nicaraguan society which has never had more than a handful of observant or active Jews, and which identifies those of Jewish ancestry as in some sense "Jews," from the viewpoint of contemporary Jewish life and history, such assertions can seem ridiculously naive, disingenuous or proof positive of a callous, cynical indifference.

The controversy over these remarks apparently took the Sandinistas by surprise. The use of the synagogue building as a center which can present and explain Jewish life, history and values to the Nicaraguan people, can contribute to a process of increased cultural awareness on both sides, which would reduce the likelihood of such faux pas. We should also note that in our conversations with government officials, we did not perceive any evidence of attitudes of anti-Semitism.

While we are convinced that available facts concerning the expropriations, the synagogue, and the press, do not support charges of anti-Semitism, we do not wish this conclusion to detract from the empathy and concern we feel for the Nicaraguan Jews who have fled their country. It is clear to us that these individuals, many of whom are refugees from the Holocaust, did feel frightened and threatened by the violence and disorder which accompanied the toppling of Somoza. It is not our purpose or place to judge whether particular individuals left Nicaragua because of economics, ties to Somoza or fear for their own safety, or whether such fear was reasonable or justified. We would hope however, that those who have left the country would consider taking the Government of Nicaragua at its word--that they are welcome back, that their safety, liberty and rights to due process are protected, and that they will be treated fairly and without prejudice. If Nicaraguan Jews do wish to return, members of this delegation stand ready and are committed to assist them and to carefully monitor and report on their treatment.¹

Israel - Although the focus of the delegation was not on foreign policy per se, questions of Nicaraguan - Israeli relations and of the role of the PLO in the nation's politics were closely examined. Of particular concern were actions taken by the Sandinista government such as the breaking of diplomatic relations or the refusal of the Nicaraguans to honor the Somoza debt (for arms purchases), which appear to treat the state of

1 In this regard, we would note that here are no criminal charges outstanding against any of the three Nicaraguan Jews with whom we met in Miami. One, Kurt Preiss, indicated a readiness to "return to Nicaragua tomorrow" if his tanneries would be returned to him. As noted earlier, the Sandinista government has agreed to reopen and carefully examine any case of confiscation raised by a member of the Jewish community to ensure that laws were properly applied.

Israel in a manner different from that accorded other sovereign nations. In view of the Israeli role as a major supplier of arms to the Somoza regime during its final years, and its current involvement in arms sales in the region, it is not surprising that Nicaraguan relations with Israel would be cool at best. While the genesis of such a policy is thus understandable, the delegation pointedly argued that the severance of diplomatic relations - while maintaining relations with regimes which also supplied its adversaries such as Argentina, or to which the Sandinistas are ideologically opposed, such as Chile - appeared inconsistent, arbitrary and ill-considered and would serve as an ongoing point of dispute within the American Jewish community.

The Nicaraguan leaders with whom we met took care to distinguish between the Government of Israel, whose policies they strongly oppose, and the people of Israel with whom they assert they have no dispute. While they certainly have a history of support for and cooperation with the PLO which maintains an office in Managua, the Sandinistas appear far less concerned with the Middle East than they do with Israeli policies as they affect Central America. In our rather extensive trips throughout Managua, we did not detect signs of any pro-PLO or anti-Israeli propaganda, nor did we observe evidence of significant PLO assistance to the Sandinistas.

At the same time it is important to acknowledge that the thrust of the Nicaraguan foreign policy stance in this area is clearly critical of Israel and in support of the creation of a Palestinian state, even while it asserts Israel's right to an independent, sovereign existence. Mr. Ramirez explained that although it maintains no diplomatic relations with Israel, the Sandinista government does not question its national legitimacy and would welcome "mutual initiatives" which could lead to the improvement of relations. He further suggested that the formation of a labor coalition government in Israel could serve to facilitate such a potential rapprochement. Ramirez clearly noted, however, that in the view of the Nicaraguan government, current Israeli arms sales and training activities in the region pose a substantial obstacle to normalization. The delegation applauds what we see as a positive opening for improving Israeli-Nicaraguan relations, urge both governments to forthrightly pursue such initiatives and to explore ways in which nongovernmental groups - teachers, technicians educators, health workers, artists, attorneys - can engage in mutual assistance visits or programs.

In summary, our investigation fails to support allegations of anti-Semitism on the part of the Sandinista government. Clearly, the Nicaraguan government's initial responses to such charges did not evidence great understanding of the profound significance of this issue to the Jewish people. They now appear far more aware of its importance and desirous of demonstrating a policy of non-discrimination toward Jews. It is our hope and

expectation that our investigation, coupled with earlier examinations of this issue by human rights groups, the U.S. Embassy and other Jewish leaders, will serve to put this controversy to rest. We also believe that our open, vigorous examination of the charges, serves in some measure both as an ongoing means of ensuring continued respect for rights of Jews in Nicaragua and as a mechanism for stemming the potential exploitation of this issue for partisan, intracommunal or political purposes in the United States.

HUMAN RIGHTS/CIVIL LIBERTIES

Although the focus of the delegation's inquiries was upon an examination of the issues underlying allegations of anti-Semitism on the part of the Government of Nicaragua, the group also addressed the general question of the state of human rights and civil liberties within the country. This broader inquiry is both an expression of the traditional Jewish value of concern for the well-being and rights of all humanity, as well as a means for providing a perspective within which the situation of Jews in Nicaragua can be viewed. This section of the report will briefly address our findings in this area. More detailed and in-depth analyses of the current status of human rights in country can be found in documents such as the recent (April 1984) Americas Watch report, Human Rights in Nicaragua (New York, 1984).

In our view, the current condition of human rights and civil liberties in Nicaragua presents a mixed picture. There are many areas of clear advancement which we applaud, but other developments which we find troublesome. We appreciate that Nicaragua today is a rapidly changing and developing society, one which is only recently emerging from decades of brutal dictatorship, exploitation, poverty, and conflict. This process of fundamental political, economic and social rebuilding is occurring at a time when the country is also under military and economic attack, encouraged and in good measure sponsored by the United States. In our view such attacks are ill-conceived and counterproductive to the establishment and strengthening of democratic, pluralistic institutions. We also believe that the attacks raise profound moral questions for us as Jews and as Americans about the U.S. role in the hemisphere.

Several positive developments are particularly worth noting. In an area of the world in which government-sponsored torture, disappearance, and murder are all too commonplace, the government of Nicaragua has abolished the death penalty and made thirty years the maximum sentence for crimes of any sort. While the guarantees of due process have not always been vigorously honored, particularly in the areas of confiscation and detainment, judicial review has overturned many such illegal actions. Further, in approximately three hundred instances, agents of the Sandinista government, ranging from soldiers to officials have been charged with and convicted of crimes or abuses of power; an occurrence truly extraordinary in Central America. The

Sandinista government also appears open to investigation of instances of alleged human rights or civil liberties violations, to admitting responsibility for such abuses, and for correcting such injustices.

In preparation for the elections, press censorship has recently been relaxed for all but security related issues. An opposition press and opposition parties function openly, albeit under duress. A law of political parties, although controversial, does establish clear rules and a mechanism for political participation and access to media. After studying electoral procedures in democracies in Europe and South America a mechanism and procedures for the November 4 election were established. We note, however, that the Nicaragua government and the principle opposition coalition have not agreed on terms for the latter's participation in the elections. They will be under the scrutiny of international observers and the press.

An independent human rights organization, though at times beleaguered, operates openly in Managua, investigating cases of alleged human rights abuses or violations. A government-sponsored human rights commission also freely investigates such issues and has in instances such as the case of the Managua Synagogue, found against the government.

We must also note our areas of primary concern. During the course of our interviews we were informed of instances of coercive practices such as harrassment of opposition political parties and activists, prolonged detainment by security police prior to the filing of formal charges, and to government intolerance of dissent. Sandinista officials accept responsibility for some "mistakes" in this area and point out that democratic institutions are in their infancy in Nicaragua. While we certainly applaud such candid admissions and the rectification of abuses, we must firmly call upon the Sandinista government to uphold its expressed commitment to creating a pluralistic society respectful of basic human rights for all of its citizens. We believe that the activities of visiting delegations such as ours, as well as the ongoing work of Nicaraguan-based human rights groups and international organizations such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch, can play a valuable role in supporting a public climate of concern and respect for civil liberties and human rights.

Many members of the delegation also expressed grave misgivings about the establishment in Nicaragua of a system of "popular tribunals" which exist outside of the authority of the regular judiciary system. In this regard, we would endorse the conclusion of Americas Watch (1984) that this dual system of justice holds within it the potential for serious abuse and urge the government to consider instead, a bolstering of the existing judicial system. In fairness, we should note that in its thorough examination of this issue, Americas Watch has concluded that the tribunals "do not involve a reduction in due process

protections", and that they had not found any case in which the tribunals have been used as a mechanism for political control.

Perhaps the most serious source of delegation members' concern in the area of civil liberties involves what appears from our perspective to be a potentially dangerous lack of separation between the Sandinista party (FSLN) and the government, its resources and institutions. In our view, a truly pluralistic society requires a clear distinction between political parties, which may gain or lose popular support at any given time, and the principal institutions of government such as the army, the courts, and state-owned media. The blurring of such distinctions, even in the face of overwhelming popular support for one party or position, weakens the base of civil liberties in the society and threatens freedom of peaceful dissent and opposition. It is, of course, true that nation-building is not easy, particularly when one is poor and under attack, and cannot build upon a base of democratic institutions. But we fervently urge the Sandinista government to avoid the temptation for expediency, in favor of the more difficult mandate for struggling towards a honest and pluralistic system. In this way, the Sandinista revolution can fulfill its promise and serve as a model for the developing world.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the Jewish Human Rights Delegation to Nicaragua finds that:

- 1) charges of Nicaraguan government anti-Semitism cannot be supported; there simply is no body of credible evidence to suggest that the Sandinista government has pursued or is currently pursuing a policy of discrimination or coercion against Jews, or that Jewish people are not welcome to live and work in Nicaragua;
- 2) charges of anti-Semitism are far too serious an issue to be publicly raised without clear substantiation and should not become used as a partisan political gambit in the United States;
- 3) the state of human rights and civil liberties within Nicaragua is mixed; there are many areas of progress compared to previous conditions in the country and to several other nations in Central America, but there are troublesome areas of concern which require ongoing attention;
- 4) the United States policy of economic, political and military confrontation with Nicaragua raises profound moral questions and is destructive of the very pluralistic and democratic institutions which we purport to desire for Nicaragua.

We would recommend that:

- 1) future examinations of possible anti-Semitism in Nicaragua or elsewhere be pursued by a broadbased fact-finding group comprised of members of the local Jewish community and representatives of various Jewish and human rights organizations
- 2) a wide variety of North American groups including non-governmental delegations visit Nicaragua to promote a positive dialogue between both countries;
- 3) serious consideration be given to utilizing the Managua synagogue building as a center for presenting and preserving Jewish culture, religion and history, for conducting religious services and for implementing programs of humanitarian assistance; we urge American Jewish groups to examine the possibility of providing resource support for this endeavor which would serve as a living demonstration of Jewish values;
- 4) the governments of Israel and Nicaragua pursue mutual initiatives to restore diplomatic relations and examine forms of mutual assistance which can benefit both societies.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to those persons in Nicaragua and the United States who worked diligently to insure the success of the delegation, to those in the Government of Nicaragua and other groups, parties and individuals who spent so much time patiently answering our questions and to New Jewish Agenda for organizing this important project. We are convinced that independent fact-finding groups such as ours can play a valuable role in preserving and enhancing human rights. We remain committed to do our part to ensure that the rights of Jews and all people are preserved and protected and that the facts surrounding such issues are reported as honestly and completely as possible.

Signed: Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer
Rabbi Gerald Serotta
Cynthia Arnson
Alice Blue
David Cohen
Jo Levinson
James M. Statman
Albert Stern
Hector Timerman
Robert T. Weisbrot
Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg

Press Release
Issued August 15, 1984
Managua, Nicaragua

A group of American Jewish human rights activists, participating in a study mission in Nicaragua to explore allegations of anti-Semitism and other policy concerns issues the following statement:

After intensive discussion with leading figures of the Sandinista government, opposition leaders, religious leaders, and local human rights organizations, we believe that there is no policy of anti-Semitism or bias on the part of any official body. Moreover, it was made abundantly clear to us and confirmed by leaders of the Sandinista government that Nicaragua welcomes Jewish participation as well as participation from any group in the reconstruction of a pluralistic society which seeks friendly relations, based on non-interventionism with respect to its neighbors.

Remarking on the experience of Jewish history, the delegates declared: "We Jews who have known so much suffering can readily empathize with the downtrodden of Central America. We make a special plea to our own government to desist from the escalation of violence and to seek out ways of creative dialogue so that a just and lasting democratic way of life can be secure in the nations of Central America, and to spare the lives and suffering of millions of people."

The delegation was sponsored by New Jewish Agenda, an American Jewish group dedicated to the furtherance of human rights.

Signed:

Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer (Los Angeles, Buenos Aires)
Rabbi Gerald Serotta (Washington, DC)
Alice Blue (Kansas City, MO)
David Cohen (Washington, DC)
Jo Levinson (New York City, NY)
Dr. James M. Statman (Washington, DC)
Albert Stern (Cleveland, OH)
Hector Timerman (New York City, NY)
Robert T. Weisbrot (Boston, MA)
Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg (Memphis, TN)

- o Cynthia Arnson* is a foreign policy legislative assistant in the U.S. House of Representatives, specializing in Central American affairs.
- o Alice Blue is a Jewish community youth worker in Kansas City, Missouri, and serves on the Kansas City Jewish Community Relations Bureau.
- o Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer is Vice President of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, California, and founding Rector of the Latin America Rabbinical Assembly in Buenos Aires.
- o Walter Ruby** is a correspondent for the Long Island Jewish World and a contributor to the Jersulem Post and the London Jewish Chronicle.
- o Rabbi Gerald Serotta, a Jewish Chaplain at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., is the founder of New Jewish Agenda and serves on its Steering Committee.
- o Rabbi Francis Barry Silberg** is senior rabbi at Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Chairman of Fellows at the center for the Study of Religion.
- o David Cohen is President of the Professionals Coalition for Nuclear Arms Control and a long time citizen's and human rights activist in Washington, D.C.
- o Jo Levinson is on the board of the National Coalition Against Censorship. She also serves on the governing council of the American Jewish Congress and on the Domestic Affairs Committee of the Synagogue Council of America.
- o Dr. James M. Statman is a psychologist and Executive Vice President of Aurora Associates, Inc. in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Central America Task Force of New Jewish Agenda.
- o Albert Stern is a businessman in Cleveland, Ohio, and is Chair of the Advisory Board of New Jewish Agenda.
- o Hector Timerman is a founder and member of the Board of America's Watch, a human rights organization.

* did not sign the August 15 press release.

** did not sign the press release or the final report.

- o Robert T. Weisbrot is Assistant Professor of History at Colby College in Waterville, Maine and author of The Jews of Argentina.
- o Jocelyn Dan Wurzberg is an attorney in practice in Memphis, Tennessee and serves on the Executive Committee of the Social Action Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.



JEWISH HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION TO NICARAGUA
SPONSORED BY NEW JEWISH AGENDA
AUGUST 12-17, 1984

Sunday, August 12

- 12:30 p.m. Meeting with three members of expatriate Nicaraguan-Jewish community, F. Luft, I. Gorn, K. Preiss, at Miami airport.
- 8:30 p.m. Dr. Gustavo Parajon, Joan Parajon, Evangelical Committee for Aid and Development (CEPAD)

Monday, August 13

- 8:00 a.m. Patricia Hynds, Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Coordinator for the Central America Historical Institute, a Jesuit documentation and research center.
- 10:00 a.m. Mr. Daniel Bonilla, Director of COSEP, the Superior Council for Private Enterprise, also President of the Coordinadora Democratica, a coalition of nine opposition organizations, political parties and unions.
- 11:30 a.m. Adan Fletes, Member of the Executive Council for the Social Christian Party, (PSC) and Vice-Presidential candidate with Arturo Cruz of the Coordinadora Democratica, which did not register for the elections.
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch meeting with Mateo Guerrero, Executive Staff-member and Augustin Fuentes, Nicaraguan Commission for Human Rights.
- 2:30 p.m. Michelle Najlis, writers' union of the ASTC, Sandinista Association for Cultural Workers.
- 4:30 p.m. Reverend Norman Bent, Moravian Pastor and Meskito, to speak on the Meskito Indian situation and Atlantic Coast.
- 6:00 p.m. Xabier Gorostiaga, Jesuit priest, Director of INIES, Institute for Economic and Social Research for the Central American Region.

Tuesday, August 14

- 8:00 a.m. Dr. Roberto Arguello, President of the Supreme Court.
- 11:00 a.m. Vice-Minister of Justice, Alba Luz Ramos.
- 2:00 p.m. Military briefing by First Lieutenant Luis Angel Martinez.

- 3:30 p.m. Visit to the former Synagogue, now a center for the ANS, Sandinista Childrens' Association, and to the Jewish section of the National Cemetary.
- 7:00 p.m. Meeting with Herty Lewites, Minister of Tourism.
- 8:30 p.m. Dinner with Mateo Guerrero, Executive Staff and Sister Mary Hartman, Director of the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission.

