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Broken Promises: Sandinista Repression of Human Rights in Nicaragua

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SANDINISTA REPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA

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I. INTRODUCTION

In June 1979, the organization of American states (OAS), in an unprecedented move, recognized the coalition fighting against the repressive dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. To do this, the OAS had to withdraw its recognition of the still-ruling Somoza dictatorship as the legitimate government of Nicaragua. The most persuasive argument for this move by the OAS was the coalition's promises to establish a pluralistic society with a mixed economy, to hold early elections, and to pursue a nonaligned foreign policy. In July 1979, the coalition which represented every major sector of Nicaraguan society--including organized labor, private business, and the Catholic Church--overthrew the dictatorship of Somoza. Many Nicaraguans and supporters of the revolution in other countries had high hopes that the new government would improve the lives of all the country's citizens.

The Sandinista government, heir of the coalition, has violated these promises made to the OAS and to the Nicaraguan people because of the policies of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The FSLN's nine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary leaders, declaring themselves the "vanguard of the revolution," have imposed their programs on the government and the people of Nicaragua.

To consolidate their power, the Sandinistas, with Soviet and Cuban help, have established a pervasive security apparatus and auxiliary organizations. The resulting repression has caused tens of thousands of Nicaraguans to flee their homeland. In addition, some 10,000 Nicaraguans have taken up arms to resist the Sandinista dictatorship. This paper describes the instruments of repression employed by the FSLN and gives examples of their impact on Nicaraguan society.

II. INSTRUMENTS OF REPRESSION

To extend their control over Nicaraguan society, the Sandinistas use a variety of state institutions, including the army (EPS), the secret police, and the regular police forces. The Sandinistas control and use to their advantage most of the media. Only one newspaper, La Prensa, is independent; yet it must submit its material to government authorities for review and censorship. The Sandinistas have also created Cuban- and Soviet-style "mass organizations" designed to indoctrinate and control the people at all levels of society. These organizations have adopted the structures, the rhetoric, and the methods of their Cuban and Soviet models.

State Security Forces (The Secret Police)

At the heart of the Sandinista system of repression and control is the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE), or secret police. The DGSE, modeled after the Cuban Intelligence Agency (DGI), is guided by a former colonel in the Cuban intelligence service who has become a Nicaraguan citizen. About 400 Cuban and 70 Soviet advisers work closely with the DGSE, along with several East Germans and Bulgarians.¹ The Soviets and their allies provide facilities, training, and equipment to the DGSE, in addition to operational guidance.

In his testimony before the United States Senate, and in a number of other interviews, Miguel Bolanos Hunter, a former high-ranking counter-intelligence officer in the DGSE, has described the structure and role of this Sandinista secret police organization. Bolanos defected to Costa Rica on May 7, 1983. He has described how, through the DGSE, the Sandinistas have been able to infiltrate and keep watch on all levels of Nicaraguan society.²

The Sandinistas have used the secret police network not only for surveillance and information gathering, but also for other projects designed to help them consolidate power. For example, the DGSE directs the activities of the so-called mass organizations. The secret police regularly invoke the "turbas divinas" (literally "divine mobs") against Sandinista opponents, particularly against opponents within the Church. The mobs that heckled the Pope during his celebration of a Mass in Managua in 1983 were arranged and coached by agents of the DGSE. The DGSE has harassed business leaders, independent trade unionists, the Church leadership, and the independent newspaper, La Prensa.³

The Mass organizations

The mass organizations include the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs) and the turbas, the Sandinista Workers' Central (CST), the Rural Workers' Association (ATC), the

militias, the Sandinista Women's Association (AMNLAE), and the Sandinista Youth (JS-19J). Each organization has a role in the FSLN's plan to control all aspects of Nicaraguan life.

Sandinista Defense Committees

The most important as well as the oldest of the Sandinista mass organizations is the network of Sandinista Defense Committees, called CDSs. These committees have become a major force for ideological education, social control, and security enforcement at the neighborhood level. Under the guise of security, the FSLN has converted these groups into formidable instruments of the party. Interior Minister Tomas Borge has stated that their goal is to be the "eyes and ears of the revolution."

To assure continued control over some 10,000 CDSs, the Sandinistas placed a trusted FSLN officer, Leticia Herrera, in charge of the national CDS Federation and organized the CDSs along military lines. The FSLN developed the CDSs into an effective intelligence system that works closely with the government security police. The structure of the CDSs resembles the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) in Cuba.⁴

Controlling the Workers: The CST and the ATC

To garner support for their policies and to neutralize the independent worker organizations that already existed, the Sandinistas created new mass organizations for Nicaraguan workers, in both the cities and the countryside. They established the CST (Central Sandinista de Trabajadores), or Sandinista Workers' Central for urban workers, and the ATC (Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo), or Rural Workers' Association. Using the CST, the CDSs, the secret police, and other instruments at their disposal, the Sandinistas have tried to consolidate their control over Nicaraguan labor.

Immediately following the victory of July 19, 1979, the FSLN insisted on the dissolution of all independent labor unions, including the two large non-Marxist union centrals: the CUS (Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical, affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) and the CTN (Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua, oriented toward the Christian Democrats and affiliated with the World Confederation of Labor). When the CUS and CTN refused to dissolve, the Sandinistas embarked on a campaign to force these two independent union centrals to yield. To that end, the FSLN has violated universally accepted concepts of human and trade union rights.⁵

The Militias

The FSLN created the Sandinista Popular Militias in 1980 as a back-up to the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS). For many reasons the Sandinistas have had difficulty recruiting volunteers for the militias. For example, the training and equipment provided to members of the militias have always been minimal. In the initial battles against the Nicaraguan guerrillas, the Sandinistas employed poorly trained militia recruits. Numerous casualties resulted, while the Sandinista soldiers stayed in the barracks. As rebel organizations and activities have grown in size and intensity, the FSLN has had to send the army into combat.

Nicaraguan Women's Association--Asociacion de Mujeres Nicaraguenses: Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE)

Created in 1979, the Sandinista mass organization for women, the AMNLAE, is named after the first FSLN woman to be killed in combat (1969). The Sandinistas created the AMNLAE to draw women into an organization supporting the FSLN. To form the organization, the Sandinistas suppressed several previously active women's groups, including the women's movement of the Socialist Party.