Wednesday, August 15

- 8:00 a.m. Marta Patricia Baltodano, Lawyer and Director of the non-governmental Permanent Human Rights Commission.
- 10:00 a.m. Dr. Roberto Cardenal, Assistant Editor of La Prensa, opposition newspaper.
- 2:00 p.m. Meeting with Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nora Astorga.
- 3:30 p.m. Meeting with U.S. Ambassador Harry E. Bergold, Jr., Michael Joyce, Political Counselor, Gil Callaway, Cultural Attache, U.S. Embassy.
- 7:00 p.m. Meeting with Sergio Ramirez, member of the Governing Junta and the FSLN's candidate for Vice President, Alejandro Martinez, Minister of Foreign Commerce, Herty Lewites, Minister of Tourism and Nora Astorga, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Thursday, August 16

- 8:00 a.m. Visit to Barrio Ciudad Sandino accompanied by Celine Woznica, Maryknoll Lay Missioner.
- 10:00 a.m. Meeting with Dr. Mariano Fiallos, President of the Supreme Electoral Council.
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch meeting with Milu Vargas, Legal Advisor to the Council of State, and three other members of the Council, representing the Journalists Association, Woman's Organization and an opposition political party.
- 2:00 p.m. Trip to the countryside to visit an agricultural cooperative.

During the week, unscheduled meetings were also held with American Jews residing in Nicaragua, members of the Nicaraguan Jewish community and others.



NEW JEWISH AGENDA

149 Church Street, #2N, New York, NY 10007 (212) 227-5885

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 1984
New York

Contact: Marshall Meyer
(213) 271-3520 (h)
(213) 476-9777 (w)
879-4114
Gerald Serrota
(202) 667-5543 (h)
(202) 296-8873 (w)
Reena Bernards
(212) 227-5885 (w)

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP HITS REAGAN ANTI-SEMITISM CHARGES

An internationally-known human rights activist today charged that the Reagan administration has abused charges of anti-semitism in its accusations against the government of Nicaragua. Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer made his charges as part of a report released today by a Jewish human rights delegation to Nicaragua. Meyer, the Vice-President of Los Angeles' University of Judaism was a human rights activist for over twenty-five years in Argentina. On September 4th, Meyer received a Bnai B'rith award at their national convention for his work in Argentina. The mission to Nicaragua, sponsored by New Jewish Agenda, included members of three national Jewish organizations, rabbis and businesspeople.

Mission participants concluded from their investigation that the charges of anti-semitism could not be supported by any body of evidence. This even includes extensive interviews with opposition politicians and human rights groups in Nicaragua. "We found the charges to be a political ploy probably utilized to win over American Jews to a policy which has been extraordinarily detrimental to the great majority of the Central American people," stated Meyer.

The report concluded that the primary moral concern in Central America is not anti-semitism, but present United States policy. Meyer called the Reagan admini-

--more--

stration's policy in Central America, "both dangerous and inimical to the interests of democracy in the world, and a basically treacherous act against the principles of American democracy and those principles that most Americans hold so dear, because they are the principles upon which this country was built."

Mission delegates recommended that Managua's former synagogue, now a children's center be made a center for preserving and presenting Jewish culture, religion, and history. In addition, they recommended that Israel and Nicaragua pursue a restoration of diplomatic relations and examine forms of mutual assistance.

The group raised this issue in a number of their meetings with Nicaraguan officials.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

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May/June 1985
 Vol. X, No. 3
 ISSN: 0738-601X



U.S.-Nicaraguan Controversy Intensifies

The U.S. House of Representatives dealt President Reagan a serious blow when, on April 24, it defeated all legislative attempts to provide any form of aid to the contras fighting against the Nicaraguan government.

On the previous day, the House had rejected the President's request for the release of \$14 million in direct military aid to the contras (by 68 votes, the greatest margin to date). The Senate approved the same measure by only 7 votes, the lowest margin of approval for contra aid in that chamber.

Prior to the vote, President Reagan sent a letter to the Republican leaders of the House and the Senate in an effort to persuade Congress to back his policy of strong support for the contras. In the letter, the President backed down from his original demands; most significantly, he dropped his request for direct military aid. Instead, he agreed to spend the \$14 million on "food, medicine, clothing and other assistance for their [the contra's] survival and well-being." Other concessions to Congressional criticism included the resumption of bilateral talks between the United States and Nicaragua, a pledge to press both the Nicaraguan government and the contras for a cease-fire and the favorable consideration of a plan to impose economic sanctions on Nicaragua after consulting other Central American countries.

On April 24, following its defeat of the request for military aid, the

House considered two amendments to provide the contras with military assistance. A bipartisan Barnes/Hamilton amendment would have given \$10 million for refugees of the Central America war and \$4 million for the Contadora Peace Process. The Republican amendment, proposed by House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-IL), would have given the contras \$14 million directly, but restricted its use to "humanitarian assistance." The authorization of "humanitarian assistance" would (in the eyes of many legislators) provide the contras with logistical supplies and free up funds which could then be used to purchase arms.

In the voting on the House floor, the Barnes/Hamilton amendment was accepted by a margin of 13 votes and the Michel initiative was defeated by only two votes. Then, in the vote for final passage, liberal Democrats, who did not want *any* aid approved, joined with conservative Republicans, who wanted *direct* aid to the contras, and voted down the measure by 180 votes. Members of Congress, including moderate Republicans and conservative southern Democrats, who had agreed to vote against direct military aid provided that they had something "positive" (i.e., the Barnes/Hamilton amendment), to vote for on the following day, were furious with the results.

One day after the vote, when the U.S. press announced Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's imminent visit to Moscow to seek economic

In This Issue:

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- Democracy Honduran Style
- Electoral Shift to the Left in Peru Shakes Up Washington
- Chile Resolution Caught In Partisan Crossfire
- WOLA Roundup
- Newsbriefs: Bolivia, Congress, Costa Rica, State Department

The Contadora countries criticized the economic maneuver and claimed that it fundamentally undermined the efforts of the Contadora process to promote dialogue among disputing American nations and non-intervention in the Central American region.

aid, many Representatives and Senators declared that if they had had prior knowledge of the trip, they would have voted for the President's original request of \$14 million in military aid.

On May 1, President Reagan imposed a trade embargo on Nicaragua, in what many interpret as a move directed more at the U.S. Congress than at Nicaragua. The embargo covers all goods imported into or exported from the United States and prohibits all Nicaraguan ships and planes from using United States facilities.

European allies strongly objected to the embargo, which the President announced during his trip to Europe for the annual economic summit. Latin American countries, except for El Salvador and Honduras, agreed with the European nations that such a move was likely to push Nicaragua further into the Soviet sphere. The Contadora countries criticized the economic maneuver and claimed that it fundamentally undermined the efforts of the Contadora process to promote dialogue among disputing American nations and non-intervention in the Central American region.

Many U.S. citizens who have visited Nicaragua or who do not approve of the Administration's Central America policy characterized the embargo as another illegal and immoral attempt by President Reagan to force the Nicaraguan government to "cry uncle." Over 62,000 U.S. citizens have signed the "Pledge of Resistance," by which they have promised to actively oppose any ser-

ious U.S. military escalation in Central America with either civil disobedience or other types of protest. On May 7, over 1,600 U.S. citizens were arrested nationwide while protesting the embargo.

It is now almost certain that there will be more votes on contra aid in both the Senate and the House in the coming weeks. In the Senate, these votes could occur during debate on the Defense Department Authorization Bill the week of May 20, or in early June when the Senate is expected to consider a supplemental appropriations bill for aid to Egypt and Israel for the coming year. Amendments giving some form of direct aid to the contras could be

Latin American countries . . . agreed with the European nations that such a move was likely to push Nicaragua further into the Soviet sphere.

attached to either piece of legislation and probably would be approved by a small margin of votes.

In the House, the Appropriations Committee will be voting on the FY85 supplemental appropriations for the Middle East in the week of May 20, at which time an amendment, sponsored by Representative McCurdy (D-OK), to provide direct humanitarian aid to the contras may be offered. The McCurdy bill is not acceptable to the Democratic leadership and is likely to be voted down in committee. Whether or not the amend-

ment is accepted by the committee, the issue will surely be debated and voted upon during House consideration of the supplemental bill in early June. The House's Foreign Aid Bill, also slated for debate in June, is another legislative vehicle to which aid for the contras may be added.

A positive vote in the Senate for the President's policy would be insignificant if the House does not vote for any direct military aid to the contras. If Congress were to vote on aid to the rebels before the end of May, it is likely to approve some of the President's resurrected \$14 million. A vote on the floor, however, is unlikely to take place until June, because Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill (D-MA), strongly supports efforts to delay the vote.

The current favorable situation for the Administration might change by the time a vote comes to the floor. Ortega's visits to Spain, France, Italy, Finland and Sweden are already starting to dissipate the negative effect of Ortega's visit to Moscow. In addition, the Administration has been criticized worldwide for the embargo. Furthermore, the Nicaraguan government has reached a partial agreement with the Misurasata leader, Brooklyn Rivera, while the Administration's favorite democratic Nicaraguan, Arturo Cruz, has come out against the embargo. (He also recently admitted to accepting CIA money via a private agency.) All things considered, by June, the Congress might fund some form of "humanitarian" assistance to the contras, while also calling for a resumption of bilateral U.S.-Nicaraguan talks. ■

Democracy Honduran Style

The present conflict among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the Honduran government threatens to disrupt Honduras' first transition from one constitutional government to another. Undemocratic procedures now plague the democratic experiment which started in November 1981. President Roberto Suazo Cordova's manipulations of the electoral law and his desires to remain as the leader of the Liberal Party have exacerbated the conflict.

The National Electoral Tribunal (*TNE*), which is empowered to change laws and rule on internal party disputes, is a key actor in the conflict. One representative of each of the four recognized political parties, and one representative of the Supreme Court, appointed by the party in power, sit on the *TNE*. The National Party representative to the *TNE* currently belongs to a faction of the party which is loyal to Suazo. The Liberal Party representative and the *TNE* delegate from the Supreme Court are also Suazo loyalists, so, in practice, Suazo can count on a majority of the five votes in the *TNE*.

The Honduran Constitution prohibits President Roberto Suazo Cordova from succeeding himself. Suazo, nonetheless is determined to ensure that his choice for successor, Oscar Mejia Arellano, wins the Liberal Party's presidential nomination for the upcoming November 24 elections. Other factions within the Liberal Party want Suazo's successor to be elected by the direct popular vote of all party members.

Efrain Bu Giron, President of the Honduran Congress and self-declared Liberal Party candidate, recognizing the power wielded by the Supreme Court delegate on the

TNE, formed a legislative commission to investigate corruption charges against Suazo's loyalist judges. The commission found the judges, one of whom is the Court's delegate, guilty on fourteen counts. In what President Suazo later called a "technical coup," Bu Giron rallied the forces of the Honduran Congress to fire the Supreme Court's President and its four magistrates and replace them with judges who were not allied with Suazo.

At stake are both the upcoming elections and the political stability of the country.

In his counterattack, Suazo charged the new Court members with "high treason," ordered the imprisonment of the new Supreme Court President, Ramon Valladares Soto, and the capture of the other four magistrates. The Honduran Bar Association has charged that Soto's present jailing is illegal under the law and has called for the halting of persecution against the magistrates who remain in hiding. (The Honduran Constitution allows for the removal of Supreme Court judges only in cases of death, resignation or criminal activity.) Suazo charges that the magistrates have been dismissed without sufficient proof, and therefore, that the Constitution empowers him to keep order and integrity in the country.

Reactions to the March crisis sprang from all sectors. The Armed Forces rejected carrying out a coup, and its chief, Gen. Walter Lopez Reyes, affirmed his support

and subordination to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Suazo Cordova. Peasant, labor, church, private organizations and all political parties, including the Liberal Party factions which do not support Suazo, proposed a negotiated solution to the Supreme Court problem and an electoral law that requires each party to allow direct election of its own presidential, vice-presidential, deputy and mayoral candidates. After numerous hours of talks between the parties in conflict, mediated by the leaders of peasant and labor organizations and the church, a resolution has yet to be reached. The sensitive issue remains Suazo's opposition to internal party elections and to the new restructuring of the Supreme Court.

If, as one major Honduran daily commented, "elections are the essence of democracy, and primary elections the essence of the electoral system," Honduras' three-and-a-half year old government is far from that reality. (*El Tiempo*, 4/17/85.)

At stake are both the upcoming elections and the political stability of the country. The consequences of this crisis overshadow the Honduran political landscape. Suazo could impose a state of siege, dissolve the Congress or circumvent the Constitution and hold power for two more years. The Armed Forces could stage a coup to "safeguard order and the constitutional process." The peasant and labor unions could call for a general strike, an action currently under consideration. Whatever the outcome of Honduras' current political crisis, it is certain to shake the foundations of that nation's nascent democracy for years to come. ■

Electoral Shift to the Left in Peru Shakes Up Washington

Various signals emanating from Washington suggest discomfort within the Reagan administration with the results of the first round of Peru's general elections, held on April 14, which gave over 70% of the popular vote to liberal and leftist parties there. Two days after the election, the anticipated winner of the presidential race, Alan Garcia, of the social-democratic American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), criticized the United States for its policy toward Central America and lack of a policy toward South America. Both Garcia's election and his recent remarks apparently surprised Reagan administration officials, who viewed both events with some apprehension.

According to the Peruvian Constitution, APRA's Garcia, who received 48% of the vote, will have to face the candidate of the United Left, Alfonso Barrantes, who won 23% of the votes, in a run off election, since the former did not surpass the 50% of the total votes required to become President. The leading parties obliterated President Belaunde's Popular Action (AP) party, which received 6% of the votes, and dominated a right-wing coalition of parties (CODE), which garnered 11%.

In his first comments to the press, Garcia called on all Peruvians "to convene for a national effort . . . so that this great cause, called Peru, can continue along its road, giving priority to the urgent needs of the poor, saving the peasants, returning to the worker and his family the dignity they should have in a democracy, which truly means nourishment, health and employment." (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 4/15/85.)

In the press conference in which he criticized U.S. policy toward Latin America, Garcia added that the Rea-

gan administration must understand that the Soviets have not always been the cause of Latin America's social demands. Regarding Peru's \$13.5 billion foreign debt, Garcia proposed bypassing the International Monetary Fund and negotiating repayment terms directly with the lenders or re-negotiating as a block of Latin American countries.

Support for Peru's counterinsurgency program against the terrorist Shining Path organization is clearly part of the Reagan administration's plan. Whether the Administration will pressure Garcia to change the violent tactics currently being employed by Peru's military remains to be seen.

Reagan administration officials reportedly were disturbed by Garcia's remarks, with some White House policymakers going so far as to suggest cutting U.S. aid to Peru. These policymakers and their advisors fear that the Soviet Union, which sells military hardware to Peru and has 150 military advisors stationed there, will gain a larger foothold on the continent during Garcia's term and would benefit even more if the United Left's candidate is elected president in Peru's next round of general elections in 1990. Even conservative politicians in Lima scoff at such a picture of Soviet influence in Peru.

The Reagan administration clearly wants to gain influence with the new government and to wean Peru's military away from Soviet suppliers. The Administra-

tion is asking Congress to provide \$45 million in direct economic aid (ESF) for Peru next year (FY86), as well as \$18.5 million in military aid grants (MAP), on top of nearly \$10 million in military aid loans normally made available annually to Peru. The rationale for the aid includes building a military "supply relationship with the US which will place the focus on critical internal threats." (*Congressional Presentation for FY1986, Security Assistance Requests.*)

Support for Peru's counterinsurgency program against the terrorist Shining Path organization is clearly part of the Reagan administration's plan. Whether the Administration will pressure Garcia to change the violent tactics currently being employed by Peru's military remains to be seen. Alan Garcia has thus far given no indications that he will reorient the brutal program of Peru's security forces, a program which essentially involves the physical liquidation of all presumed subversives.

Efforts to make Peru reform its deplorable human rights practices led the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to cut the \$18.5 million military aid grant from the President's FY86 request. The committee also required the President to report on any steps Peru has taken to end the killings, torture and disappearances, to strengthen the judiciary, to comply with its own detention procedures and to account for the disappeared. The House has yet to approve its version of the foreign aid bill, which contains the above legislation, and the Senate bill contains no such language, making the passage of these restrictions into law an uphill battle. □

Chile Resolution Caught in Partisan Crossfire

Since Langhorne Motley, outgoing Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, made a visit in February to Chile, the U.S. government appears increasingly reluctant to speak out on Pinochet's intransigence and on the deteriorating human rights situation in Chile. The U.S. State Department, for example, did not comment directly on the political assassinations perpetuated by the Chilean security forces the last weekend in March. (See *Update*, Mar./Apr., 1985.)

In the legislative branch, on April 22, 148 House Republicans and 58 Democrats defeated a move to suspend the rules allowing for approval of House Concurrent Resolution 52, which called for the restoration of democracy in Chile. The resolution was a non-binding, sense-of-the-Congress resolution which advocated the termination of joint military exercises between the United States and Chile, the retention of U.S. economic and military sanctions and U.S. opposition to multilateral loans to Chile.