Lea Guido, AMNLAE's General Secretary, was named Minister of Social Welfare, and she used her position to fill the Ministry with AMNLAE members who followed her lead. Eventually, as AMNLAE became active in the health campaign, Guido was made minister of Health.⁶

Sandinista Youth "19th of July" Movement--Juventud Sandinista "19 de Julio"

Established in 1979, Sandinista Youth (JS-19J) grew out of the Nicaraguan Revolutionary Youth Group (JRN).⁷ Since its establishment, Sandinista Youth has functioned within the school system from primary through university. Its tactics include the turbas' harassment and vandalism, political meetings that interrupt classes, and expulsion of "uncooperative" students and faculty. (When members of Sandinista Youth miss classes or neglect homework, they can claim that "revolutionary activities" take priority over school work.) But most significant is the FSLN's use of the youth movement--in conjunction with the CDSs, the militias, and the CST--to intimidate dissenters.

III. RESULTS OF REPRESSION: SANDINISTA HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In the process of creating a Marxist-Leninist state in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have frequently violated the most basic human rights standards.

Social Control and a Climate of Fear

At the end of the struggle against Somoza, most Nicaraguans expected a net gain in freedom, as the Sandinistas promised the OAS. But the end of the Somoza regime did not mark the beginning of freedom for the citizens of Nicaragua. FSLN suppression of promised freedoms has been accomplished by a variety of means. The FSLN has combined the use of mass organizations and official instruments of the government to engineer a gradual movement toward a one-party state. Among the most important mass organizations in this campaign have been the Sandinista Defense Committees.

The Sandinista Defense Committees are both a network of informers and instruments of political intimidation. As they ferret out dissidents and alleged subversives, the CDSs tolerate everyday grumbling about inflation, commodity scarcities, and insensitive government policies. But individuals who criticize the "revolutionary process" or its leadership are subjected to pressure ranging from public ridicule and defacement of their homes by Sandinista mobs to loss of employment and even detention. There have been reports that teachers have asked children to spy on their parents and report suspicious activity.

Activities of the Defense Committees include political education meetings and "Revolutionary Vigilance," a program in which committee members stand watch over their neighborhood during hours of darkness. Although the FSLN attempts to characterize the watchers as mere lookouts for thieves or other anti-social elements, the constant presence of FSLN "eyes and ears of the revolution" curtails the freedom and activities of possible opponents of the regime.⁸

Comandante Tomas Borge's Ministry of the Interior, which controls the state security apparatus, put the CDSs in charge of facilitating passports, visas, and licenses. Letters from local CDSs--needed to obtain basic government services--are denied to anyone considered "suspicious" or "counter-revolutionary," or to applicants who do not belong to a CDS. Thus, a nongovernmental organization linked to the FSLN controls access to important governmental services.

In theory, participation in the Defense Committees and their activities is voluntary. However, the Sandinistas employ many methods to induce individuals to take part. CDS control over the distribution of ration cards for the purchase of basic

cooperation. In describing how this is done, Robert S. Leiken wrote that ration cards are confiscated for failure to attend designated meetings. An even more effective and threatening method consisted of the CDSIS collecting ration cards prior to the meetings and returning them only to those who attended the meetings.⁹

This atmosphere of intimidation is increased by the "turbas divinas," composed of Sandinista supporters. These mobs demonstrate in front of homes or offices of opposition figures, chant slogans and threats, and deface homes or business establishments with pro-government graffiti. While the government officially takes no responsibility for the actions of the mobs, the government controls the mobs and selects their targets.¹⁰ In defense of these mobs, Daniel Ortega, currently head of state of Nicaragua and the FSLN's presidential candidate, stated in September 1984: "We are not ashamed to be mobs because to be part of a mob is to be part of the people."¹¹

Massive Military Build-up

Since their takeover of Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have effected a massive expansion of this small nation's military capability. While Somoza's notorious National Guard never exceeded 14,000 men, the FSLN army has now reached at least 48,800 regulars, with an additional 52,000 trained and capable of rapid mobilization.¹² According to Dr. Jack Wheeler, on a per capita basis, the Nicaraguan army and reserves would equal a force of 13 million American men and women under arms.¹³ The maximum mobilization of all armed services of the United States for World War II did not exceed 13 million troops.¹⁴

The Sandinista-initiated draft, which uses "press gang" coercion, has encountered resistance and evasion. Between January and May of 1984 an estimated 1,500 youths between 17 and 25 years of age fled Nicaragua.¹⁵ In mid-September 1984, 12 Nicaraguan students evaded the draft by running across the Costa Rican border during the traditional Independence Day Freedom Torch procession.¹⁶

Further, the FSLN has made draft resistance worse by their inadequate preparation of the draftees for combat. When faced in April 1984 by some 350 angry mothers of drafted militiamen, Federico Lopez, a Sandinista delegate in the Department of Propaganda and Political Education (DEPEP), admitted that the government had sent more than 1,500 militiamen into combat with only two months of training. The mothers had complained that their sons were being mistreated and sent into battle with insufficient training and equipment.¹⁷ A Nicaraguan journalist who interviewed some of these mothers on his radio program was jailed as a "counter-revolutionary."

The draft was condemned by the Nicaraguan Conference of Bishops, whose September 1, 1983, pastoral letter stated: "Consequently, no one can be obliged to take up arms in order to defend a determined ideology with which he is not in accord, nor to accept obligatory military service to benefit a political party."¹⁸ This statement by the Bishops highlights one of the objections to the draft, i.e., that the EPS is an army of the Sandinista party (FSLN) not of the Nicaraguan state. Thus, youths are being drafted into the service of a political party.

Political Killings

The Permanent Commission for Human Rights (CPDH) was an early target of Sandinista repression. Founded in Managua in 1977, the CPDH had suffered severe harassment for exposing human rights violations under Somoza. After the ouster of Somoza in July 1979, the CPDH continued to collect and publish information about human rights violations in Nicaragua. Despite continuing harassment from the Sandinista regime, the CPDH and other human rights observers have been able to expose a pattern of serious human rights violations in Nicaragua.

Despite the abolition of the death penalty in Nicaragua and claims by the Sandinista comandantes that they respect human rights, from 1981 to 1984 the CPDH received 97 complaints of deaths attributed to Sandinista civil and military authorities. In each case, the death occurred shortly after the deceased had been detained by Sandinista officials who had fully identified themselves. In each case, the deceased "died trying to escape," or "died in" combat with army troops," or "died of heart attack" or under other suspicious circumstances.¹⁹ The CPDH brought all of these cases to the attention of the appropriate authorities and sought explanations. The only responses to the CPDH or to the relatives of the deceased have been threats against their lives.