The Reagan administration had mobilized Republican opposition against the resolution, and ultimately, the resolution was caught in the crossfire of bipartisan bickering over the controversial seating of a Democrat as the Representative of Indiana's 8th District. Republicans, such as Representative Robert Lagomarsino (R-FL), who previously were supportive of the resolution at the committee level, balked and refused to suspend the House rules to register their support for the restoration of democracy in Chile. Representative Toby Roth (R-WI) led the opposition. Two members who sit on the House Armed Services Committee, Samuel Stratton (D-NY) and Sonny Mont-

gomery (D-MI), concurred with him that the weakening of military ties with Chile was not desirable.

Chilean government and military officials read the U.S. Congress' failure to pass the resolution as an expression of sympathy with the Chilean government and a sign that Chile's image abroad is improving.

The reluctance of some U.S. government officials to sever military ties with Chile may be linked to a U.S. National Aeronautics and

Chilean government and military officials read the U.S. Congress' failure to pass the resolution as an expression of sympathy with the Chilean government and a sign that Chile's image abroad is improving.

Space Administration (NASA) request that the Chilean government authorize the United States to use Chile's Easter Island for emergency landings of the Columbia space shuttles. The proposal includes U.S. financing of the extension and reconstruction of Mataberi, the island's airport. The airstrip would be expanded from 2,900 meters to 3,350 meters and the U.S. would provide equipment, such as boats and helicopters to Chile. The cost to the United States, according to Chilean air force operations director, Gen. Ramon Vega, would be from \$18 million to \$20 million to extend Easter Island's existing runway. If Chile accepts, construction will move ahead rapidly so that the 1986 space shuttle flights could make use of the new airfields. (*Foreign Broadcast Infor-*

mation Service, 5/1/85.) Chilean Defense Minister Patricio Carvajal has endorsed the proposal and denied that it would transform Easter Island into a U.S. base.

Human rights in Chile continue to decline. On May 6, Pinochet again extended the state of siege. Kidnappings by armed individuals in secret-police fashion have occurred with increasing frequency, despite the stage of siege. The responsibility for these killings falls clearly on the government of Pinochet, who has boasted, "Not a leaf moves in my country without my knowledge." (*SIC*, 4/30/85.)

On April 9, unidentified armed individuals shot and killed Oscar Fuentes Hernandez, a student, and kidnapped eight other youths. Then, on April 11, following the funeral ceremony for Oscar Fuentes, Carabineros (armed police) detained 17 of the students involved in the mourning. (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 4/16/85.) Also on April 9, armed men raided the Construction Workers Union (CTC), and beat up eight union leaders. Masked individuals returned and kidnapped two CTC leaders, Jose Figueroa Jorquera and Manuel Bustamante Garcia. The same day, individuals attempted to kidnap a twenty-one year old student who is a member of the Chile Human Rights Commission. (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 4/10/85.)

The police continue to arrest and to hold people without due process. On April 26, for example, Carabineros arrested 264 people who were attending a political-cultural event in celebration of the fifty-second anniversary of the Socialist Party. By April 30, the government released all but twelve, who were relegated to internal exile. ■

NEWSBRIEFS

Bits of Bolivia

In December 1984, mounting political anarchy, illegal drug trafficking and a deepening economic crisis provoked an "episcopate coup," whereby the Roman Catholic Church called together the major political parties and persuaded Bolivian President Hernan Siles Zuazo to advance the timetable of presidential, congressional and local elections by one year. The elections are currently scheduled for July 14, 1985.

The National Revolutionary Left Movement (MNRI) of President Siles is unlikely to score well in these elections, after presiding over the worst economic crisis in decades. Inflation in Bolivia for 1984 surpassed 2,000 percent.

Within Bolivia's severe economic crisis, coca leaf production and coca-paste processing has become one of the few viable options for Bolivian peasants in the Chapare and Yungas regions and its increase has attracted the wrath of the U.S. Congress. Senator Hawkins (R-FL) has repeatedly singled out Bolivia for its failure to control coca production. (See *Washington in Focus*, 3/29/85.)

In early April, Representative Michael Barnes (D-MD) shaped a compromise amendment to the Foreign Aid Bill which, rather than completely severing aid to Bolivia, conditioned the first 25% of the Economic Support Funds (which would total \$10 million for fiscal year 1986), on a Presidential certification that the Bolivian government "has enacted legislation which prohibits more than two hectares of coca production per family." The remaining 75% of the FY86 allotment would be provided only after Bolivia achieves the eradication targets set by the 1983 narcotics control agreement with the United States. The amendment similarly restricts the

allocation of funds for FY87. The Reagan administration has opposed any such cutoff.

While this debate was underway, the Bolivian Army Commander announced on April 5 that Bolivia and the United States would conduct joint military maneuvers, BOL-USA II, in Cochabamba from April 29 until April 8. The United States would provide transport planes, helicopters and other equipment. The exercises would be carried out in the coca-growing regions of the Chapare and the Valle Alto and include civil-defense strategies.

The announcement provoked a strong reaction within Bolivia, especially from the National Congress and the National Workers' Confederation (COB), as well as from U.S. missionaries living in Cochabamba, and caused the Bolivian President to reject the joint exercises. The Bolivian Defense Minister and the military opposed the rejection, as did the party of one of the leading presidential contenders, Hugo Banzer. (Banzer, the preferred candidate of the United States, was invited to participate in the Republican National Convention in Dallas.) The reaction of the U.S. Embassy suggested its willingness to wait out the next few months. U.S. Ambassador Edwin Corr commented, "For now it is impossible for the North American Army to carry out joint maneuvers with Bolivia; in any case we should wait for the criteria of the next government, which will take office in August." (*Aqui*, 5/3/85.) ■

U.S. Tests Costa Rica's Neutrality

In 1949, Costa Rica constitutionally abolished its army. In November 1983, Costa Rica proclaimed continued neutrality in

regional military conflicts. The growing U.S. military presence in the country, however, is severely testing these actions.

In April, the first shipment of 4,000 M-16 rifles arrived in San Jose. (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 4/17/85.) In early May, newspapers reported that U.S. military advisors will soon begin training Costa Rica's national police force. Twenty-four U.S. Army Special Forces advisors will train four companies, numbering approximately 750 men, of the Costa Rican civil guard. Their training will include instruction in the use of M-16 rifles, M-60 machine guns, 50-caliber machine guns, 81mm mortars, 90mm recoilless rifles and M-203 grenade launchers.

In 1981, Costa Rica began receiving U.S. military aid for the first time in over a dozen years. Under the Reagan administration, the United States has granted Costa Rica more than \$22 million in U.S. military aid.

In March, Costa Rica's Public Security Minister, Benjamin Piza, sent 45 police personnel for training at the regional military training center in Honduras. That same month, the Interior Ministry announced that 100 Costa Rican rural guardsmen would receive training from U.S. experts in counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, firearms use and first aid. U.S. instructors will train both in Costa Rica and in the United States.

In February, the U.S.S. Iowa, armed with 32 nuclear-capable Tomahawk cruise missiles, made a "goodwill" visit to Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. In granting permission for the visit, the Costa Rican Congress inadvertently may have placed Costa Rica in violation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which restricts nuclear material transport in the Caribbean. ■

NEWSBRIEFS

Shifts at the U.S. State Department

On May 1, the State Department announced that Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, would replace soon-to-be-departing Langhorne Motley as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Congressional observers state that Abrams' presence will make little difference on policy. "In fact," one staffer commented, "some people around here [Capitol Hill] say the State Department doesn't even have a role in . . . [the formulation of] . . . policy" in Central America.

In fact, the person generally re-

garded as the mastermind of the Grenada invasion and the architect of at least the military component of U.S. Central America policy is Major Oliver North. On loan from the Pentagon, North serves on the National Security Council's (NSC) Office of the Deputy Assistant for Coordination, where he is one of the most influential of the NSC staff policymakers. Because of the influence of the NSC on Central America policy and the revolving door at the State Department's Inter-American Bureau, the State Department's role in Central America is not clearly defined. Assistant Secretaries Thomas Enders (who preceded Motley) and Motley found themselves straining against

the power curve tilted against them. Enders was sent to Spain as Ambassador and Motley is rumored to be thinking about public office.

Elliott Abrams, articulate and ambitious, can view his new job at State as a promotion. His desire to keep his job will be based more on getting along with the NSC than on trying to reassert the traditional role of the State Department in making foreign policy. Abrams is a favorite of Secretary of State Shultz and is seen as a consummate team player. Abrams' new appointment is the latest example of Shultz' efforts to put his personal imprint on State's unwieldy bureaucracy. ■

WOLA ROUNDUP

Visitors

- **Chris Krueger**, Washington-based anthropologist and development consultant, and **Kjell Enge**, Associate Professor and Director of Latin American Studies at Dickenson College in Pennsylvania. Both are members of the American Anthropological Association's Advisory Panel on Guatemala.
- **Fr. Sean Doggett**, of Kiltegen, the Missionary Order of St. Patrick of Ireland. Fr. Doggett is assigned to Grenada.
- **Sergio de Castro Lopez**, Editor-in-Chief of Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, a wire service from Nicaragua.
- **Ewe Holtz**, Social Democrat member of the German Bundestag and Chairman of its Committee on Economic Cooperation.
- **Sisters Peggy Healy** and **Nancy Donovan**, with Maryknoll Sisters in Nicaragua.
- **Guillermo Ungo**, president of the Democratic Revolutionary Front of El Salvador.

- **Adolfo Perez Esquivel**, 1980 Nobel Peace Laureate from Argentina.
- **Christen Persson**, First Secretary of the Swedish Foreign Ministry.
- **Fr. Dennis O'Mara**, from the Dublin-based order of the Columban Fathers, expelled from Chile last year.
- **Steve Tulberg**, Director of the Indian Law Resource Center in Washington.
- **Anselmo Sule**, First Secretary of Chile's Radical Party and charged with international affairs.

Conferences

- On April 9, WOLA and the Overseas Development Council (ODC) hosted the conference, "Peru: Elections and Economic Crisis." Among the panelists from Peru who assessed that country's transfer of political power and its observance of human rights were **Luis Pasara**, journalist; **Javier Iguinez**, from Lima's Cath-

olic University; and **Sonia Goldenberg**, an investigative reporter and producer. Addressing Peru's economic crisis were **Pedro-Pablo Kuczynski**, co-chairman of First Boston International Bank, and **Ernest W. Brown**, of Bankers Trust. U.S. policy toward Peru was discussed by **Jeffrey Puryear** of the Ford Foundation and **Roberto Danino** of the Peruvian Center for International Studies. (*A copy of the Rapporteur Notes will be available for \$2 from WOLA and the ODC.*)

- On May 2, WOLA offered a seminar on Central America for representatives from religious organizations. Speakers included **Representatives Robert Edgar** (D-PA) and **James Leach** (R-IA), **Professor Bill LeoGrande**, and **William Brownfield**, of the U.S. Department of State. The session is the first in a series of continuing education seminars. ■

NEWSBRIEFS

U.S. Congress Debates Foreign Aid

On May 14 and 15, the Senate debated and approved the Foreign Aid Bill for fiscal year 1986 (FY86—which begins October 1, 1985). The bill sets foreign aid spending targets and foreign policy guidelines. This year's bill cuts back on the Reagan administration's requests for increased military aid worldwide, although it authorizes most of the Administration's programmatic goals, including \$1.2 billion in cash and development aid per year through 1989 for Central America. (See *Update*, Mar./Apr., 1985.) An amendment to delete this multi-year authorization was defeated during the debate.

While some amendments to provide "non-lethal" or humanitarian aid to the contras were waiting in the wings, no such amendments were offered in the floor debate. Also, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator Lugar (R-IN) considered weakening a prohibition on the use of foreign aid funds for the contras or for the purpose of encouraging third party countries to

assist the contras. These and other amendments to assist the contras were withheld because they would have clouded the bill's chances for passage in the House. (A foreign aid bill has not been enacted into law since 1981.)

The Senate also approved, by voice vote, an amendment introduced by Senator Hawkins (R-FL) to terminate all U.S. assistance to Bolivia unless that country eradicates ten percent of its coca production.

The fate of the Foreign Aid Bill in the House may be dismal. Originally scheduled for floor debate in late April, the bill has been held up at least until June, as the House is bogged down in partisan bickering and "guerrilla tactics" by disaffected House Republicans upset over the seating of a Democrat in a controversial race in Indiana. A Republican alternative to the House Foreign Affairs Committee's bill will be offered at the end of the House debate on the bill. The Reagan administration opposes both House Democratic and Republican versions of the bill, so prospects for passage of any foreign aid bill are slim. ■

The Washington Office on Latin America is a nongovernmental human rights organization supported by religious organizations and private foundations and individual donors. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Volume XXXVIII, No. 6

February, 1985

The Nicaraguan Religious Debate

by Rev. Joseph E. Mulligan, S.J.



Archbishop Miguel Obando Y Bravo is a vocal critic of the Sandinista government. He concurs with the Bishops' Pastoral issued on Easter, 1984 which faults the Nicaraguan government with materialistic and atheistic tendencies.

The author is a writer, lecturer and activist on Latin American human rights issues. He is currently involved in pastoral ministry with the Hispanic communities of Detroit, Michigan and is an adjunct professor for adult courses at Mercy College.

Father Mulligan has traveled extensively throughout Latin America and was in Nicaragua as recently as September, 1984. He wrote the September, 1980 issue of the BLUEPRINT entitled, "Biography of a Martyred Priest" on the late El Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero. He has been published in THE NATION, THE PROGRESSIVE, AMERICA and CHRISTIAN CENTURY. He holds a B.A. from Loyola University in Chicago and an M.Div. from the Jesuit School of Theology of Chicago.

Thanks to Sr. Ann Graffy, RSM, for her artwork and to Bonnie Smith for preparing the map on page three.

It has been said that if one wants to understand why the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops are so opposed to the Sandinista government, one should go to the Mass

celebrated by Archbishop Obando y Bravo of Managua. The cars lined up outside the church bear witness to the affluence of the Archbishop's congregation. Many attribute the bishops' current anti-government position to their alleged over-identification with the wealthy minority.

Just as the upper class has shifted its support, so too has the Catholic hierarchy. When the wealthy supported late dictator Anastasio Somoza-Debalye, the bishops did likewise. When Somoza's greed and excesses became extreme, the oligarchy deserted him. The religious hierarchy became critical as well. After the wealthy began to resent the Sandinistas' clear preference for the poor majority, the bishops too denounced the new government.

Motives, however, are always complex. There is need to analyze the present anti-Sandinista position taken by the Nicaraguan bishops. This stance has prompted a strong response from Nicaragua's Jesuit community. The Jesuits disagree with the bishops and frown upon the hierarchy's inconstant support for the means and ends of the revolution.

The Seeds of Dissent

The ferment in the Catholic church in Nicaragua started long before the 1979 Sandinista victory over the Somozistas. The seeds of Vatican II found fertile soil in Latin America. This was especially true in Nicaragua. The new emphases and accents were interpreted by the Latin American bishops at their historic conference in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. The unjust

social structures of the region were labeled the "institutionalized violence" of the status quo. The Church took upon itself to carry out the Lord's work of liberation of the poor and oppressed.

Such prophetic doctrine was taken seriously by Christians throughout Latin America. Before long, the results of the Medellin conference could be seen. Involvement of Christians in social change efforts intensified. The number of martyrs for faith and justice, especially in Central America, increased.

The Latin American bishops met again at Puebla, Mexico, in early 1979. Despite some attempts by ecclesiastic officialdom to reverse the direction taken by the Church during and after the Medellin conference, the Puebla conference reaffirmed liberation as the role of the Church. It proclaimed a "preferential option for the poor" as characteristic of the followers of Jesus.

Nicaragua was an important part of this entire process. Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government, returned to Nicaragua from Gethsemani, Kentucky. There he had studied under Thomas Merton in a Trappist monastery. Cardenal founded a Christian community at Solentiname, Nicaragua. The simple yet profound meditations of Solentiname spread throughout Nicaragua. Grass-roots Christian organizations sprouted across the nation.

These Christian communities were involved at every level in the movement against Somoza. This presented a new and

significant phenomenon in the history of revolutions. Heretofore, Christians had been either spectators or opponents of revolutionary change. In Nicaragua, Christians were taking an active role in the struggle. **The hierarchy declared the insurrection justifiable and called for the departure of Somoza.** Several months after the July, 1979 ouster of the hated dictator, the bishops issued a pastoral letter. The document pointed out the positive potential of a genuinely Nicaraguan form of socialism which could develop under the new revolutionary government.

Reconciliation or Capitulation?

Since then, however, relations between the bishops and the Sandinistas have become steadily more strained and strident. The bishops' support, which once blew strongly in favor of the Sandinistas, now seeks to return Nicaragua to the sanctuary of pre-revolution harbors. In their harshest criticism of the Sandinistas to date, the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference issued a pastoral letter on Easter, 1984 which summarized their position vis-a-vis the government. This letter was translated and distributed immediately by the Reagan administration. Republicans in Congress quoted heavily from it in the debate on covert aid to the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries.

The most controversial statement in the letter is the bishops' call for a dialogue in which "all Nicaraguans inside and outside the country must participate . . . , regardless of ideology, class, or partisan belief." The bishops go further in stating: "We think that Nicaraguans who have taken up arms against the government must also participate in this dialogue."

To outside observers this may seem to be a reasonable call for reconciliation, akin to the dialogue just starting between the Duarte government and local rebels in El Salvador. Such a comparison is faulty. The difference is that the Salvadoran insurgency has a broad base of support among the people and has been recognized internationally as a legitimate revolutionary force. In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the Sandinista government, while admitting it has made some mistakes and that its human-rights record is not immaculate, nevertheless enjoys broad popular support. The armed

The BLUEPRINT is published ten times a year by the Institute of Human Relations, Box 12 Loyola University, New Orleans, LA 70118 (504) 865-3436

Editor Robert Udick
Publisher George F. Lundy, S.J.
Typesetting Ramona Harris
Layout Bonnie Smith
Jane Domboski
Business Thomas Paukins
Circulation John Parks
Cheryl Lumbrano
Production B. Raynal Ariatti

There is no charge for the BLUEPRINT but (tax deductible) donations are gratefully accepted. Please make checks payable to: Loyola IHR.

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counter-revolutionaries who have been attacking Nicaragua from Honduras and Costa Rica, by contrast, have practically no internal base of support. They could not even exist without U.S. assistance. They seek to restore the ancien regime which the Nicaraguan people struggled to overthrow.

Furthermore, the Salvadoran government represents a privileged oligarchy and hardly controls its own brutal military which has inflicted a reign of terror on the peasant population. The Sandinistas, on the other hand, have made remarkable changes in health, education, land tenure, nutrition, and other areas to benefit the poor majority. It has also encouraged grass-roots empowerment of the people and their participation in building a new society.

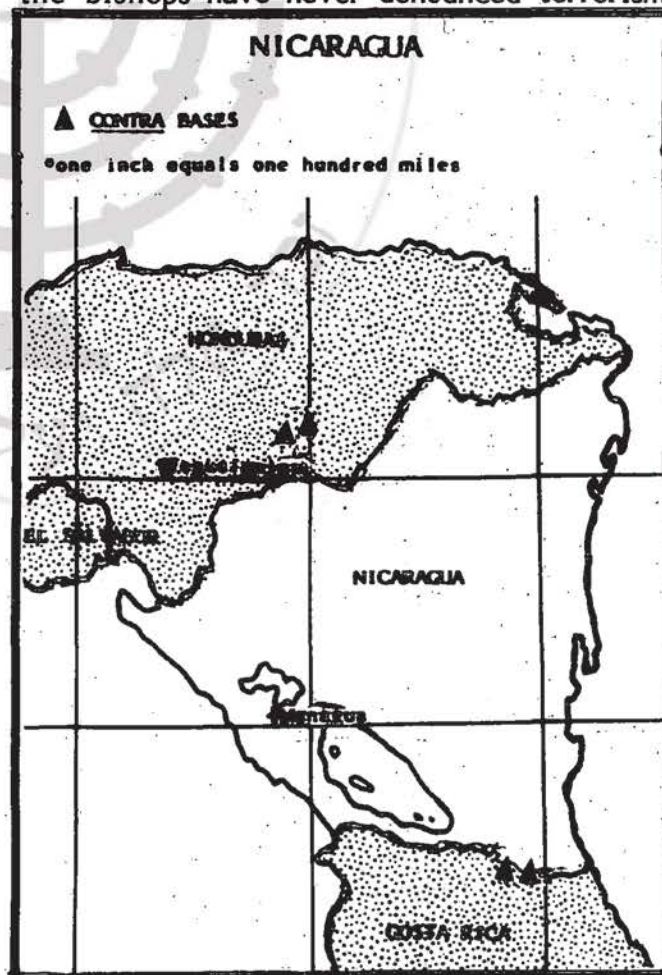
Jesuits in Nicaragua pointed this out on May 5, 1984 in their response to the bishops' letter.

The (bishops') letter forgets . . . that Nicaraguans not in agreement with the revolutionary process to the point of unleashing an armed counter-revolution were only able to do this when the current President of the U.S. signed, in December of 1981, an order concerning his country's national security which authorized a covert operation to provide financing, training, and multi-faceted support for the counter-revolutionaries.

This is also the prevailing international view of the Nicaraguan situation. It is difficult to find governments which consider what is happening today in Nicaragua to be a civil war. On the contrary, what stands out is that the counter-revolutionary revolt, made possible only by U.S. aid, has not been able to create an internal uprising against the revolutionary process. The prevailing international view of the situation in El Salvador is very different.

The Jesuits go on to describe the "almost permanent harassment of Nicaragua" by the U.S. government. U.S. support of the contras goes beyond training soldiers and providing weapons. The contras have figuratively, perhaps literally, borrowed pages from CIA manuals. The contras are believed to be responsible for the torture and murder of peasants and multiple kidnappings. In order to demonstrate to the American people what this means to a small country, the Jesuits make a direct and valid comparison. The 50,000 U.S. fatalities over 10 years in Vietnam represented 2.32 deaths for every 10,000 Americans. The 1,500 deaths in just since 1982 in Nicaragua represents 4.58 deaths for every 10,000 Nicaraguans.

In a clear reference to the U.S., the Jesuits state that "a world power which dominates the hemisphere in which Nicaragua is located is . . . trying to impose . . . its own interests on our country" and "has not wavered in resorting to war." Of particular concern among Nicaraguans is the fact that the bishops have never denounced terrorism





Father Fernando Cardenal is Minister of Education in Nicaragua. He was dismissed from the Society of Jesus in December, 1984 for refusing to resign his government position. His brother Ernesto, a Trappist priest, serves as Minister of Culture. He was defrocked by the order of the Vatican in late January of this year.

by the contras. Nor have they criticized U.S. backing of that terrorism and other U.S. acts of aggression. The Jesuits ask pointedly: "Can one assert a position of reconciliation while at the same time declaring a unilateral alternative to the revolutionary process . . . without raising one's voice, with at least equal firmness and clarity, against the attacks on our country, symbolized in the mining of our ports? (author's emphasis.)"

The Conditions of Reconciliation

The Jesuits are clearly not opposed to the bishops' call for reconciliation. Rather, the Jesuits are disturbed by the bishops' one-sided political prescription for achieving it. The Jesuits believe Nicaragua has already embarked on "a true road toward reconciliation" consisting of "the just defense of our people in the face of U.S. aggression."

The Jesuits, however, are opposed to the proposal of unconditional dialogue with those who have taken up arms. Such negotiations sacrifice the sovereign rights of Nicaragua and do not mention traditional, valid concerns of the Catholic faith which are prior to and necessary for reconciliation. John Paul II expressed these demands in his encyclical, Rich in Compassion.

The Jesuits agree with the encyclical when it says that "forgiveness does not nullify the objective demands for justice." Forgiveness does not mean capitulation to evil and injustice. Unity, reconciliation and peace must not be sought at the price of sacrificing the interests of the poor majority in the face of an external aggression financed by the U.S. and lacking internal support.

The basic values of forgiveness and compassion, however, are very much alive in Nicaragua. Father Ernesto Cardenal explained that the Sandinistas wanted to incorporate priests in the revolution from the beginning. After the victory, the people's anger was going to be great. It would be necessary to build a "generous revolution, without personal vengeance," and that, "the influence of religion would be important, so that there would not be assassinations and the death penalty." Priests would promote the Christian principles which the revolution needed.

Tomas Borge, Minister of the Interior, set a powerful example of this compassionate and forgiving attitude. After the victory over Somoza, Borge came face to face with a former National Guard member who had tortured Borge in prison some years earlier. The trembling prisoner feared the worst, but Borge expressed forgiveness on the spot. No vengeance was carried out. (Of course, some of the National Guardsmen were kept in prison for some time. They were released once the new government was reasonably sure that they would not seek to overthrow the revolution.)

The Root of the Bishop's Opposition

To discern why the bishops are opposed to the Sandinista government one must analyze in theological terms the relationship between Church and State in modern Nicaragua. In their Easter letter, the bishops complain that "society has become secularized and is no longer oriented toward God; it does not heed the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, but considers it an alienating institution."

What seems to lie beneath these words is a longing for the old days of Christendom -- that Constantinian alliance of Church and

State in which the Church tended to legitimate the government and the government granted protection and privileges to the institutional Church. During the last several centuries, revolutions have brought about a healthy separation of Church and State (a development which is celebrated in our American tradition). Vatican II affirmed the principle of religious liberty which removes the coercive power of the state from the promotion of religion.

Secularization or Toleration?

The Nicaraguan bishops decry the secularization of society, saying that it is no longer oriented toward God. In this, they ignore some important theological insights which have been developed in recent years, such as Karl Rahner's concept of the "anonymous Christian" and the insistence by Gustavo Gutierrez and others on orthopraxis as well as orthodoxy. According to such insights, a society is "oriented toward God" not only to the extent that it describes itself explicitly as religious. In a more practical way, it implements the God-given values of peace, social justice, and special concern for the poor.

The Nicaraguan bishops complain that society "does not heed the Church." What does this mean? It always wants to be heard. Society remains free, however, to accept, reject or criticize the Church's message. This is especially true when the bishops enter into the details of public policy. Perhaps the bishops are nostalgic for the old days of clerical monopoly over the channels of communication.

In their letter, the bishops charge that society "repudiates the Church and thereby falls into the temptation of establishing other 'churches' than the one founded by the apostles and their successors." It must be stated clearly that the Sandinistas have not repudiated the Church. The bishops may be bothered that the government safeguards the right of all Nicaraguans (members of the Catholic grassroots communities, other Christian churches, atheists, or agnostics). It allows all their criticisms of the hierarchy's political judgements.

In other times, and still today in other countries, the prelates could count on an obliging government to discourage or prevent

such criticism. In Nicaragua, what the government is defending is precisely religious freedom. In the Sandinista newspaper Barricada and in an independent but pro-government paper El Nuevo Diario, members of the Catholic laity can get their views published and can express, for instance, their support for the Sandinista revolution in the face of the hierarchy's opposition.

The bishops venture further into murky theological waters when they assert in their letter that "human social life can only be based on an accurate perception of the individual as an intelligent, free, and religious human being." Here again the bishops seem to be asserting that in order to have a decent, just, moral society, the religious dimension of human existence must be explicitly recognized. The role of religion must be promoted by society (presumably, by the government). Many Christians do recognize the importance of religion while fulfilling their social and political responsibilities. However, they also admire the dedication and altruism of those who are not Christians.

Materialism or Economic Progress?

The bishops cite a number of other areas which cause them concern. For instance, they deplore the "materialistic and atheistic educational system (which) is undermining the consciences of our children." Do they want the state to promote a public school system which would require courses in religion (as is the case in some Latin American countries)? The government of Nicaragua has declared that its position on religion is neutral. It will neither obstruct nor promote religion. In that same declaration, however, there is positive recognition of the role Christians have played and continue to perform in the building of a new society.

Father Fernando Cardenal, S.J., Minister of Education, and his brother Ernesto, Minister of Culture, are two of many priests who are actively involved in leadership positions. They see their public service in the building of a more just society as an exercise of their priestly vocation. It should be clear that they are not promoting an anti-Christian educational system. Rather, they seek an educational system whose underlying Christian values of justice



Daniel Ortega was the principal leader of the Sandinista junta which overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza-Debayle in July, 1979. He was elected President of Nicaragua in November, 1984.

and equality are either not understood or not appreciated by some Constantinian bishops.

Indeed, the government is generously subsidizing private education, most of which is under Catholic auspices. This is so the poor may have the opportunity to send their children to private schools. Although this goes beyond our American definition of the separation of Church and State, it makes good sense to the Sandinistas and to the school administrators who welcome the subsidy. The bishops ignore this.

The Nicaraguan Jesuit Response

The Jesuit response to the bishops' letter recognizes that there are "atheist and materialist tendencies in the new Nicaragua." Such problems constitute a challenge to the Church. The government is trying to improve the conditions of the poor materially. The Church must see that such efforts alienate the poor from God. Rather than confront the government, the Jesuits feel that the Church must collaborate and maintain a dialogue with non believers in the edification of this world.

This does not imply that the Sandinista government as such is promoting these atheist and materialist tendencies. Some in the government are atheists, others agnostics, others Christians. Many of the atheists are in the Communist party which is

not the governing Sandinista party. Acknowledging these atheist tendencies, which obviously exist not only in the new Nicaragua, but in the whole world, the Jesuits' response is not one of fearful entrenchment. It is one of recognizing these as a "challenge" to the apostolic preaching and lived practice of the Church.

They also note that "economic imperialism" (i.e. international capitalism,) has not wavered attempts to hurt Nicaragua's economy by warlike actions. In such a materialistic ideology "freedom is frequently construed as the possibility of obtaining limitless wealth and unchecked consumption."

The Jesuits summarize their theological reflections on this complex question concerning the relation between Faith and Justice using a metaphor of a garden.

If there are weeds in the revolutionary process, we must be careful. To pull them out all at once may also cause us to pull out the good seeds of greater justice for those who have always been impoverished and oppressed. . . . If there are seeds of atheism in Nicaragua today, does this justify a complete disqualification of the revolution?

With regard to the Sandinista government, the Jesuits express their support for the socially beneficial process which has developed since 1979 and for the right of Nicaragua to defend itself against foreign aggression. They cannot be accused, however, of identifying revolutionary Nicaragua with the Kingdom of God or of sacralizing Sandinismo or of being blind to the imperfections of the revolutionary government. (Such absurd, though theoretically possible, charges are often brought against Christians who work for revolutionary social change, especially when they contribute to and give critical support to revolutionary governments.)

In their letter the Jesuits state that they are aware of problems in Nicaragua. They cite "errors in the revolutionary process" and its "imperfect freedom of

debate." There is an "excessive tendency to bureaucracy" and "abuses and inefficiencies" within the struggling market system of a developing nation.

"Some of these things happen to us because we are burdened with poverty and backwardness of a Third World country." Many also attribute some of these problems to the fact that the country is under a state of siege from the CIA-supported contras and has had to declare a state of emergency. The Jesuit letter continues:

But serious testimony confirms that these things do not constitute a governmental pattern of violation of human rights. Besides, many of these mistakes have been recognized and some have been legally punished. We don't believe that Nicaragua has been subjected to any evil comparable to that of a war which is imposed unjustly upon our people."

Nicaraguans hope that Americans will understand the truth about Nicaragua and not the distortions broadcast by the U.S. government ("communist reign of terror,"

"religious persecution," etc.), and will oppose Washington's economic and military interference in their internal affairs. "Covert" U.S. support for the contras does not only appear to be against the will of the American people, but it also hinders the quest for representative democracy for which the Nicaraguan people yearn and for which they will continue to struggle.



Anastasio Somoza-Debayle was deposed as ruler of Nicaragua in July, 1979 ending his family's 43 year hold on the government. He was assassinated in Asuncion, Paraguay in September, 1980.

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In this issue

The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, which culminated in the ouster of Anastasio Somoza-Debalye in July, 1979 was solidified by the election of Daniel Ortega as president of Nicaragua in November, 1984. The violent political struggle has not ended. Today, the Sandinistas must not only govern the country, but they must also defend Nicaragua from U.S. supported counter-revolutionaries. The fight, however, is not limited to the political arena. A debate rages within the religious community also. Father Joseph Mulligan, a noted writer on Latin American human rights issues, analyzes for us the cause of the disagreement between the Catholic hierarchy and Nicaragua's Jesuit fathers. The bishops, who once supported the revolution, have reversed themselves. Why? The Jesuits still support the Sandinistas. Why? Father Mulligan examines the unique nature of Christian involvement in the revolution and answers these important questions.

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March 14, 1984

THE BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN NICARAGUA

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said and written about the Sandinista government and its efforts to change the economic and political system of Nicaragua. Little has been noted of the many disillusioned men and women who fought alongside the Sandinistas to overthrow Anastasio Somoza, because they believed that they were building a new democratic order. Using methods all too familiar, the militarily powerful Sandinista party has imposed on Nicaraguans a worse tyranny of violence and repression. This has driven many one-time allies of the Sandinistas into opposition once again--this time against the government run by the Marxist-Leninist FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front). This opposition includes the freedom fighters or the "Contras," the Catholic Church, the one nongovernment newspaper, La Prensa, the private sector, and the Indians, who are calling for a democratic system and freedom from oppression.

Nicaraguans' freedom of speech, assembly, and private property have almost ceased to exist. Yet some nonsupporters of the Sandinistas, who have not overlooked or rationalized Sandinista repression, portray the democratic opposition in Sandinista terms as "Somocistas" or "the right-wing opposition," when in fact the representatives of this opposition are primarily liberal democrats who for years opposed the Somoza regime.¹

¹ An example of a common perception of the militant opposition is Carlos Fuentes' statement to The Washington Post on June 12, 1983, that Nicaragua is being "invaded by counterrevolutionary bands led by former commanders of Somoza's National Guard who are out to overthrow the Revolutionary Guard and reinstate the old tyranny."

The elections announced by the Sandinistas and scheduled for November 4, 1984, have brought about a greater cohesion to this diverse but democratic opposition, who have questioned the fairness and legality of an election under a government that controls the media, the army, 60 percent of the economy, and the councils recently created to supervise the electoral process.² Many fear that, through such a mock election, the Sandinistas will obtain the international legitimacy they need to pursue their foreign and domestic policies without the formidable pressure of the U.S. and neighboring democratic states. The opposition knows that, if this happens, there will be less likelihood of restoring to Nicaragua the original liberal democratic goals of the revolution.