Typical was the case of Nelson Perez, a Managua taxi driver who died while in police custody. As his widow told the CPDH in June 1982, Perez had been a member of the Taxi Drivers' Union and had attended a union meeting at which Sandinista Comandante Bayardo Arce spoke. Perez booed something Arce said and was arrested that same night by the security police (DGSE). After Perez had been held incommunicado for three days, the family learned from a television news program that he had been shot "while attempting to escape."²⁰

A number of other cases were described by Humberto Belli, former editorial page editor of La Prensa, the remaining independent newspaper of Nicaragua, in testimony before the Congressional Task Force on Central America. Among the evidence of human rights abuses he presented was a document

signed by the President of the Nicaraguan Council of Bishops, Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega. The Bishop's report, issued in November 1983, provided the names of lay Christian leaders killed by the Sandinistas. Examples cited in the report were:

--Alfonso Galiano: A lay leader from Las Pavas, Galiano was killed in his home by "burglars" who stole no property. Later they were revealed to be Sandinista militiamen, who, after being held briefly for the crime, were released and remain at liberty.

--Daniel Sierra: Charged with unspecified counter-revolutionary activity, Sierra was jailed. According to the Bishop's report, his Sandinista jailers killed him, but told his wife he had committed suicide.

--Yamilet Sequeira de Lorio: She rejected an invitation to become an agent of the security police and, as a result, was detained along with her husband and a third person. Several days later their bodies, with signs of brutal torture, were discovered in the San Miguel region.²¹

Disappearances

In a preliminary report to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 1979, the CPDH listed the names of about 100 prisoners of the Sandinistas who had disappeared. Since then, the CPDH has reported hundreds of cases of several hundred cases reported in 1979, there are 170 still unsolved. In 1980, 355 cases were reported, with 30 remaining unsolved. From 1981 to 1983, 433 cases of disappearances were reported to the CPDH, and 142 remain unsolved. The CPDH believes that these disappearances, whether permanent or temporary, involve "a deliberate policy of keeping prisoners incommunicado and at the mercy of their captors, undergoing all sorts of physical and psychological abuse."²²

Torture

During 1983, the CPDH compiled 102 cases involving physical and psychological abuse and torture of detainees. For example, prisoners were kept in dark and poorly ventilated cells, often isolated for long periods, fed meals at irregular intervals, and beaten with belts or pistol butts. Some prisoners spoke of being kept naked in cold, small cells, or being stripped and humiliated before guards or other prisoners. Others reported long, intense interrogation at irregular hours of the day. In a few cases outside Managua, the CPDH received reports of prisoners suffering numerous broken bones, of peasants being raped, forced on long marches with their hands bound, beaten, and made to face mock firing squads.²³ Miguel Bolanos Hunter has described State Security (DGSE) jails where secret police officials use sophisticated methods of psychological torturer

One brutal case is that of Prudencio Baltodano, then a 40-year-old farmer and Pentecostal lay preacher living in a small village. In February 1984, Baltodano and one other man, along with about 40 women and children, fled the scene of a battle between Sandinista troops and a force of anti-government guerrillas. The group was captured by Sandinista troops, and Baltodano and the other man were separated from their group and beaten. Upon learning Baltodano's religious affiliation, the soldiers tied him to a tree and taunted him. They struck his head with a rifle butt, cut off his ears, and cut his throat with a bayonet. Although he was left to bleed to death, he survived and managed to escape to Costa Rica.

Baltodano claims that his experience is not unique, that he has seen others whom the Sandinistas mutilated even more brutally. In his March 14, 1984, statement before the Nicaraguan Council for Human Rights, he said that while the DGSE held Pastor Miguel Flores in custody, they cut off his nose, gouged out his eyes, and peeled away the skin of his face.²⁵

Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

The Sandinistas admit holding about 5,000 people in jail, including some 2,000 former National Guardsmen and about 300 people convicted of "subversive activities." The CPDH estimates that as many as 1,400 others are being held in detention. The 1982 State of Emergency suspended the right to habeas corpus as well as provisions that limited detention without charge to seven days. (Habeas corpus was partially restored in July 1984 as a gesture to encourage opposition participation in the elections scheduled for November 4, 1984.)

An example of FSLN procedures is presented in the "Zona Franca" case. When the Somoza government fell, the Nicaraguan Red Cross established in Zona Franca, a small industrial area near Sandino Airport, a refugee holding area under Red Cross protection. A number of enlisted members of Somoza's National Guard, and a few Guard junior officers who had been unable to flee through the airport, gathered under this Red Cross protection. Initially the FSLN recognized the area's special status. Despite that recognition, virtually all of the Guardsmen were later tried under the "special tribunals." Some of these Guardsmen, actually no more than traffic policemen, were sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Security police arrested and detained hundreds of people in 1983-84 under the provisions of the State of Emergency. Open dissent often resulted in arrest. Many suspected "subversives" were held in special facilities, with no access to legal counsel; some were detained without trial, others were sent before "special tribunals." The CPDH compiled 965 such cases in 1983. Former National Guardsmen were kept in jail even after their jail sentences had expired.

In 1983, judges ordered the release of 46 Miskito Indians, but they were kept in custody until they received a special government "pardon" (for charges on which they had already been acquitted). Ten pastors of the Moravian Church were among the Miskito prisoners released by the government in 1983. All had been detained without being tried for periods of up to two years. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), in its 1982-83 report, lamented that the State of Emergency, which the Sandinista Government had declared, "gave rise to abuses in regard to political dissidents, many of whom were arbitrarily arrested, held incommunicado, and imprisoned for periods in excess of the time allowed under the laws covering the subject."

In a formal statement to the U.S. House of Representatives in September 1983, Amnesty International expressed concern for "what appears to be a pattern of harassment and intimidation through short-term, but arbitrary imprisonment of supporters of lawful opposition, trade union and other groups."²⁶

"Special Tribunals"--Denial of Fair Trial

The IACHR complained in 1980 of extra-judicial, "special tribunals" set up to try accused former National Guardsmen and alleged allies of former dictator Somoza. The IACHR recommended that cases tried by the tribunals be reviewed by a proper judicial institution, but the Sandinistas ignored the recommendation.²⁷ In early 1983, these tribunals were revived by the government as "popular anti-Somocista tribunals" to deal with the large number of cases of accused "guerrillas" and "subversives." Since the tribunals are outside the law, their decisions cannot be appealed to the regular court system. Members of the tribunals are selected from among the Sandinista mass organizations; only the president of a tribunal is required to be a lawyer. While the accused is allowed legal counsel and the right to introduce evidence, the tribunal has wide discretionary authority over admission of evidence. Charges are often vague and subjective. Journalists are not usually allowed access to tribunal sessions. Trials are scheduled on short notice, limiting the ability of the accused to prepare a defense.

By the end of 1983, of the 270 prisoners tried by the tribunals, all but about a dozen were convicted and sentenced to prison. At the end of 1983, 100 cases were being tried and 250 cases were pending. The IACHR criticized the creation of the tribunals, pointing out that the very use of the word "anti" in the title reveals a basic "lack of impartiality, independence and autonomy As a result, their impartiality, fairness and independence of judgment are seriously compromised."²⁸

Freedom of Speech and Press

Despite their officially stated support for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the Sandinistas have found many ways to restrict those freedoms. The activities of the secret police (DGSE) and the mass organizations, the rhetoric of the Sandinistas, and the threats of arrest for public criticism of the FSLN, all inhibit freedom of speech in Nicaragua.

Since 1979, 20 radio news programs have ceased broadcasting as a result of government censorship. All but one radio news program, both television stations, and two of the three major newspapers are either controlled by the FSLN or explicitly support the FSLN line. Only the newspaper La Prensa retains an independent editorial position. Since March 1982 the paper has been subject to government censorship of all of its news articles and editorials.

Censorship of La Prensa has been arbitrary and unpredictable. Each day, the newspaper must submit its proposed edition to government censors at the Ministry of the Interior. On occasion, and even at the present time, articles covering news published in the pro-FSLN papers Barricada and El Nuevo Diario have been censored from La Prensa. On other occasions, articles censored one day have been permitted the next. On at least a dozen occasions in 1984, the censors have cut so much of a proposed edition of La Prensa that its editors could not run an edition that day.

The FSLN goes beyond censorship of the press. The CPDH has reported that pro-government mobs have been responsible for "physical attacks on directors of the media, attacks on their homes, destruction of radio transmitters by supposed pro-government fanatics who have never been punished for these criminal actions."²⁹ Unidentified attackers fired a rocket at La Prensa's printing plant in October 1983. That same month, the government confiscated a transmitter from independent Radio Mundial and closed the station for a time, saying that its license was out of order.

The Catholic Church in Nicaragua has been a major target of the FSLN's suppression of freedom of speech and press. When government censors in 1983 insisted that Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo submit his sermons to censors before they were aired on television or radio, the Church refused to comply. Consequently, his sermons reach people across the country only when they are published in La Prensa.

Repression of Independent Trade Unions

The AFL-CIO in the United States condemned "the betrayal of the Nicaraguan revolution by the Sandinista government" in a resolution at its 1983 constitutional convention. The

following examples were cited by the AFL-CIO to demonstrate Sandinista repression of trade unions:

--In 1979, the CUS wrote to the Sandinista government to complain that armed Sandinistas were harassing union leaders and disrupting union activities, and that "comandantes in Corinto and Chinandega were accusing CUS leaders of being thieves, sell-outs, imperialists, and counter-revolutionaries."

--In December 1979, the CTN's headquarters in Managua was fired upon by Sandinista troops.

--In January 1980, "the port union of Corinto was terrorized into affiliating with the Sandinista Workers' Central (CST) after the union's Secretary General was arrested and held without charges."

--Also in that month, Sandinista anti-labor activity included the occupation by soldiers of CTN's regional office, the arrest of the Secretary General of the stevedores' union in Corinto, and the bombing of the home of the CUS secretary for cultural affairs in Leon. In addition four CUS leaders were arrested.

--In March 1980, Tomas Borge, Minister of Interior and member of the National Directorate, interfered with the Hotel Intercontinental Union's elections by ordering that new officers be elected. When the results displeased him, Borge ordered another election.

--In February 1981, Carlos Huembes, Secretary General of the CTN, was attacked and beaten by a Sandinista mob at the airport. Sandinista troops made no move to intervene. After the attack, which caused a broken nose and deep cuts, he was followed by the secret police and publicly denounced by FSLN officials, and his home was painted with Sandinista graffiti: "Always watched. Death to traitors of the FSLN."

--In January 1982, the Chinandega Transport Union (2,000 members), having become disillusioned with the FSLN's central, the CST, called a general assembly. They invited CTN and CUS representatives to describe their centrals, and the three centrals signed an agreement to respect election results. Then the 480 delegates voted: the CUS received 400 votes, the CTN 69 votes, and the CST 11 votes. The next day, the Sandinistas began a campaign of reprisals and harassment against the local union's leaders, who were told that "a disaffiliation from the CST was tantamount to counter-revolutionary activities."

--March and April 1982, 40 CTN activists were detained and interrogated by the police; three CTN Executive Committee members received death threats.

--In May 1982, armed men broke into the offices of the CTN. These invaders went through the union's records.

--In February 1983, three CTN leaders in Matagalpa were picked up by the police and detained without charges being filed. They were held for four months.

--During spring 1983, the stevedores union in Corinto (1,800 members) voted to switch its affiliation from the CST to the CUS. The Sandinista actions which followed caused Martha Baltodano, National Coordinator of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights, to send the following letter to the Human Rights Department of the OAS and Amnesty International:

We denounce the trade union related repression against members of the dock workers of Corinto. A score of armed mobs backed by governmental authorities engaged in a violent physical confrontation with defenseless workers to prevent them from disaffiliating from the official trade union central organization and to affiliate to the Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CUS). Alejandro Arnuero Martinez, Julio Solis Samayoa, Jorge Gutierrez Medrano, Jose Gomez Novoa, Francisco Davila Mendoza, Guillermo Salmeron Jimenez and Crescencio Carranza, dock workers and leaders of their union have been arrested; seven others had their dock workers cards destroyed, which resulted in their unjustified dismissal for absenteeism, and some two hundred and sixty workers are on the black list, being threatened with dismissal by the company that runs the dock operations in Corinto.

We would appreciate your good offices before the Nicaraguan Government to ensure that further and serious reprisals of this kind do not take place.

--In July 1983, Estela Palavicini of a small local union in Corinto was arrested and released. Three months later, she was arrested and tortured. After being released, she was told she had no job and had been blacklisted by the CST.

--Also in July 1983, Jose Miranda Wilford, Secretary General of the Radio Workers' Union, was arrested for resisting the forced affiliation of his union with the CST.

--In December 1983, the home of Carlos Huembes of the CTN was again besieged by members of the Sandinista militia, who shouted obscenities and branded him "counter-revolutionary."