EXPLOITING THE MODERATE DEMOCRATS

In 1978, the Sandinista forces (FSLN) began to ally with various anti-Somoza groups, while carefully retaining tight control of the military wing of the insurrection. They presented themselves as champions of a democratic program that included free elections, a pluralistic society, and a mixed economy.³

² The Nicaraguan Political Parties Law of September 1983 prescribes the legal status of the political parties. It also creates electoral councils that govern the electoral process and the legal rights of the parties. Representation on these boards is, however, weighted heavily in favor of the Sandinistas. The Council of State, one of the bodies created, consists of 11 members from the nongovernment parties and 40 from the Sandinista party FSLN. Another important governing body, the National Assembly of Political Parties, is also dominated by the Sandinistas.

³ Formal written commitments were made by the FSLN on June 23, 1979, to the Organization of American States' 17th Meeting of Consultation, to pluralism, human rights, respect for private property, and other democratic guarantees. In addition, exiled leaders such as Arturo Cruz have stated that, although it was no secret that the hard core of the FSLN was Marxist-Leninist, the non-Marxists were comforted not only by the "pluralistic spirit" but also by the assurances made that certain democratic elements be part of the revolutionary system which followed. These were: the creation of nonpolitical armed forces; democratic elections to be held at a reasonable time after victory; the promotion of pluralism and the preservation of legitimate private property; and national self-determination. Arturo J. Cruz, "Nicaragua's Imperiled Revolution," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1983, pp. 1031-1047.

The deliberate deception of the Sandinistas is further confirmed by an October 5, 1979, report issued by the Sandinistas in which the FSLN stated: the Government of National Reconstruction composed of moderates as well as FSLN was "an alliance of convenience organized by the Sandinistas to thwart Yankee intervention (and) it was not necessary to negotiate with the bourgeoisie, just to give some representation to people with a patriotic reputation."

This garnered international legitimacy for the revolution as well as considerable amounts of financial and military assistance from Western democracies. Further, the formation of this front made it nearly impossible for the U.S. and other governments to continue support to Somoza. In 1979, he was forced to turn over the government to the Sandinista-led coalition. Its legality was recognized by the Organization of American States, after it received a letter from the Sandinista government that promised free elections and democratic procedures.

By 1981, the Sandinistas had emerged as the dominant power. The democratic members of the Government of National Reconstruction that was formed in 1979 were methodically being eased out of any meaningful role in the government. Meanwhile, the Sandinista government was aligning itself with Cuba's Fidel Castro and the Soviet Communist Party. Increasing numbers of Eastern-bloc personnel were given managerial roles in the reconstruction of Nicaragua.

The final blow came when the Sandinistas imposed the Economic and Social Emergency Law in September 1981, which in effect gave them total power to make laws, imprison people without due process, confiscate property, censor the press, and restrict the right of assembly.⁴ Moderates like Arturo Cruz, Violeta Chamorro, and Edgar Macias resigned their government posts in protest and went into exile. From there they are continuing to struggle for the democratic goals of the revolution.

THE MILITARY OPPOSITION

The armed opposition to the Sandinistas operates on two fronts: The Nicaraguan Democratic Forces (FDN) are based in the north near the Honduran border, and the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) is in the south near the Costa Rican border. Indians from the Sumo, Rama, and Misquito tribes, belong to one of two organizations. One, under Steadman Fagoth, is called the Misura. It is independent of ARDE and FDN although it cooperates with the FDN. The other, Misurasata, under Brooklyn Rivera, is within ARDE.

Under the leadership of Alfonso Robelo and Eden Pastora, ARDE has about 4,000 armed soldiers and claims to have considerable support from the local populace and army militia. ARDE has been having difficulty collecting supplies and medicine for its forces, although they have been receiving foreign assistance from Western European and Latin American countries as well as the U.S.⁵

⁴ The Sandinistas have attempted to use U.S. support for the Contras as a justification for the promulgation of the Emergency Decree despite the fact that the September 1981 Emergency Decree preceded by several months the November 1981 decision by President Reagan to support the Contras.

⁵ Assistance received by ARDE has not come directly from the governments of these countries, at least not publicly, but from organizations which are nominally autonomous but which receive government assistance. ARDE also receives undisclosed amounts of aid from the CIA.

Because he was a hero of the anti-Somoza revolution and cannot be accused by the Sandinistas of being "Somocista," Eden Pastora ensures ARDE's political legitimacy in Nicaragua and abroad. His early split (1980) with the Sandinistas was politically embarrassing to them. Subsequently, he and his followers have been excluded from the amnesty decree included in the peace proposals announced by the Sandinista government last December. Together with the FDN leaders, they have been refused participation in the upcoming 1985 presidential elections.

Another important leader, ARDE's Alfonso Robelo is also widely respected in Nicaragua. He was the founder and leader of the political opposition front, the Movimiento Democrático Nicaragüense (MDN), against Somoza. After the overthrow of Somoza, he became a member of the Sandinista government. In 1981, he left his position in the junta and joined Pastora. For the most part, the ideological and political objectives of Robelo's MDN have been adopted by ARDE. Although often described as a social democratic party, MDN refused an offer to join the Socialist International, preferring a nationalist autonomy.⁶

The FDN has a force of approximately 10,000 armed combatants and receives much publicized aid from the U.S. government. Large, powerful, and militarily effective, the FDN is seen by some as politically weakened by the presence of ex-National Guardsmen in its military command structure. Although not created as such, the National Guard came to be perceived as Somoza's special army and was unpopular among most Nicaraguans because of its heavy-handed treatment of Somoza's opponents and its support of his repressive policies. However, they represent barely 2 percent of the FDN and they have no political role.

Rank-and-file FDN are mainly peasants, small landowners, and shopkeepers, who became disaffected with the government after the Sandinistas seized their property or confiscated most of their crops. Others have joined because of religious persecution.

The election of Adolpho Calero Portacarrero as FDN Chairman and Commander-in-Chief has done much to offset the political liability from the inclusion of ex-Guardsmen in its ranks. Calero was a highly respected political leader in Nicaragua and for many years an outspoken critic of Somoza, who jailed him twice. In 1982, Calero left Nicaragua for Tegucigalpa, Honduras, from where he now directs his forces.

The FDN's political ideology and objectives reflect Calero's philosophy. And as one of the leaders of the Conservative party

⁶ Certain notable participants in the Socialist International, such as Mario Soares of Portugal, have long been critical of Sandinista government policies.

in Nicaragua, he has given FDN a more conservative democratic platform than that shaped by his counterpart in ARDE, Alfonso Robelo. Although much has been made of their differences, there are many areas of agreement. It would seem that the two forces could unite, particularly now that the FDN seems to have removed the ex-National Guardsmen from its military command. Both Calero and Robelo hold strong democratic views, and neither represents an extreme. The democratic opposition in Nicaragua, though diverse, has never been characterized by the kind of polarization that afflicts other countries in Central America.

THE INDIAN FORCES

Although the Misura and Misurasata forces fighting the Sandinista armies in the north and south of Nicaragua consider themselves part of the nationalist struggle and often cooperate with the FDN and ARDE, their major aim is to return to their ancestral lands from which they were driven by the Sandinistas.

Brooklyn Rivera, leader of the Misurasata coalition of Indian forces, has joined the ARDE alliance. Last summer he publicly condemned the systematic discrimination by the Sandinista regime against the Misquito, Sumo and Rama Indians, who are now kept in detention camps. He said: "During more than four years of totalitarian government by the Sandinista in Nicaragua, the Indian people and other low income sectors of the population have suffered the tragedy of this police state. As a result, they have been subjected to systematic extermination."⁷

Because of international concern with its Indian policies, the Sandinista regime offered amnesty to Indian rebels last December. So far, there has been only minimal response to this offer and other promises for resettlement and improvement of the conditions of the camps, which have been consistently revealed as desperate.⁸

Professor Bernard Nietschmann of the University of California at Berkeley, who has studied the Sumo, Rama, and Misquito tribes since 1968 and recently visited detention camps, has protested the conditions in the camps. In a letter to The Times of London he wrote:

The Indians are not mercenaries nor have they been duped into resisting. The significant point is what they are fighting for, not what they are fighting with. They are fighting for an indigenous cause, Indian

⁷ FBIS, December 15, 1983, p. 14.

⁸ Separate interviews with Bishop Salvador Schlaefter and Jim Steiglitz, an American ex-medic who is still working among the Misquito camps, The National Catholic Register, January 5, 1984.

lands, Indian autonomy, Indian self-determination. To liberate their lands and villages, to bring the people home from the refugee and relocation camps, they would take arms from any source. Would their struggle be more politically acceptable to some if they obtained arms from China, Libya, Israel, or Angola's UNITA force?

As the influx of thousands of Indian refugees into Honduras indicates, the Sandinistas have not been successful in gaining the cooperation of these people, despite their repeated assertions to the contrary.

INTERNAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION

An important political organization inside Nicaragua is the Democratic Coordinating Board. Under the leadership of Eduardo Rivas Gasteozoro, internationally recognized for his human rights campaign against Somoza,⁹ the Coordinating Board is composed of several political parties, businessmen, and union representatives. Its function is to negotiate on behalf of its members for the right to continue their work and to participate in the elections November 4, 1984.

Like many other groups and individuals in Nicaragua, the Democratic Coordinating Board hopes that, by staying and fighting within the system created by the Sandinistas, they will make democratic gains. But this hope is fading. The elections will be under Sandinista control; the February 22 electoral law does not guarantee free and equal participation. Emergency laws now in place effectively prohibit political rallies, access to the media, and criticism of the "Revolutionary Government." Significantly, the Sandinista regime has refused to review or lift these emergency laws that potentially could be used to negate the more liberal electoral law. For this reason, the reaction to the promise of elections in 1985 is pessimistic. Speaking for the Democratic Coordinating Board, Rivas Leiva stated: "We can only view the so-called (political) opening with skepticism if press

⁹ Eduardo Rivas Gasteozoro was one of the leaders of the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission for Human Rights, which was instrumental in bringing world attention to the human rights violations in Nicaragua under Somoza. The Commission is banned inside Nicaragua and has been moved to San Jose, Costa Rica, where it is under the direction of Nicaraguan exile Jose Estaban Gonzales. The Commission, which no longer receives the world attention it once enjoyed, has repeatedly asserted that the human rights situation under the Sandinistas is much worse than under Somoza. See Richard Araujo, "The Sandinista War on Human Rights," Heritage Foundation Background No. 277, July 19, 1983.

ensorship is not lifted, and if we are not allowed to participate in the collective communications media."¹⁰

The Private Sector

Important as a political opposition group is COSEP, the Nicaraguan Higher Council of the Private Sector. COSEP represents those Nicaraguan businesses that have not been fully nationalized. Like other opposition groups and organizations, COSEP is allowed to exist, but is denied access to the media, and attacked in the government newspapers, television and radio stations. Many of its members have been physically assaulted by mobs, and in numerous cases, imprisoned without being charged.¹¹ Although the government recently invited the representatives to participate in a dialogue, COSEP's demands and criticisms were barred from distribution, and the efforts of the one independent newspaper, La Prensa, to print the demands were stopped by the government.

COSEP, nevertheless, has responded to the promise of elections with specific proposals, which have been endorsed by the Democratic Coordinating Board and the Conservative Party. They closely resemble the proposals put forth by FDN, ARDE, and Misura. Calling for "authentic elections," COSEP proposes a separation of party and state; elimination of politics from education and other cultural activities controlled by the state; suspension of the September 1981 and March 1982 Emergency Laws; full freedom of expression and information; respect for freedom of worship; free independent labor unions; autonomy of the judicial branch; national dialogue among all the political parties and movements including the rebel groups; and supervision of the elections by either the Contadora or the Organization of American States.

COSEP's newly elected president, Enrique Bolanos, has requested permission from the Sandinistas to sponsor programs daily on the radio and weekly on television to discuss political and economic topics. Skeptical that his request will be granted, Bolanos observes: "There was a time when we thought we could make the Sandinistas come fairly close to their original programs. But now they have made very clear that they are Marxist-Leninists, who are moving towards creating a totalitarian state."

Asked by an American reporter why he stayed in Nicaragua, Bolanos responded, "We have the moral credibility to speak out

¹⁰ FBIS, January 11, 1984, p.18.

¹¹ Several union and business leaders who are members of COSEP were imprisoned for criticizing the economic policies of the Sandinistas immediately following the institution of the September 1981 Emergency Economic and Social Law which, among other things, prohibited any criticism of the government's economic policies.

because we have remained here...We are setting an example for many people who might otherwise give up hope."¹²

The Catholic Church

Just as the Catholic Church in Nicaragua under the leadership of Archbishop Obando y Bravo opposed the repression of the Somoza dictatorship, it now opposes the repression under the Sandinistas. As a result, it has become a major target of Sandinista propaganda and government sponsored mob attacks.¹³ In the last three months, 22 churches have been attacked by gangs, who set tires afire outside the churches and threatened those trying to enter to pray. The Bishop himself has been harassed and attacked on his way to services.

The new Archbishop Pablo Antonio Vega Mantilla was expected to be less political. Yet he has stated that the Catholic Church "...[is] not a political opposition, we are believers in any regime based on Christian values. In Nicaragua today people feel an excessive control and are unable to realize their full potential." He added, "much of the creative dynamism of the revolution has been lost, it has been replaced by scheme imposed from the outside."

The Sandinistas appreciate the church's powerful influence. They have tried to undermine this power by creating a "People's Church." But this "is more fiction than reality," Arturo Cruz, an ex-member of the junta, writes in Foreign Affairs.¹⁴

The Catholic Church is prohibited from receiving funds or contributions from abroad. The Archbishop's Sunday Mass no longer is televised. The People's Church, on the other hand, is heavily funded from abroad, particularly by Protestant and Catholic churches in the United States, and has its own television and radio stations.¹⁵

Most recently, the Catholic Church has protested the Sandinista's efforts to take over the nongovernment Catholic schools. The Episcopal Conference of Bishops, which governs the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, is backing fully the La Salle Order of Teachers' refusal to replace the traditional curriculum with

¹² The New York Times, December 18, 1983.

¹³ The Wall Street Journal, December 9, 1983.

¹⁴ Foreign Affairs, Summer 1983. See also, "The Subversion of the Church in Nicaragua: an Interview with Miguel Bolanos Hunter," The Institute For Religion and Democracy, December 1983.

¹⁵ Centro Valdivieso and CEPAD are the organizations through which considerable funds pass to the Sandinistas for the "People's Church." In 1981, for example, the World Council of Churches contributed \$176,000 to Valdivieso.

Marxist-Leninist teachings.¹⁶ La Prensa, which tried to report the story on January 27, was closed down by the government. Archbishop Pablo Antonio Vega, President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, has stated that "at this time in Nicaragua there is not a state of law, or basis for liberty and democracy."¹⁷ Like the other groups in the opposition, the Episcopal Conference has demanded of the government fulfillment of its original promise of nonalignment, popular sovereignty, suggesting that "the people be the subject not the object of the revolution."

The Press

La Prensa, the only remaining nongovernment newspaper, is censored daily. In fact, the Sandinistas have set up a special office exclusively to censor La Prensa, according to editor Violeta Chamorro, who was a member of the Junta until 1981. The Sandinistas cannot shut the paper down completely. It would cost too much politically not only because La Prensa still symbolizes, after many years of struggle against Somoza, the fight against tyranny to Nicaraguans and much of the world, but also because the Sandinistas would no longer be able to credibly assert that freedom of the press exists in Nicaragua. La Prensa is internationally known for its opposition to Somoza, and the assassination of its editor Edgar Chamorro, Violeta's husband, was the turning point of world opinion against Somoza.

The Sandinistas do not limit their press control to censorship. Most of the attacks, according to the editors, occur outside the editorial offices. Distributors are often attacked by government mobs, some have been jailed by the government, their families threatened, and their houses painted with derogatory slogans.¹⁸ La Prensa's editorial council has taken an active political stand before the Sandinista Government. It recently demanded fulfillment of points 4 and 5 of the Contadora Group's proposals, which call for the establishment of pluralistic democratic regimes in Central America.

In recent weeks, the Sandinistas claim to have eased the censorship of La Prensa. Yet the paper has been closed down twice more since it attempted to print the statements of the Episcopal Conference of Bishops.

¹⁶ The following statement was issued by the Episcopal Conference: "We oppose any form of monopoly over education because it is contrary to the natural rights of men, to progress and knowledge of men's culture and heritage, to peaceful coexistence of citizens and the plurality of beliefs that prevails in many other societies." Diario Las Americas, January 28, 1984, p. 6.

¹⁷ Wall Street Journal, December 9, 1983.

¹⁸ Furthermore, the Sandinistas are proposing a new law which will grant the government permanent control over the media in Nicaragua. Diario Las Americas, March 3, 1984, p. 6.