--In January 1984, Alfonso Davila of the Faustino Martinez Union in the San Antonio sugar mill, was arrested for handing out CUS union literature. Davila was held incommunicado in a jail in Chinandega.³⁰

Repeatedly, independent labor union leaders have been harassed and threatened by Sandinista mobs. They have complained of the ministry of Labor's blatant favoritism for the CST, of interference in union affairs and elections, of arrests without charges and incommunicado detentions, of the ban against strikes, and of blacklisting of independent unions and their leaders. Partly as a result of such complaints, in 1983 the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), to which the CUS belongs, formally protested to the International Labor organization (ILO) about the Sandinistas' repeated infringement of workers' rights.³¹

While these activities have primarily been directed against urban workers, the rural workers have not been spared. In rural areas r cooperation between the Rural Workers' Association (ATC) and the Ministry of Agricultural-Livestock Development and Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA), and between the ATC the National Development Bank (BND), directly affects the daily lives of Nicaraguan farm workers. The MIDINRA decides which farmers are allowed to use expropriated farmland; the usual beneficiaries are members of Sandinista organizations such as the ATC. To obtain a loan from the BND, a peasant must be supported by a major Sandinista organization, such as the ATC.³² The daily lives of peasants are even more directly affected by the activities of the State Agricultural Collective. Frank Tourniel Amador, from Chinandega province, said:

Before, you could sell what you grew to whomever you wanted, and buy your supplies from whomever you wanted. Now you must sell your maize (corn) or frijoles (beans) or whatever to the State Agricultural Coop-erative--at a very low price--and you can only buy sugar, salt, flour, and other things you need from the State as well--and at a very high price!³³

One Nicaraguan labor unionist now in exile as a result of Sandinista harassment summed up the current situation when he said:

For twenty years we had fought against the Somoza nightmare. Our resistance, bent at times, was never broken. We denounced the harassments, tortures, and human and trade union rights violations. The price we paid was more torture, jailings, dismissals from jobs, and death. Finally our struggle was over and the Somoza dictatorship overthrown, and we thought that everything we fought for would now become a reality.

Four and one-half years after the takeover by the [FSLN], the democratic labor movement finds itself in a very serious predicament. We never dreamed that our labor leaders and workers would be put in jail again in great numbers; we never dreamed that--the campaign by the

never dreamed that our workers and their families would be brought to ridicule by long-time friends and neighbors who now serve on block committees [CDSSI, and it was beyond our wildest dreams that we would be asking once again about the "desaparecidos" (the missing).³⁴

In light of the above litany of actions against free trade unions, it is not surprising that a Nicaraguan labor leader compared his country to Poland:

We are both small countries and have suffered many invasions. We both experience long lines and scarcity while many of our products are shipped off to the Soviet bloc. We are Catholic countries with close ties between the unions and the church. We live under regimes where citizens can be jailed at will. And both governments brand independent unions "anti-socialist agents of imperialism."³⁵

Sandinista Suppression of Religious Freedom

During the Somoza era, the Catholic hierarchy, led by Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, was outspoken in calling for reforms, respect for human rights, political democracy, and help for the poor of Nicaragua. Shortly before Somoza was toppled in 1979, Archbishop Obando announced publicly that the Somoza regime had become intolerable and that Christians could rebel against that regime without compromising their faith. So outraged was Somoza by the announcement that he referred to the Archbishop as "Comandante Obando." The Church clearly sided with the revolution in 1979 and for a time following its success. Archbishop Obando also welcomed the Sandinistas' much-heralded literacy program that year, even coming to the United States to help raise money for the program.³⁶

But soon Sandinista intentions to limit the Catholic Church's autonomy became obvious. Despite early promises of pluralism, democracy, and respect for human rights, the Sandinistas intended from the beginning to prevent Church leaders from playing an independent role in post-revolutionary Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas evidently had no illusions regarding the difficulty of preempting the influence of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua. They worked steadily to neutralize the Church's potential opposition to a Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua. In the "72-Hour Document," they stated their intention to "pursue a careful policy aimed at counteracting conservative stands whenever possible, strengthening ties with priests who are sympathetic to the revolution and encouraging revolutionary sectors in the Church." At the same time, the FSLN would "have to pursue a restrictive policy toward the Protestant church, which consists mainly of American sects, undertaking intelligence work on them and, if they are caught doing

something wrong, expelling them immediately."³⁷ Since "something wrong" could be manufactured by the FSLN at its own convenience, the Sandinistas placed no limitations on themselves by such wording.

In October 1980, the Sandinistas took a major step toward limiting the influence of the Catholic Church. In a policy statement on religion, the FSLN declared that Christians would not be permitted to evangelize within Sandinista organizations. Furthermore, only those clergy and lay workers who fully accepted the objectives of the Revolution, as defined by the FSLN, would be allowed to participate in public affairs.³⁸

The Nicaraguan Conference of (Catholic) Bishops responded quickly, calling such an attempt to limit the activities of the Church "totalitarian." The Bishops argued that totalitarian systems typically seek to turn the Church into an instrument by tolerating only those activities the Government considers convenient.³⁹ These early public clashes between the Bishops and the FSLN merely hinted at the level of intensity their conflict had reached by 1982 as the Sandinistas continued to pursue the program outlined in 1979.

In addition to their attempts to limit the social activities of the Church and their attempts to censor Church criticism of FSLN policies, the Sandinistas have drawn fire not only from the Bishops but also from the Pope and a number of other Church leaders for trying to split the Church. With the help of a few strongly pro-Sandinista priests and lay workers, the FSLN has encouraged development of the concept of a so-called "popular church."

The Sandinistas have repeatedly referred to the concept of two Catholic Churches: one that is not revolutionary, and another that is "a church of change" and "the people's ally." The "church of change" is "participating in the revolutionary process and is incorporating the patriotic and revolutionary priests, of whom we are very proud, into the government."⁴⁰ Sandinista leaders speak regularly of one church for the rich and the other, their "popular church," for the poor. The Vatican became so alarmed at the attempt of the Sandinistas to divide the Nicaraguan Catholic Church that the Pope issued a letter on June 29, 1982, criticizing advocates of the "popular church" for their:

infiltration of strongly ideological connotations along the lines of certain political radicalization of the class struggle, of acceptance of violence for the carrying out of political ends. It is not through a political role, but through the priestly ministry that the people want to remain close to the Church.

Even prior to the Pope's letter of June 29, 1982, the Sandinistas had begun to cut off the Bishops' access to the Nicaraguan media. Customarily, Archbishop Obando y Bravo, or a priest designated by him, celebrated Mass on Managuan television each Sunday, giving a sermon in the course of the Mass. In July 1981, the Sandinistas announced that the televised Masses must be rotated among Catholic priests. The Archbishop, realizing that pro-FSLN priests would be chosen, had the televised Masses cancelled. When the regime established prior censorship of all sermons read over the radio, radio Masses were also cancelled. Since the imposition of a State of Emergency in 1982, the ability of the Archbishop to publish his views in La Prensa has been curtailed, although the regime still permits La Prensa to publish his homily. In 1983, the regime even forbade Radio Catolica to broadcast live Easter services. In 1984, Easter week services were broadcast live, but a request to continue past that week was denied.

Since the FSLN replaced the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, tension between the Sandinistas and the Catholic hierarchy has increased because the Church has refused to become a tool of the FSLN, and because it has condemned the many violations of human rights by the regime. The Conference of Bishops strongly condemned the forced relocation of the Miskito Indians in 1982, the State of Emergency and subsequent censorship that resulted, the use of Sandinista organizations and mobs to harass FSLN opponents, and the draft law.

In August 1982, a DGSE agent and the FSLN-controlled media contrived to entrap Father Bismarck Carballo, director of Radio Catolica and spokesman for the Archbishop, in a scandal to discredit both Father Carballo and his supervisor, the Archbishop. Having been called to the home of a woman parishioner, Father Carballo was stripped of his clothing and forced out of the house in front of television cameras and newspaper photographers who had been planted there in advance. The plan backfired, however, as pictures of the naked priest shown on Sandinista television and in the newspapers deeply shocked the public and led to anti-Sandinista riots in the city of Masaya.⁴¹

Although this insult had already shocked many Nicaraguan Catholics, the FSLN chose to attack the Church even more directly by deliberately disrupting the Pope's Mass in Managua in March 1983. Miguel Bolanos Hunter, then a leader in the DGSE's counter-intelligence, has described how the FSLN orchestrated the demonstration made during the Pope's Mass. According to Bolanos, the DGSE packed the square with Sandinista supporters, preventing non-Sandinista Church people from getting close to the stage, and used strategically placed

When the Pope refused to let himself be used, the Sandinistas carried out their plans to interrupt his Mass with amplified shouting and chanting.⁴²

As the tension between the Bishops and the FSLN has grown, the Sandinistas have begun to resort to violence in their attempts to curb the Church's criticism of their program. Sandinista mobs have harassed and attacked priests and bishops loyal to Archbishop Obando y Bravo. For example, in October 1983, Sandinista mobs attacked 20 Catholic churches in Managua, interrupting services and breaking windows. These mobs occupied at least three of the churches, vandalized property of parishioners, and struck at least one priest. Despite government claims of innocence in these events uniformed soldiers and police were observed in the mobs.⁴³

In April 1984, the Bishops called for peace and reconciliation among all Nicaraguans, including the armed rebel groups. Shortly thereafter, the Sandinistas arrested Father Amando Pena, branding him a "counter-revolutionary." When the Archbishop led a small and peaceful march to protest the priest's treatment, the government expelled 10 foreign priests from Nicaragua for allegedly violating Nicaraguan law by engaging in political activities. At least two of the expelled priests were not involved in the demonstration, but all ten were known to be supporters of the Archbishop in his criticism of the Sandinistas.

Nor have Protestant groups been free from Sandinista persecution. In 1982, a number of public statements by Sandinista Interior Minister Borge led to the seizure of more than 20 Protestant properties by Sandinista mobs, some of which remained under government control at the end of 1983. Most were small churches (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, Mennonites, Jehovah's Witnesses) which were accused by the FSLN of being "subversive" and "counter-revolutionary."

In 1982, the Sandinistas closed the Moravian Biblical Institute in Bluefields, which had been the Moravian Church's sole seminary in Nicaragua.⁴⁴ Among the Christian organizations forced by the FSLN to leave Nicaragua is the Salvation Army, whose humanitarian activities there were ended in August 1980, after "ominous verbal threats from the authorities, and, finally, instructions to close the program and leave the country."⁴⁵

In 1983, two Sandinista military officials attended the synod of the Nicaraguan Moravian Church, to which a majority of the Miskito Indians belong, and warned delegates to the synod not to elect certain pastors to the Church's provincial board. Furthermore, ten Moravian pastors (Miskito), who had been held

All of this harassment contrasts sharply with treatment of the small group of priests and lay workers involved in the "popular church" in Nicaragua. These people and their supporters receive considerable support from the FSLN-controlled press. Four priests even hold positions in the government: Father Miguel D'Escoto, the Foreign Minister; Father Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit priest who was vice coordinator of the Sandinista Youth and has recently been named minister of Education; his brother, Ernesto Cardenal, a former Trappist monk who is Minister of Culture; and Edgard Parrales, Ambassador to the organization of American States. The priests have been told by the Vatican to choose between political and religious offices.

A statement issued in September 1982 by Archbishop Roach, President of the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, regarding the Sandinistas is still applicable today:

institutions and persons of the Church, including bishops, have been subjected to attacks of a serious, at times disgraceful nature....We cannot fail to protest in the strongest possible terms, the attempted defamation and acts of physical abuse directed at prominent clerics, the inappropriate State control of the communications media, including those of the Church, the apparent threat to the Church's role in education and, most ominous of all, the increasing tendency of public demonstrations to result in bloody conflict.⁴⁷

Sandinista Treatment of the Miskito Indians

A widely publicized example of human rights violation by the Sandinistas involves their treatment of the American Indian peoples who live on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Sandinista violations and the widespread rebellion they have engendered among the American Indians spring from the Marxist program of the Sandinistas, as well as from "historic internal ethnic strains ... between the Spanish and indigenous cultures. Such strains predate the revolution, but ... have been severely exacerbated by the present government, resulting in violation of numerous internationally guaranteed rights which the Nicaraguan Government is pledged to uphold."⁴⁸

Historically, Zelaya Province on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua has been inhabited by Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians, who form a majority of the inhabitants of the region and number perhaps 150,000 to 165,000, and a number of blacks or "creoles," descended from slaves brought to the region from the West Indies.

The people of Zelaya traditionally speak English, since the area was long a British protectorate. Most of them are Protestant (especially Moravian), since most early missionaries to the region were Protestant. In their ethnic background,

religion, language, culture, and economics, they differ from the rest of Nicaragua's people. Under the Somozas, the central government in Managua generally left the Indians alone; although there was little economic development of the region, the Indians maintained a high degree of self-government. On the village level this self-government was usually democratic, with both tribal and church leaders being elected.