Labor Unions

Nearly extinct, the remaining nongovernment labor unions are struggling to stay alive with the help of the Nicaraguan Higher Council of Private Enterprise and the Democratic Coordinating Board. These free unions, the Workers Central (CTN) and the Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS), both of which opposed the Somoza government, have suffered from an unrelenting government campaign of repression. Their members have been assaulted by mobs, arrested and beaten, and their families are threatened. The leaders have been forbidden to hold meetings, collect dues, bargain without government intervention, hold seminars, organize, or leave the country without explicit permission from the Council of Ministers.¹⁹

Although the members of the various opposition groups inside Nicaragua have not publicly endorsed the armed opposition of the FDN and the ARDE, they have not condemned it. Many of their spokesmen concede that, with the focus of the Sandinistas constantly diverted to the external opposition, the internal opposition has more room for maneuvering. Many feel that, without external pressure, the Sandinista government never would have been compelled to issue its peace proposals last December, which promised more freedom and political and economic opportunities to the opposition groups and other members of Nicaraguan society as well as announced elections. In addition, the various opposition groups have unanimously asserted the right of the leaders or representatives of FDN and ARDE to participate in the upcoming elections.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

The ruling Sandinista directorate was never elected. It came to power only by its alliance with the truly democratic and popular opposition to Somoza. It has maintained its power only through force. By aligning itself with the Soviet bloc, where free elections never are held and power is maintained through terror, the Sandinista regime has made clear the undemocratic path it has chosen. And were it not for the large and growing presence of Soviet and Cuban personnel and armaments in Nicaragua, the armed opposition of the Contras would not need U.S. assistance.

The U.S. government should continue supporting the armed opposition. Through this pressure and through diplomatic channels,

¹⁹ The Washington Post, letter to the editor from Robert W. Searby, Deputy Under Secretary of Labor for International Affairs, January 1984. The AFL-CIO and the American Institute for Free Labor Development have taken similar positions with regard to labor union freedom and other human rights violations. See, for example, the February 1984 Memorandum from AIFLD-executive director William C. Doherty on Nicaragua.

the U.S. can support the democratic demands of the internal opposition as well. The U.S. government can aid in the democratic opening of Nicaragua by publishing opposition demands at the United Nations and the Organization of American States as a counterpoint to Nicaraguan demands on the U.S.

Costa Rica, which has no army, is especially vulnerable to Sandinista and Mexican pressure to cease supporting the Contras who receive supplies and find refuge inside Costa Rican borders. Costa Rica's insecurity should not be exacerbated by a wavering U.S. policy. U.S. support for the democratic Contra forces should be continued as part of a firm U.S. stance. So should financial aid, and military aid when requested, to Nicaragua's increasingly apprehensive neighbors. Without U.S. strength behind them, the choice will be narrowed to those forces inside their respective governments that offer "peace" only through accommodation.

Finally, the OAS and the world should be reminded of the Sandinistas' promises to the OAS in July of 1979 that have never been fulfilled and as a result are now the basis of the opposition's demands. As the Sandinistas were able through those democratic commitments to receive the recognition of their legitimacy as a government, then this legitimacy, at the very least, should be called into question by the representatives at the OAS and other international organizations.

CONCLUSION

Although politically diverse, the several elements of the Nicaraguan democratic opposition share the principal objective of achieving the democratic goals of the revolution of 1979 that overthrew Anastasio Somoza.

The Sandinista government's charge that the opposition represents the old Somoza regime is unfounded. The small minority of ex-National Guardsmen active within the FDN are not politically important and are not part of the leadership. There are, in fact, former members of the Somoza government now in the Sandinista regime and many former National Guardsmen in the Sandinista security forces. Most important, substantial progress has been made toward an alliance between the Nicaraguan Democratic Forces and the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

In 1979, international support of the anti-Somoza revolution was made possible through the presence of the democratic opposition within the Sandinista movement. The Sandinistas rode to power on their backs. Now this same opposition, divided into political and military camps, is fighting the takeover of their country by totalitarian forces. The struggle is not between Somocistas and the people; it is between democracy and communist totalitarianism. By supporting the opposition forces, the United States is squarely on the side of democracy.

Esther Wilson
Policy Analyst

APPENDIX I

Prominent Sandinista Defectors

<u>Name</u>	<u>Then</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>	<u>Now</u>
Alfonso Robelo	Member of the original Sandinista junta. Leader of the Somoza opposition party Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN).	July 1981	ARDE leader
Arturo Cruz	Director of the Sandinista Central Bank, member of the junta, Ambassador to the U.S.	December 1981	Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.
Eden Pastora	Sandinista military commander and hero, Deputy Minister of Defense.	July 1981	ARDE leader
Alfredo Cesar	Director of Sandinista Central Bank, was an FSLN militant.	May 1980	In exile
Jose Francisco Cardenal	Vice-President of Sandinista Council of State.	July 1982	FDN
Edgar Macias	Leader of the Anti-Somoza Popular Social Christian Party, Sandinista Deputy Labor Minister.	August 1981	ARDE representative in Washington, D.C.
Haroldo Montealegre	Minister and Director of the International Reconstruction Fund, and was a member of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN).	August 1981	Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Then</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>	<u>Now</u>
Francisco Fiallos	Sandinista Ambassador to U.S., was an FSLN militant.	December 1982	In hiding
Violeta Chamorro	Member of the original Sandinista junta, Chairman of the Board of <u>La Prensa</u> , wife of assassinated Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.	December 1981	Editor of <u>La Prensa</u>
Adolfo Calero	Anti-Somoza activist, member of the Conservative Party. Supported the Sandinistas initially.	1982	FDN, Chairman and Commander-in-Chief
Alvaro Taboada	Sandinista Ambassador to Ecuador, member of Anti-Somoza Popular Social Christian Party.		In exile
Carlos Coronel	FSLN militant, Minister of Fishing.	October 1981	ARDE
Noel Rivas Gasteozoro	Board of Directors for Sandinista Nicaraguan Development Foundation, was on Board of Directors of the Nicaragua Chamber of Commerce and a member of MDN.	December 1979	Exile in Miami
Cesar Amador	Minister of Health.	1980	
Bernadino Larios	First Minister of Defense, former National Guard.		Jailed in Nicaragua
Sebastian Gonzales	FSLN ex-militant, Vice Minister of Agriculture.	October 1981	Founder of M3 anti-Sandinista group in Costa Rica, was part of ARDE

<u>Name</u>	<u>Then</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>	<u>Now</u>
Lionel Bovela	Sandinista Director General of Customs.	January 1981	Costa Rica
Angel Navarro	Vice Minister of Agriculture.	October 1981	Houston, Texas
Jose Antonio Baltodano	Director of Sandinista Coffee Corporation, was a member of MDN.	mid-1980	New York
Miguel Bolanos Hunter	FSLN militant, officer of Counter Intelligence (F-2) of the Sandinista State Security.	May 7, 1983	In exile



APPENDIX II
Excerpts from Written Statements of the Opposition

Summary of main points:

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE

- To promote understanding among the anti-totalitarian forces;
- To unify efforts to accelerate the overthrow of totalitarianism in Nicaragua;
- To guarantee the establishment of a democratic system of justice, freedom, and social progress, and self-determination through elections.

THE NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES

- To invigorate civic resistance and armed insurrection against the Sandinistas in defense of the essential values of Nicaraguan Nationalism and Christian culture.
- To promote respect for life, liberty and human dignity.
- Respect for family rights and their primary role in society, particularly the rights of parents to choose the education of their children.
- Freedom of religion.
- The right to pursue happiness, the right of private property.
- Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, abolishment of all forms of censorship and state control over the media to guarantee the establishment of authentic democratic system, representative and pluralistic, based on the will of the people as expressed through direct, free and periodic elections.
- Freedom of social, political, labor and professional organizations, and autonomous universities.
- Separation of party and state, party and army, party and national police.

MISURA (MISQUITO, SUMO, RAMA) NICARAGUAN INDIAN ORGANIZATION

- Misura supports the Democratic Movement so that the rightful restoration of the political, social and economic system in the Atlantic Coast can be realized.

- Misura seeks a pluralistic Republic through which the social transformation of Nicaragua can be achieved with a meaningful respect for Human Rights.
- The Sandinista regime has violated systematically human rights in Nicaragua applying its policies of racism, apartheid and neo-colonialism against the ethnic groups of the Atlantic Coast...which constitutes a crime of GENOCIDE.
- The people of Nicaragua cannot act in self-determination under the Sandinistas.
- The Sandinistas must dismantle the internal security apparatus of the Sandinista regime, the Security Forces of the State, the Sandinista police, the Sandinista Army, rationing cards, the Sandinista Defense Committees, the centralization of internal commerce, the international forces, many of which have been given a nationalist disguise.
- It is imperative that the process of change in Nicaragua which was betrayed by the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) in July 1979, be put back in the hands of the Nicaraguan people in order to establish a government which truly represents the different sectors of Nicaraguan society.
- The promises made to the Organization of American States in the resolution at the 17th meeting of Consultation of Ministers in July of 1979 must be fulfilled.

THE NICARAGUAN HIGHER COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

(Statements made regarding the proposed elections in Nicaragua scheduled for November 4, 1984.)

- State-Party separation...A general restructuring of the state and para-state apparatus to put an end to the identifying of state and para-state organizations with the political party in power (the FSLN) and its ideology. This means transforming state organizations (such as the Sandinista Peoples Army, the Sandinista Police, the Sandinista Air Force, Sandinista Television Network) which now have a political nature.
- Repeal laws that violate human rights...as pointed out in studies prepared by the Nicaraguan Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights since October 1982.
- Suspension of the State of Emergency and the institution of the full exercise of freedom of expression and information.

- Promulgation of an amnesty law pertaining to political crimes.
- Respect for freedom of worship and the exercise of the churches' ethical and religious principles.
- Labor union freedom...repeal of the laws that restrict full exercise of labor union freedom.

(Signed by Democratic Unions, Central Organization of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN), Confederation for Trade Union Unity (CUS); the democratic political parties, Democratic Conservative Party, Social Christian Party, Authentic Popular Social Christian Party; COSEP, Nicaraguan Chamber of Industries, Nicaraguan Chamber of Construction, National Confederation of Professional Associations, Confederation of Chambers of Commerce of Nicaragua, Nicaraguan Institute of Development, Agricultural and Livestock Producers Union of Nicaragua.)



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

OF SAN FRANCISCO, THE PENINSULA, MARIN AND SONOMA COUNTIES

Beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation

Suite 301

121 Steuart Street

San Francisco, Ca 94105

(415) 957-1551

July 9, 1985

TO: Ernest Weiner

FROM: Earl Raab

In case I forget next time I see you, I want to tell you how much I appreciated your piece on Nicaragua in the Bulletin.

Obviously, everyone will not agree with everything you wrote. But it is now so important for Jews to think about American foreign policy and developments in the world outside of Israel -- as they affect Israel and the Jews. We're in a period when we can seriously erode our effectiveness if we believe that Israeli/American relations operate in some kind of an enclosed vacuum.

Your piece does make people think in larger terms, even if they don't end up agreeing with all your implications. There is not much of that being credibly done. That's why I think you did a service, especially here in San Francisco. I hope you do some more.

Marc Tanenbaum

M Tannebaum

S. Kneidel Steyer

The Miami Herald

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Limit Use of Force

PERHAPS the greatest danger arising from the successful, justified U.S. invasion of Grenada is the encouragement that it gave to militarists who now advocate similar force to "solve" other U.S. problems. Such as, say, Nicaragua.

This is most unfortunate. Nicaragua is not Grenada. A U.S. invasion to overturn Nicaragua's Sandinista government would not be comparable to the invasion of Grenada morally, legally, logistically, diplomatically, or any other way. It would be a colossal mistake.

A very specific set of particular circumstances coincided in Grenada that, together, justified the U.S. resort to force. Sixteen Grenadian soldiers seized power. They executed their tiny nation's leaders and imposed a round-the-clock curfew enforced by shoot-to-kill orders. This effectively put the entire nation's population under house arrest.

There were roughly 1,000 American citizens on that island. They could have been taken hostage at any time. No good reason existed to accept the word of 16 revolutionaries who said that they intended no harm to the Americans. To the contrary, rescuing the American citizens from such a clear and present danger was Washington's duty. This nation does not need to relive the psychological torture that it suffered when Iran held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

The East Caribbean islands enjoy a centuries-old tradition of government under a British-implanted system of parliamentary democracy. Law and respect for human rights is the norm, violence the rarest exception. When Grenada's

neighboring island democracies asked for U.S. help, invasion was justified to rescue not only U.S. citizens, but to rescue Grenada's citizens and its neighboring states. The invasion did not rob Grenadians of government by self-determination; it permits self-determination by ousting outlaw brutes who represented no one.

The same cannot be said about Nicaragua. The Sandinistas spearheaded a broad-based popular revolution. Some legitimacy attaches to them even yet, as a result. Inarguably, they still enjoy wide support from many Nicaraguans. Furthermore, the Sandinistas administer a functioning government, albeit one that is unsavory to freedom lovers. Yet diplomatic ties exist, and must remain the preferred legal avenue of international relations.

Americans are not imminently endangered in Nicaragua. Nor would an invasion request from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala be comparable to the request from the island democracies. The context is utterly different.

The Grenadians cheered U.S. Marines. Nicaraguans would fight them. An invasion in Central America would be very bloody. The Sandinistas, once beaten, would fight on as guerrillas from the hills by the thousands for years. The adverse reaction of Latin America, indeed of the entire world, to such "big-stick" Yankee force would be immediate, severe, and enduring. The price would be too high.

Force must always be the last resort, justified only by extreme circumstance. That condition applied in Grenada. It does not apply in Nicaragua.

The Destiny of the Nicaraguan Jewish Community

by

Sergio Nudelstejer

The first Jews established themselves in Nicaragua in the second half of the 19th century, but it was not until the 1920's, after the First World War, that Jewish immigration to Nicaragua began and the Jewish population grew. By the 1950's approximately 52 Jewish families lived in Nicaragua, the majority in the capital city of Managua and others in towns such as Leon, Granada and Chinandega. During the different regimes in which the Somoza family headed the government, this small Jewish community developed freely, socially as well as economically. Some Jews even became owners of coffee plantations, the basis of the country's economy. Other members of the community established private businesses in partnership with members of the Somoza family, who, for 40 years, determined the destiny of this small Central American nation. After being in power for almost thirty years, Anastasio Somoza was murdered in 1956.

Although the Somoza regime carried out many serious human rights violations, the Jewish community was untouched. Under Somoza, the Jewish community enjoyed absolute liberty, civil as well as religious. In 1948, when Israel became a state, Nicaragua established friendly and cordial relations. And, under then President Anastasio Somoza, Nicaragua even sold American arms to Israel during the latter's War of Independence. Years later, Israel in turn sold weapons to the government of Nicaragua.

On December 23, 1972 a violent earthquake destroyed more than 60% of the city of Managua, leaving 14,000 dead and 200,000 people homeless. Although suffering minimal harm and loss of life, the Jewish community of Nicaragua experienced large loss of income as many businesses and factories were destroyed. Many Jews took refuge in El Salvador, Costa Rica or the United States, reducing the community in Nicaragua to only 27 Jewish families by 1975.

Once again, this time at the beginning of the Sandinista revolution against the regime of President Anastasio Somoza Debayle in 1978, a large number of Jewish families left the country. The majority went to Miami. Some retained their businesses in Managua, traveling frequently back and forth until the triumph of the Sandinistas.

When the Sandinista regime came to power in 1979, it found that the building that had housed the only synagogue in Managua was now occupied by a few very poor families who had lost their homes. But even before the victory of the Sandinistas, the Sifrei Torah had been taken out of Nicaragua, some to Costa Rica and others to Miami. The building was repaired and turned into a meeting place for Nicaraguan youth groups.

The new government discovered that only five Jewish families remained in Managua. In the first weeks two Jews, Mr. Abraham Goren and his son-in-law, were arrested and charged with complicity with the Somoza family and with harboring anti-Sandinista sentiments. After a very short jail term, the two were liberated and they, too, left the country.

The regime of Daniel Ortega has signified a willingness to return the building of the synagogue to the Jewish community, but the three Jewish families that remain in Managua have declined the responsibility of taking it back, there being no Jewish community per se left. The families have been living and working in Nicaragua without incident.

Some time ago it was expected that the Sandinista regime would announce publicly that all Jews who left Nicaragua would be able to return freely to the country, possibly regain their businesses and properties and live without anti-Semitic persecution. None of these promises materialized, particularly because of accusations against the Sandinistas made by the U.S. government of being anti-Semitic, persecuting the Jewish community, arresting many Jews and acting sacrilegiously against the synagogue of Managua. The Sandinistas were likewise accused of being openly anti-Israeli and of giving full support to the PLO and to its Arab allies.

It is true that some Jewish families had to leave Nicaragua in a hurry, leaving behind their property which they could not sell and that these have been nationalized by the government. But it should also be mentioned that property of Nicaraguan citizens of all origins and religions who left the country has been appropriated.

It is well-known that the Sandinistas were trained in Arab countries and that, from the very beginning, they were supported by Cuba and the PLO, both of whose influence in Nicaragua is notorious. In addition, there is an active PLO office open in Managua which steadily creates anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli propaganda.

The Sandinistas have accused the regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle of depending on full Israeli support and weapons for their army. Israel was accused of supplying weapons to the Somoza government for use against Nicaraguans in the civil war. Yet the percentage of arms supplied by Israel was extremely small. Sales had been negotiated before the civil war, and Israel did no more than fulfill previous contractual obligations. The revolutionaries exploited anti-Israel propaganda to win Third World support for their cause.

* * * *

Sergio Nudelstejer is director of the Central American office.