Following the revolution in 1979, the Sandinistas decided to impose state control over the entire country, including the Atlantic Coast region. The Sandinistas insisted that the government "must be in charge of developing [Nicaragua's] natural resources," that it must "create state-run fishing, industrial, and mining enterprises," and that it must "pursue ... programs that bring the revolution to the masses, giving priority to the peasant population...along the northern border and the Atlantic Coast.⁴⁹ Clearly these objectives clashed with the values and objectives of the indigenous Indian tribes, who sought a degree of autonomy from the central government, enabling them to maintain their traditional economy and culture and to control their own lands and natural resources.

Friction between the FSLN and the Indians began soon after the revolution, when Sandinistas and their Cuban advisers began moving into the area in large numbers to "rescue" the Atlantic Coast. The FSLN moved to disband the Miskito organization ALPROMISU; the FSLN finally agreed to allow a new group to form known as MISURASATA (an acronym for "Miskito," "Sumo," "Rama," and "Sandinista"). Indian leaders continued to present demands for autonomy that the Sandinistas considered threatening to the revolution. Indian resistance to the Sandinistas increased, sometimes violently. Then, in early 1981, the Sandinistas jailed and tortured MISURASATA leaders. In January and February 1982, citing "security dangers," the government rounded up more than 8,000 Indians living in villages near the Honduran border and shipped them to "relocation camps" in the interior. Thousands more fled to Honduras or Costa Rica to escape "relocation."

The emigration continues: in December 1983, the entire population of the village of Francia Sirpe (about 1,000 people), accompanied by Catholic Bishop Salvador Schlaefer, emigrated to Honduras. They began their celebrated "Christmas March" after learning that they were to be "relocated" by the Sandinistas. In April 1984, some 600 Miskitos fled to refuge in Honduras.

The International League for Human Rights has documented this cultural collision between the Sandinistas and the Indians. It stated:

Despite the fact that there remains a major need for further information and accountability from the

Government...facts publicly acknowledged or supplied by the Nicaraguan Government alone are sufficient to make the case that Indian rights have been badly violated:

- The entire Indian leadership was arbitrarily arrested imprisoned, and interrogated.
- The Indians' organization (Misurasata) was disbanded by the government.
- Indian rights to self-government, to land, and to resources were denied by new government policies.
- Up to 14,500 Indians were forcibly relocated to camps where they have been detained or denied freedom of movement.
- Some 16,000 Indians fled to refugee camps in Honduras to avoid being relocated to the camps in Nicaragua.
- 39 Indian villages, including livestock, personal effects, crops, fruit trees, and so forth, were completely destroyed by Nicaraguan government forces in January and February 1982.
- The entire Indian region has been under strict military rule, even at the village level.
- Many hundreds of Indians have been killed, injured, or arrested and imprisoned in an ever-deteriorating Indian crisis.

Furthermore, "the de facto discrimination against the Indians of the East Coast has taken on such proportions that it also includes abridgement of religious freedom, as well as cultural rights."⁵⁰

Similarly, the Organization of American States has investigated many complaints against the Sandinistas for their human rights violations against the Miskitos. According to the OAS:

In the period between January 1 and February 20, 1982, the relocation of approximately 8,500 people was effected. Approximately half of the Rio Coco region population fled to Honduras, fearing that their lives were in danger.... The relocation in Tasba Pri [Sandinista "relocation camp"] of some Miskitos, and the flight to Honduras of others, uprooted the Miskitos from the banks of the Coco River, where they had lived from time immemorial, resulting in the division of numerous towns and entire families, the destruction of their homes, the loss of their livestock and, in some cases, all of their belongings. The Miskito structure of authority was undermined and later dissolved de facto as a result of the repression of the Misurasata leaders f who were accused of "counter-revolutionary" activities. Later-the Miskito villages were increasingly harassed, and the deprivation or limitations on the liberty of the Miskitos became more frequent, culminating on November 4, 1982, with the establishment of a military emergency zone....

Hundreds of Miskitos have been arbitrarily detained without any formalities and under vague accusations of carrying out "counter-revolutionary activities"; many of these detentions have been followed by prolonged periods of incommunicado imprisonment and in some cases the Commission has verified that illegal torture and abuse took place.⁵¹

That same OAS report noted cases of illegal arrest and detention and approximately 70 cases of disappearances linked to government security forces. Further, the compulsory relocation was marked by a tragic helicopter accident in December 1982 in which 75 Miskito children and 9 mothers died. The report characterized the Indian situation as one of "inevitable economic dependence on the government, as they have been deprived of their traditional means of subsistence...."⁵²

As a result of repressive Sandinista policies, a fourth of surviving Indians are in "relocation camps" such as Tasba Pri or in refugee camps in Honduras or Costa Rica. Half of the Miskito and Sumo villages have been totally destroyed, with their inhabitants killed, "relocated," or driven away. Indian rights to self-government, land, or control over any natural resources have been abolished by the government. Subsistence farming, fishing, and hunting are strictly controlled and have disappeared in many areas. Access to staple foods is so limited that hunger is a constant problem and starvation a possibility. With the undermining of the Moravian Church's humanitarian activities, many villages have been without medicine or doctors or pastors, in some cases for more than two years. Freedom of movement is severely and arbitrarily restricted by the Sandinistas. In many cases canoes (major method of transport in this seashore area) have been confiscated or their use prohibited.

Sandinista Denial of Free Elections

If free elections are the heart of a democratic system of government, perhaps the most significant human rights "failure" of the Sandinistas has been their refusal to hold the genuinely democratic elections they promised in 1979. Democratic countries generally have much better human rights records than non-democratic ones--if only because democratic leaders must be responsive to the people.

Because the Sandinistas see genuine democracy as a threat to their monopoly of power and, thus, to their ability to carry out their Marxist-Leninist program, the Sandinistas avoided holding elections for as long as possible. Indeed, they have explicitly stated their reasons for avoiding democratic elections.

As recently as May 1984, Bayardo Arce, one of the nine comandantes of the FSLN Directorate and head of the commission appointed to prepare for the "elections" scheduled for November

1984, told a private meeting of the Central Committee of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party:

What a revolution needs is the power to enforce. This power to enforce is precisely what constitutes the defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat--the ability of the class to impose its will using the instruments at hand, without going into formal or bourgeois details. From that point of view, the elections are bothersome to us.