9237-IRD-7
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A G E N D A

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80TH ANNUAL MEETING, J.W. MARRIOTT HOTEL
WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 14, 1986

LEO NEVAS, CHAIRMAN, PRESIDING

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- ✓ 2. AUSTRIA, KURT WALDHEIM, ANTI-SEMITISM: AJC Follow-up. Int'l Panel -
Ed program
3. CENTRAL AMERICA: Discussion with Leaders of the Federation of
Jewish Communities of Central America and Panama
- ✓ 4. SOVIET JEWRY: Recent Developments - Reuben Gross
5. AJC'S ISRAEL OFFICE -
- X 6. AUSCHWITZ AND THE CARMELITE CONVENT -
7. SOUTH AFRICA: Proposed Follow-up Consultation
- 8. IRD BUDGET
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MEMO

To: IRD Board of Advisors and Friends
From: Maria H. Thomas
Date: April 11, 1986

AMERICAN JEWISH

Enclosed are three articles we thought might be of interest to you. We have added our own addendum to the piece by Fred Barnes pointing out that the main factor which gives the "Sandinista lobby" its prestige and credibility is its strong church ties, a fact which Barnes neglects to mention.



(202) 393-3200

*The members of this board serve as individuals active in their own denominations, not as representatives of the institutions with which they are identified.

THE SANDINISTA LOBBY
"HUMAN RIGHTS" GROUPS WITH A DOUBLE STANDARD

by Fred Barnes



The Institute on Religion and Democracy
729 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900
Washington, D.C., 20005

April 1986

'Human rights' groups with a double standard.

THE SANDINISTA LOBBY

BY FRED BARNES
AMERICAN JEWISH

LAST JULY 1 a man named Alvaro Jose Baldizon Aviles slipped across the border from Nicaragua into Honduras. He was no ordinary refugee. Baldizon was chief of the special investigations commission of Nicaragua's Ministry of Interior. He worked for Tomas Borge, the interior minister and a powerful figure in the Sandinista government. Baldizon had an eye-popping story to tell of massive human rights abuses by the Sandinistas. In September and October, under the guidance of the U.S. State Department, he told it all over Washington.

Citing specific names, dates, and locations, Baldizon disclosed hundreds of murders of peasants, prisoners, Indians, businessmen, and opponents of the Sandinista regime, all of them carried out by Nicaraguan government soldiers or police. Borge personally ordered some killings and whitewashed others, Baldizon said. In 1981 Borge allegedly standardized the practice of murdering political foes by issuing a secret order allowing "special measures," the euphemism for assassinations. He institutionalized the deception of visiting foreigners, appearing before Christian groups in an office with a crucifix, a statue of Jesus Christ, and a Bible. His real office is adorned with pictures of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and copies of *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. Moreover, Borge was involved in cocaine trafficking, put former criminals in police jobs, and installed Cuban advisers in operational posts. Baldizon also said the Sandinistas were training Costa Rican guerrillas and using mobs of young Sandinistas to break up gatherings of political opponents.

Even by Latin American standards, this was quite an indictment, exactly the kind of firsthand account likely to trigger outrage by groups monitoring human rights in Central America. And maybe even spark an aggressive investigation or two. But not by the Washington Office on Latin America, which says it "monitors human rights practices and political developments in Central and South

America . . . [and promotes] a foreign policy that advances human rights, peace, and democracy in the hemisphere." Joseph T. Eldridge, the Methodist minister and former missionary in Chile who is WOLA's director, was invited along with other human rights activists to a session with Baldizon at the State Department on October 3. Eldridge didn't show. He did call to ask about a private session with Baldizon, and State Department officials agreed so long as one of their staff aides was present. Later, Eldridge canceled the meeting because of a schedule conflict. He insists he's still trying to meet with Baldizon. But Janice Barbieri of the State Department's office of public diplomacy says Eldridge isn't trying very hard; he hasn't even called back to set up a new time. Whatever the case, it's been months, and Eldridge has yet to meet with Baldizon.

This indifference to Baldizon and his evidence of systematic abuses of human rights was not a lapse. On the contrary, it reflects the selective moral indignation of a phalanx of organizations in Washington that regularly criticizes the Reagan administration's policy toward Central America and, in particular, Nicaragua. The ostensible aims of these groups are high-minded: peace, protection of human rights, free elections, an end to domination of politics by oligarchies, etc. And they tirelessly point out how Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama—all allies of the United States—come up short. But Nicaragua, with its increasingly repressive Sandinista regime, is another story. What criticism these organizations have of Nicaragua is soft-hitting in the extreme. Mostly they explain away or ignore abuses by the Sandinistas.

These organizations and their leaders refer to themselves as "the community." But they've been accused of being something quite different. A Heritage Foundation paper labeled them "The Left's Latin American Lobby." A book by the Council for Inter-American Security attacks them as "The Revolution Lobby." Bruce Cameron, a for-

mer lobbyist for Americans for Democratic Action, says WOLA at least is a "shill for the Sandinistas." Naturally, WOLA and other groups disagree. "There is an attitude in [Washington] that equates opposition to the administration's Central American policy with support for the Sandinista government," says Eldridge. "This is an unfortunate and lamentable conclusion."

MAYBE SO, but WOLA and other organizations haven't exactly gone out of their way to show that they don't apply a double standard—tough on right-wing governments and U.S. allies, soft on left-wing regimes. A good place to start would have been with Baldizon. Juan Mendez of America's Watch, a human rights monitoring group, went to the trouble of taking Baldizon to lunch, where they could confer without State Department interference. But America's Watch seems more interested in countering Reagan's attacks on Nicaragua than checking out Baldizon's evidence. Last July it put out a report evaluating Nicaragua's human rights record. The logical yardstick was the Sandinista promise of political pluralism and a mixed economy. Had the Sandinistas delivered on these? But that wasn't the question asked. Rather, America's Watch found the one human rights standard that the Sandinistas can meet: Is their human rights record as bad as Reagan says? Nope, America's Watch concluded.

WOLA doesn't pretend to be anything but an advocacy organization. It advocates friendly, tolerant relations with Nicaragua. But similar questions arise in the case of legal groups, whose nominal concern is not policy but the rule of law. Susan Benda of the American Civil Liberties Union says her only concern is blocking U.S. involvement in the covert war waged by the *contras*. "We're opposed to this covert war regardless of what the Sandinistas do," she says. "We don't care if they close down the press. What the Sandinistas do doesn't affect our opinion on the war."

But at least one legal group is now taking care to avoid the appearance of a double standard. Amy Young, the director of the International Human Rights Law Group, now admits that her organization's study of *contra* abuses last year should also have looked at Sandinista conduct. In a new investigation early in 1986—another vote on *contra* aid comes in March—both sides will be examined, she says. Larry Garber, IHRLG's project director, characterizes the soft-on-the-Sandinistas approach of some groups as "avoidance tactics." Although they recognize there are human rights problems in Nicaragua, "they won't go down and investigate," he says. Why not? "It's no secret some organizations in town were excited about what happened in Nicaragua and are still hopeful it will be a revolution that brings lasting peace and stability. They've been willing to forgive things that have gone on during a time of transition. That time is over."

Practically no one is more forgiving than the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the umbrella group of "the community." Its 50-odd members include WOLA, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, the Washington office of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the American

Friends Service Committee, and the YWCA. The coalition, along with the Commission on U.S.-Central American Relations, published what it called a "basic information" book on Central America. According to the book, the Sandinistas have done little wrong, and when they have, it was only because the United States forced them to.

Take the massive Sandinista arms buildup. It began in 1979, at a time when the U.S. government was reasonably friendly, and has gone on unabated. Nicaragua now has by far the largest military force in Central America. Yet the "basic information" book attributes the Sandinista buildup to fear of a U.S. invasion. "In short, the Nicaraguans want to raise the military, and thereby the political, cost of a U.S.-sponsored invasion," it says. Nor do the Nicaraguans threaten their neighbors. "Despite the difficulty in distinguishing between offensive and defensive weapons, it is clear that the military strengthening that Nicaragua has undergone in the last few years is primarily defensive, not offensive." Even MIGs from the Soviets, the book says, wouldn't give Nicaragua "a credible offensive force capable of invading any country in the region."

The book is vague about the political leanings of the Sandinista directorate, vague in a way that misleads. Borge, the interior minister, is described as "a poet and a writer [who] has studied law at the National University." This is the fellow who confided to *Playboy* magazine in 1983: "I told [my mother] that I would not be blackmailed by her gentleness and her naivete and that I was a Communist." Humberto Ortega, the defense minister and brother of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega, is described simply as an author. Yet Ortega doesn't mince words about his ideology. "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our revolution," he said in 1981. "Our moral strength is Sandinismo and our doctrine is that of Marxism-Leninism."

As the Sandinistas are legitimized by "the community," the *contras* are demonized. Dissenting opinions are not tolerated on this point. When Bruce Cameron decided that support for the *contras* would promote human rights in Nicaragua, he was no longer welcome in "the community."

THE acceptable line on the *contras* is that they are old Somoza hands who have generated no popular support for their insurgency. "Nicaraguans," wrote Reggie Norton of WOLA in the coalition's book, "are justifiably concerned that far from representing a promise to improve their lives, the *contras* represent a return to the type of repression that characterized the Somoza regime." This may have been true five years ago, but since then the *contras* have been transformed from a small band of ex-National Guardsmen to a 15,000-man force that has won the support of such anti-Somoza leaders as Alfonso Robelo and Arturo Cruz. Mass defections to the *contras*, plus their ability to operate in large areas of Nicaragua, are palpable signs of a surge in popularity, and evidence of growing disenchantment with the Sandinistas.

On the subject of elections, Eldridge of WOLA talks

scornfully about the recent election in Guatemala, which saw a once-exiled dissident win the presidency. After all, Eldridge says, "elections are one note in the symphony of democracy. . . . The gist is it [the Guatemalan election] was technically flawless. Hats off. The question is whether this will wean the military away from its monopoly of power. A lot of people are skeptical." But the Nicaraguan election in 1984 was "a political opening," concluded a report by WOLA and IHRIG. Serious impediments to free choice by the voters were minimized in the report. There was censorship, but the parties were permitted "to communicate to the Nicaraguan people" their "vision for the future" and "to criticize freely the performance of the government." Repeated "incidents of harassment and intimidation" occurred—Sandinista mobs broke up opposition rallies—but they didn't affect much. The chief opposition party, the Coordinator, which dropped out charging that the election wasn't free or fair, acted for "political reasons."

ELDRIDGE SAYS that half the leaders of the Coordinator would rather have an invasion by U.S. Marines than participate in an election. If so, then why did the Coordinator accept the Sandinista condition that the *contras* be asked to lay down their arms for the election? In fact, the Coordinator's candidate, Arturo Cruz, negotiated feverishly for a postponed election in which the opposition would take part. At the key moment, though, the Sandinistas backed out.

The Sandinista sympathizers continue to insist that political pluralism is the general rule in Nicaragua. America's Watch proclaimed in July 1985 that "while prior censorship has been imposed by emergency legislation, debate on major social and political questions is robust, outspoken, even often strident" in Nicaragua. In fact, just as under Somoza's regime, debate is allowed only so long as it doesn't threaten the authorities.

The America's Watch report claims that the group does "not take a position on the U.S. geopolitical strategy in Central America," then goes on to do exactly that. There have been abuses of human rights by the Sandinistas, it says, but "some notable reductions in abuses have occurred in Nicaragua since 1982, despite the pressure caused by escalating external attacks." This is exactly what the Sandinistas say. Baldizon, who was in a position to know, tells a strikingly different story. So do Protestant preachers who have been arrested recently in Nicaragua. And last October the Sandinistas suspended what few civil liberties had been allowed.

One organization that has gone to great lengths to explain away this new state of emergency is the Central American Historical Institute at Georgetown University. Tossing out civil liberties "does not violate the U.N. International Civil and Political Rights Amendment," the institute said in 1984. And the state of emergency doesn't take away the right to life or justify torture or slavery, or block "freedom of thought, conscience, or religion," the institute said. "Nor is it applied in a discriminatory fashion," it added, suggesting that political

repression is less troubling if it is evenhanded.

The institute points out the impressive turnout of 75 percent for the election, despite efforts by the Coordinator to discourage voting. "This, and the fact that opposition parties won one-third of the valid votes, contradicts the accusation that the election was merely a rubber stamp for the [Sandinistas]." Last May, in its publication *Update*, the institute went to great lengths to knock down an article in *La Prensa*, the frequently censored opposition paper in Nicaragua. Jaime Chamorro, the paper's codirector, charged that the Sandinistas added 400,000 votes to their tally. The same month the institute said in another *Update* that opposition parties are alive and "kicking" in Nicaragua's National Assembly. The Sandinistas like "a give and take dynamic to prevail so as to not alienate what amounts to a 'loyal' opposition."

The institute frequently attacks the *contras*, but is squeamish about Sandinista abuses. In a rundown of *contra* leaders, it lists Lucia Cardenal de Salazar as "widow of Jorge Salazar, wealthy coffee grower killed in a November 1980 dispute with Nicaraguan police." Shirley Christian of the *New York Times* reports in her book *Nicaragua* that Jorge Salazar was assassinated by Sandinista security forces. Baldizon confirmed that Sandinista leaders were involved in plotting and carrying out Salazar's death.

THE BIGGEST splash made by "the community" has been with its well-timed reports of *contra* abuses. The most famous of these was written by Reed Brody, a New York lawyer. He charged that the *contras* attack purely civilian targets, and he cited instances of killings of unarmed women and children, rapes, beatings, kidnappings, forced recruitment of new troops, disruption of harvests, and intimidation of people joining government programs. With a congressional vote on aid to the *contras* a few weeks away last spring, the Brody report got big play in the press. But it was, at best, open to question. A Reagan administration examination of the report found that six incidents cited by Brody had been carried out by a *contra* officer later executed for murdering civilians and that four incidents occurred before the *contras* were constituted as an organized force. Brody blames the *contras* for killing a French doctor with mortar fire, but the *contras* say they had no mortars in that incident and that Sandinista fire killed him. Moreover, the administration says 48 rifles and 11,500 rounds of ammunition were seized from what Brody describes as merely a farm, and that a "deeply religious" couple killed by *contras* were actually agents of Sandinista state security. Brody was candid enough to disclose that the idea for the report came from Reichler & Applebaum, the Washington law firm that represents the Nicaraguan government. And he also revealed that in Nicaragua he was housed and given office space by the Sandinistas. The government even directed him to witnesses. Still, Brody said, his investigation was "independent." He made no attempt to probe Sandinista abuses.

A recent Sandinista defector has described Brody's close relationship with the Nicaraguan government. Mario Jose

Guerrero was director of the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The commission, Guerrero said, was ordered to give full support to Brody. Besides office and lodging, it paid all his bills and arranged interviews. Another defector, Bayardo de Jesus Payan, was the chief budget officer of the commission. He described Brody in action to a House subcommittee:

I . . . noticed that many times he showed a photograph in which he was hugging Commander Daniel Ortega and also that he was constantly calling on the telephone to the foreign ministry and visiting it. He also made propaganda for the [Sandinistas] and urged the employees of the institution to vote for Daniel Ortega, since he was a great supporter of the Sandinistas. Also, he always spoke badly about the policy of the government of the United States and of President Ronald Reagan.

WOLA and the International Human Rights Law Group found Brody's evidence compelling, but they were worried that his connection with the Sandinistas would deprive the report of credibility. They dispatched two lawyers, one an outspoken critic of administration policy, to Nicaragua to check on *contra* abuses. These representatives also neglected to examine abuses by the Nicaraguan government. But they managed to corroborate some of the

Brody report, and they declared their support for it. America's Watch supplied a report of its own, which dealt with both sides. It concluded that Sandinista abuses were mainly in 1981 and 1982, and directed against the Miskito Indians. Since then, there had been a "sharp decline" in Sandinista abuses, America's Watch said. Baldizon, for one, would quarrel with that.

"The community" does make some efforts to demonstrate evenhandedness. WOLA, Eldridge says, has been "steadfastly encouraging dialogue in Nicaragua, as in El Salvador." Indeed, WOLA sponsored a visit to the United States by leaders of El Salvador's guerrilla forces. But the *contra* leaders in Nicaragua are out of bounds. Eldridge is for a dialogue between Duarte and his Communist opposition, but not for one between the Sandinistas and the *contras*. The dialogue he wants would pit only the erratic Eden Pastora, once a Sandinista commander, and perhaps Arturo Cruz against the Sandinistas. Cruz could be there only as an individual, not as a leader of the *contras*, says Eldridge. Which means that the main political and military opposition to the Sandinistas would be excluded, and the Sandinistas be under little pressure in the talks to make concessions to democracy. Some dialogue.



ADDENDUM

In the foregoing article Fred Barnes exposes quite ably the pro-Sandinista slant that characterizes a whole "community" of organizations. Yet, as Barnes observes, these organizations have often gained a sympathetic hearing in press and legislative circles -- circles which generally no longer trust direct statements from the Nicaraguan regime.

What, then, gives this "Sandinista lobby" such undue influence? Barnes supplies part of the explanation when he notes that WOLA, America's Watch, and others in the "community" bill themselves as monitors of human rights. In this posture they project an appearance of disinterested objectivity, which lends credence to the information they disseminate.

An even more important factor underlying the perceived prestige of "the community" was not stressed by Barnes, i.e. its strong church ties. Because many of these left-leaning, pro-Sandinista groups draw much of their leadership and financial support from mainline Protestant denominations and Catholic religious orders, their pronouncements are invested with an authority of religious conviction. Moreover, the groups may implicitly claim to represent the views of tens of millions of U.S. Christians -- few of whom even know of the existence of this "Sandinista lobby" in their name.

Two of the main organizations Barnes discusses, WOLA and the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, rely heavily on church backing. The Executive Director of WOLA, Joseph Eldridge, is not precisely a "former missionary," as Barnes describes him. In fact, Eldridge remains a paid missionary of the United Methodist Church even as he coordinates WOLA's work of political advocacy. Furthermore, eleven of the sixteen members of WOLA's Board of Directors work in churches or church-related groups. The list reads like a roll call of prominent left-leaning church activists on Latin America, including: Oscar Bolioli and William Wipfler of the National Council of Churches, Joyce Hill of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Patricia Rumer of the United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries, Thomas Quigley of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Theresa Kane of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union, and Edward Killackey of the Maryknoll Fathers.

WOLA also receives almost one-quarter of its income -- approximately \$100,000 out of \$420,000 in 1984 -- from churches and other religious groups. Among the major donors, giving over \$1,000 each in 1984, were: the National Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the American Lutheran Church, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Jesuit Missions, the St. Columban Foreign Mission Society, and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

There is a similar predominance of ecclesiastical influences within the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy. Over half of its 54 constituent organizations are religious. Of the eleven members of its Executive Committee, eight hold positions in churches or church-related groups. These include Gretchen Eick of the United Church of Christ, Joyce Hamlin of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Edward Snyder of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, Joseph Hacala of Jesuit Social Ministries, and Sally Timmel of Church Women United. The Coalition received \$7,100 in 1984 from the United Methodist Church, as well as significant sums from other denominations.

The church-supported "Sandinista lobby" extends far beyond the few groups mentioned in The New Republic article. For instance, in 1984 the United Methodist Church made 11 grants totaling \$167,000 for activities directly related to Nicaragua. Most of the recipient organizations had among their goals the creation of a more positive image of the Sandinistas. Examples:

\$20,000 to Witness for Peace to send volunteers to live in border regions of Nicaragua. According to a Witness for Peace brochure, it stations these people there in order to "maintain a permanent presence of U.S. citizens in areas where U.S.-backed contras employ tactics of terror, torture, and murder against the civilian population." The volunteers are supposed to "document contra attacks" (nothing is said about Sandinista abuses) and then return to the United States to "engage in local media work and public education."

\$6,000 to the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center, a nucleus of the pro-Sandinista "Popular Church" in Nicaragua. The Valdivieso Center magazine declares its purpose to be the promotion of "Christian reflection in the New Nicaragua."

\$2,938 to AMNLAE, a Nicaraguan women's organization established by and affiliated with the Sandinista Front.

A total of \$27,250 for travel by various groups to Nicaragua. In addition, the Board of Global Ministries pays the salaries of four missionaries in Managua who are mainly involved in hosting such trips. These missionaries, attached to the pro-Sandinista Evangelical Committee for Development Assistance (CEPAD), are hardly disinterested tour guides. Instead they set up the trips with pro-Sandinista background briefings and meetings with carefully selected "typical" Nicaraguans.

United Methodist agencies also underwrite many other organizations with a major, although not an exclusive, interest in Nicaragua. Among grants in this category are:

\$15,000 to the Ecumenical Program of Inter-American Communication and Action (EPICA). The UM budget targets the money for an "education project" that is "aimed to challenge U.S. policy in the region." EPICA's major publication to date on Nicaragua is a book entitled Nicaragua: A People's Revolution.

\$7,150 to the Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America, which coordinates annual "Central America Week" observances designed to protest U.S. backing of El Salvador's democratic government and reverse U.S. opposition to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

\$5,000 to Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America (PACCA). The UM budget says that PACCA was founded to "help provide alternatives" to the recommendations of the bipartisan Kissinger Commission.


\$1,000 to the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), a radical Left research group in sympathy with Castro in Cuba, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and Marxist revolutionary movements throughout Latin America.

\$1,000 to the Women's Coalition against U.S. Intervention in Central America.

The United Methodist Church is by no means the sole, or even the principal, church sponsor of these groups. The National Council of Churches gave \$8,500 in 1983 to the Valdivieso Center, to which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) now supplies two staff members. In 1981 the NCC allocated \$15,000 to the Latin America Evangelical Committee for Christian Education (CELADEC), which praises Nicaragua as a model of liberation theology. Last year the Mennonite Central Committee donated \$7,000 to Witness for Peace, and the Episcopal Church contributed \$1,500 to the Inter-Religious Task Force. The World Council of Churches, which receives almost one-third of its income from U.S. churches, has sent at least \$65,000 to the Valdivieso Center (1985) and \$20,000 to CELADEC (1983).

These few cases merely hint at the wide reach of the pro-Sandinista network within our churches. Unfortunately, we have been unable to make a thorough assessment of its financial dimension since we have been denied access to most of the church financial records. Among the major Protestant denominations, only the United Methodist Church practices full financial disclosure. United Methodists deserve credit for this demonstration of openness, which we hope will set a precedent for wider application.

When the IRD asked nineteen religious groups for information on their financial support for Nicaragua-related activities, they all -- with the forthright exceptions of the Episcopal Church and the Mennonite Central Committee -- refused to divulge the requested details. A few sent the most general figures on their spending, without specifying the organizations funded. Clearly church agencies owe a fuller account of their stewardship.



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729 15th STREET N.W., SUITE 900

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

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April 11, 1986

These two articles by the distinguished reporter, Roy Howard Beck, of the United Methodist Reporter, tell an astonishing story of religious repression in Nicaragua today and the fear it causes among Nicaraguan Christians about speaking freely with U.S. visitors. The articles also reveal the unhappy role of some U.S. church figures in Nicaragua and the part played by the Protestant relief agency, CEPAD (funded in large part by U.S. churches), in aiding the Sandinista government.

(202) 393-3200

*The members of this board serve as individuals active in their own denominations, not as representatives of the institutions with which they are identified.

Nicaragua. two perspectives on freedom

Missionaries lament Sandinistas' loss of allies

By ROY HOWARD BECK
Associate Editor

United Methodist missionaries Peggy and Howard Heiner were feeling increasingly isolated when the Reporter called them at their Managua, Nicaragua, home late on March 25.

For 24 hours they had monitored Voice of America radio broadcasts about Pres. Reagan's sending emergency military aid to Honduras to counter an alleged border crossing by Nicaragua's army.

Hardly any U.S. group gives Nicaragua's Sandinista government the benefit of the doubt any more on their commitment to democracy, the Heiners lamented.

They said U.S. mainline Protestant agencies, church groups that travel to Nicaragua and workers such as themselves increasingly are isolated as the only U.S. sources of belief that the Sandinistas can resolve Nicaraguans' problems without pressure from outside.

NCC: mistreatment exaggerated

Experiences a few days earlier had contributed to their feeling.

The UM missionaries had spent some time aiding a delegation of Democratic congressmen and a group from the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. during their visits to Nicaragua.

The Protestant group took a position of openness to the Sandinistas while the Democrats seemed to shut them out, the Heiners said.

The NCC delegation, like most U.S. religious groups that visit Nicaragua, came back home with a report of hope



REPORTER PHOTO BY ROY HOWARD BECK

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—Missionary Howard Heiner (right) helps translate for an official of CEPAD, an ecumenical Protestant organization with good relations with the Sandinista government.

and optimism for Nicaraguans in a society where it said so many leaders are committed to the poor.

Although the Nicaraguan government has "misused" some religious leaders, the U.S. press has exaggerated reports of mistreatment of them, the NCC's chief executive, the Rev. Arie Brouwer, told a news conference in New York.

"It is more accurate to say the church in El Salvador is persecuted than to say the church in Nicaragua is persecuted," Dr. Brouwer said.

On the other hand, the Democratic congressmen ended their fact-finding

trip saying the situation is grim.

Regarding religious freedom and other freedoms in Nicaragua, "there is no such thing as saying if we don't do something this will be another Cuba; this already is another Cuba," said Rep. Kenneth Gray (D-Ill.). A week earlier, he had helped lead the 222-210 defeat of Pres. Reagan's request for aid to rebels trying to overthrow the Sandinistas.

The Heiners said there was a time when Democratic leaders opposed to Pres. Reagan had charitable attitudes toward the Sandinistas similar to those of many U.S. church groups.

Mr. Heiner said he and Nicaraguan officials of CEPAD, an ecumenical relief and development organization supportive of the government, tried to help the Democratic congressmen understand why the Sandinistas had limited some liberties.

(The four UM missionaries in Nicaragua all work with CEPAD).

But the congressmen didn't seem able to hear anything after having been told by the Roman Catholic cardinal in Nicaragua that there is a death struggle between the church and the government, Mr. Heiner said.

"The Democrats have become fearful of Nicaragua," he said.

Democratic leaders and some major religious groups based in Washington also demonstrated their mistrust and fear of the Sandinistas recently even as they fought alongside mainline Protestants against Pres. Reagan's rebel aid package.

Democratic leaders, the National Association of Evangelicals and U.S. Roman Catholic bishops said the Sandinistas' repression not only is real but has "reached very critical proportions," in the words of the bishops.

'Put incidents in context'

The Heiners in Nicaragua don't deny that acts of religious restriction have occurred or that many Christians are dissatisfied with the Sandinistas.

Mr. Heiner said he agreed with a pro-Sandinista clergyman who said in Washington last month that Nicaragua's

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the midst of major U.S. actions concerning Nicaragua, these two exclusive interviews with the Reporter provide insight from different perspectives on the complicated issue of religious freedom and on the ability of U.S. Christians to find out what is going on.

largest Protestant denomination, the Assemblies of God, basically opposes the Sandinistas.

Regarding last fall's roundup of Protestant and Catholic leaders for interrogations—and for intimidation, according to many—Mrs. Heiner said: "In no way do we condone the way they were dealt with."

Mr. Heiner said the Sandinistas were "ridiculous" in shutting down Nicaragua's Campus Crusade for Christ and confiscating all literature and equipment.

But the UM missionaries said people need to put such incidents in the context of a country that is severely frightened by United States hostility toward it, exhibited in such things as an economic embargo, off-and-on military support of rebels, U.S. military exercises near the border in Honduras, and inflammatory public rhetoric about Nicaragua's "communist menace."

The direct military threat of the rebels has diminished drastically from a year ago, Mr. Heiner acknowledged. When the UM Council of Bishops delegation visited Nicaragua a year ago, people were risking their lives to harvest coffee and cotton. The harvest this year was nearly without incident, he said.

That raises questions about why the Sandinistas felt there were national security reasons to further crack down on

civil liberties and move against some religious leaders, he said. The answer is that the Sandinistas fear some Protestant leaders are plotting urban sabotage, he said.

"When we say we understand why they (Sandinistas) are acting the way they do, in no way does that mean we condone it," Mr. Heiner added.

'Church liberty more than worship'

He said he doesn't particularly agree with the conservative theological and political views of the Protestant pastors under suspicion by the Nicaraguan government. And he said he believes the Nicaraguan government has legitimate reasons to suspect those pastors are socially and politically opposing it.

(The Protestant pastors in question have steadfastly denied they have been involved in any political activity.)

"But I believe religious liberty is much more than freedom of worship," Mr. Heiner said.

He said the people who have been arrested have a right to feel fear. "We should stand with them even though we may disagree with them," he said.

He said he would not characterize Nicaragua as a country of religious repression because only about 1 percent of the Protestant pastors, for example, had had altercations with the government.

'U.S. visitors misled by silence of repressed'

By ROY HOWARD BECK
Associate Editor

Nicaraguan evangelicals don't trust groups of U.S. Christians that visit their country, says Nicaraguan evangelist Jimmy Hassan.

Because of that, they don't tell the groups about their troubles with the government, he says.

Thus, most of the dozens of tour groups each year go back to the United States and report they didn't find any religious repression.

Mr. Hassan, head of Nicaragua's Campus Crusade for Christ until the Sandinista government shut it down last fall, says he knows that is true because he experienced it many times before fleeing Nicaragua in December.

UM bishops 'didn't get real story'

That was true when the United Methodist Council of Bishops sent a delegation to Nicaragua in January 1985, Mr. Hassan said in an interview in Dallas with the Reporter.

Evangelical leaders simply did not tell the bishops about their biggest problems with the government, he said.

A major impediment to the UM bishops' getting the real story on government harassment of religion in an interview with evangelical leaders was that they arrived in a CEPAD van and with a CEPAD employee, said Mr. Hassan.

(CEPAD is an ecumenical, Protestant relief and development organization. Its primary financial support comes from the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., World Council of Churches and other non-Nicaraguan church bodies such

as the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. CEPAD arranges a large percentage of U.S. church groups' tours.)

Many evangelical Protestants look upon CEPAD with the suspicion that it is a kind of branch of the government because of its close working relationship with the Sandinistas, Mr. Hassan said.

NCC meeting had tape recording

The wisdom of staying tight-lipped was proven a month after the bishops left, Mr. Hassan said. That's when he and two other evangelicals, one of whom had talked with the bishops, openly criticized the Sandinista government in front of a group sponsored by the NCC. The three were leaders in the National Council of Evangelical Pastors that includes the majority of the nation's Protestant pastors.

Mr. Hassan said he told the NCC group about a congregation in which the youths two months earlier had put on a play, "The Trial of Pontius Pilate," that emphasized the government's role in killing Jesus.

Police arrested the youths after the performance, took them to headquarters, forced them to strip and sign confessions that they had put on a play against the government and then placed them under house arrest, he said.

The parents of the youths had come to Mr. Hassan for help because he is a lawyer, he said. (Mr. Hassan was a judge during the first two years of Sandinista revolutionary rule. He said he decided to go into fulltime evangelism work because he felt nothing could bring about more beneficial changes in people or so-

ciety than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.)

Mr. Hassan said he told the NCC group that a CEPAD official helped coerce confessions out of the children.

At the end of the NCC session, Mr. Hassan said he noticed that one woman in the group had a tape recorder. Then he found that she was with CEPAD and was United Methodist missionary Peggy Heiner.

Tape used by Sandinistas

Not long after that, he said, Dora Maria Telles, a political secretary in the Sandinista Party, called some leaders of the pastors' council to her office where State Security people were also gathered.

"She said we couldn't get permits for foreign evangelists to come to Nicaragua because our council was full of counter-revolutionaries," Mr. Hassan said. "When she was asked to name them, she named the three of us who had talked [to the NCC group] and repeated textually what we had said."

Soon after, a CEPAD official called one of the three to his office and demanded that the pastors' council publicly denounce a publication of the Institute on Religion and Democracy in Washington, Mr. Hassan said.

Mr. Hassan said that was the first the council had heard of the institute.

The CEPAD official repeated the same accusation as had the Sandinista official and played the tape of the NCC session, Mr. Hassan said.

The government also began calling the pastors in to press for the denouncement.

Mr. Hassan said they learned later that the Rev. Oscar Bolioli of the NCC's New York office had written a letter to CEPAD asking it to get evangelical leaders to denounce criticisms of CEPAD contained in the Institute on Religion and Democracy publication. That publication included reports that members of the Nicaraguan pastors council were criticizing the Sandinistas and CEPAD.

The opposition newspaper, "La Presna," somehow got a copy of Mr. Bolioli's letter and got it past government censors to be published in its entirety in one edition of the paper.

Mr. Hassan said the incident over the tape and Mr. Bolioli's letter began a period of constant harassment from State Security of him and other council leaders.

Lesson learned

Nicaraguan evangelicals have learned their lesson and are very unlikely to give a visiting group a full explanation of how the Sandinistas are treating them, he said. Police ordered interrogated pastors not to talk about what happened to them, he said.

But the result is that dozens of U.S. groups visit Nicaragua and then unintentionally mislead U.S. Christians to believe everything is OK, he said.

He said that probably is one reason why Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega received two standing ovations when he spoke last Oct. 25 in Riverside Church, New York City. The audience included hundreds of Christians, including a group from the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries' fall



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS PHOTO BY RONALD P. HOWARD

Nicaraguan evangelist Jimmy Hassan holds copy of "Four Spiritual Laws." Sandinistas confiscated 50,000 copies as "subversive literature."

meeting.

When he heard about that incident, Mr. Hassan said, he felt betrayed by his Christian brothers and sisters.

That was the same day Mr. Ortega's state police put a pistol to his (Mr. Hassan's) forehead in a marathon interrogation session in Managua and threatened to kill him if he didn't confess to opposing the government, he said.

UM missionary Peggy Heiner confirmed with the Reporter last week that at the request of other CEPAD leaders she had tape recorded the NCC meeting Mr. Hassan described. She said she had done it openly and had made no attempt to conceal the recorder.

She said that so many "outlandish" statements had been made against CE-

PAD that she played the tape for CEPAD's administrators. She said she had not heard that anybody from the government had gotten a copy of it. "No way did I give it to State Security," she emphasized.

The tape did lead to a confrontation between leaders of the pastors' council and CEPAD, she said.

Her husband, Howard Heiner, said the charge that State Security got a copy of the tape is one he has trouble believing.

Mr. Heiner acknowledged, however, that Nicaraguan Protestants are so badly divided that Mr. Hassan probably is correct about the inability of church tours to hear real feelings from dissatisfied evangelicals if the tour groups have any connection with CEPAD.