Arce said he considered elections "out of place" and indicated that they would not have been scheduled but for U.S. pressure. The advantage of such elections is that they would win "legitimacy" for the government, resulting in a "red constitution," "removal of the facade of political pluralism," and the establishment of "the party of the revolutionary, the single party."⁵³

Arce's views are typical of the attitudes of other Sandinista leaders, though the world rarely hears them expressed so candidly. For example, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega was quoted in 1981: "Keep firmly in your mind that these elections are to consolidate revolutionary power, not to place it at stake." In his view the Nicaraguan people had already had their revolution and had chosen the FSLN to lead it.⁵⁴

Since achieving power by force, the Sandinistas have manipulated the structure of the government to their advantage. They have reduced the influence of the moderates in the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) and in its Cabinet. For example, the FSLN increased the number of seats from 33 to 47 in the Council of State, a quasi-legislative body. Through this reallocation, prior to the Council's inaugural session on May 4, 1980, the Sandinistas solidified their majority and thus ensured control of this government body. After this change in the organization of the Council, the moderate Junta members, Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Chamorro, resigned.

Other moderates, such as Arturo Cruz, left the government because of the Sandinistas' failure to remain nonaligned and to promote a pluralistic society and mixed economy, and the FSLN's postponement of the promised early elections.

As a result of international pressure the Sandinista regime scheduled general elections for president and a legislature for November 4, 1984. Three of the democratic political parties, the two non-Sandinista union centrals (CUS and CTN), and COSEP (the organization of Nicaraguan independent businessmen) formed an alliance called the Coordinadora Democratica to negotiate with the Sandinistas the conditions for general elections. Thus far the Sandinistas have not established the conditions for free and fair elections considered necessary by the

democratic opposition (Coordinadora). Consequently, it has refused to participate in the elections.⁵⁵

Since Cruz is the leading opposition figure within the country, many observers have stated that an election without Arturo Cruz would be no more representative of the actual political situation in Nicaragua than the present non-elected government.

In 1983, the Government enacted a "Political Parties Law," which stipulates that all parties support the revolution. That same law established a National Council of Political Parties with the power to suspend or abolish any party. The mechanics for electing the Council members guarantee Sandinista control.

Conditions under which independent political parties (which pre-date the revolution) are allowed to exist indicate the limitations the FSLN has placed on the democratic process in Nicaragua. Since 1979, the Sandinistas have regularly harassed the political parties through arbitrary arrest of party leaders, mob action against their headquarters, threats, prohibition of rallies, censorship, and restrictions on recruitment of new members.

As of late October 1983 about 200 members of one of the largest non-Marxist party, the Democratic Conservative Party of Nicaragua, were in jail for political activities. Since then the Sandinistas have released some of these detainees. A party member of the FSLN-appointed Council of State withdrew from the Council for several months when he was detained (in violation of his special immunity) because of a statement he had made during a Council session. While he was detained, his house and belongings were seized by the Nicaraguan Government.⁵⁶

Following the establishment of a State of Emergency in 1982, government censorship restricted the ability of the parties other than the FSLN to express their opinions in the Nicaraguan media. Even for the official election campaign, the rules allow less than five minutes air time per day per party on Nicaraguan television. In addition, the FSLN-imposed State of Emergency allows government censorship of campaign statements. Regulations for party access to the media allow the government to censor material concerning the military or national security.

In contrast, the FSLN maintains an unending barrage of propaganda through its dominance over two of the three Managua newspapers, both television stations, and all but one radio news program. Educational materials in the schools glorify the revolution and equate it with the Sandinistas which are its "vanguard." The mass organizations create strong public pressure to support the revolution and the Sandinistas, while reviling the democratic political parties as "bourgeois," "reactionary," and even "counter-revolutionary" and "instruments of the CIA."

IV. CONCLUSION

In July 1979, a popular, broadly based coalition of Nicaraguans overthrew the brutal dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza and replaced it with a "Government of National Reconstruction." By virtue of its control over the armed forces and its central leadership role in the revolution, the Marxist-Leninist FSLN party soon isolated and forced moderates from the coalition, gaining full FSLN control over the new government.

Since then, the FSLN has used the institutions at its disposal to consolidate total power for the purpose of creating a one-party state in Nicaragua. In pursuing this objective, the FSLN has met resistance from leaders of the Church, independent parties and trade unions, the private economic sector, the newspaper La Prensa, and the indigenous Indian community which constitutes a majority of the inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast.

To overcome such resistance, the FSLN and the government it controls have violated fundamental, internationally accepted standards of human rights to which it as a government officially subscribes. The FSLN is responsible for torture, kidnapping, politically motivated murder, censorship of the press, "relocation" of thousands of Indians, illegal jailings and harassment of trade union officials and political party leaders, harassment of officials of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights in Managua, and, perhaps most ominous, it has created the structure for a totalitarian state through the secret police (DGSE) and the "mass organizations" of the FSLN party.

NOTES

- 1 "Inside Communist Nicaragua: The Miguel Bolanos Transcripts," Heritage Foundation, September 30, 1983, pp. 8-9.
- 2 Miguel Bolanos Hunter, "Marxism and Christianity in Revolutionary Central America," testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, October 19, 1983 (hereinafter cited as Bolanos, Senate Testimony.), pp. 30-40.
- 3 "Inside Communist Nicaragua: The Miguel Bolanos Transcripts," p. 3.
- 4 Much of the material in this paper was provided to the Department of State through discussions with Geraldine O'Leary Macias, a former Maryknoll Sister who actively supported the revolution in 1979. She is married to Edgard Macias, Nicaraguan Assistant Minister of Labor in 1979-81. Mr. and Mrs. Macias now live in exile in the United States because of Sandinista threats on their lives. (Hereinafter cited as Macias, discussions.)
- 5 William C. Doherty, "A Revolution Betrayed: Free Labor Persecuted," AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News, Vol. 39, no. 3 (March 1984), p. 1.
- 6 Macias, discussions.
- 7 The JRN, founded in 1977, combined the Revolutionary Student Front (FER), the Secondary Student Movement (MES), and the Revolutionary Christian Movement (MCR). The FER was the Sandinista student organization at the National University. The MCR was formed under the guidance of two Catholic priests, Uriel Molina and Fernando Cardenal. The FER admitted the MCR into the organization as part of a plan to "make the Christian movement disappear We prepared the conditions for the response of the youth in two ways: through concrete struggles and through a policy of propaganda and agitation." Nicaragua, revolucion: relatos combatientes del Frente Sandinista, por Pilar Arias, Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2d printing, 1980, p. 141. Translated by Geraldine Macias.
- 8 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1983. Report of the State Department to the Congress, February 1984, p. 638.
- 9 Robert S. Leiken, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories," The New Republic, Vol. 191, no. 15 (October 8, 1984), p. 19.
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- 11 "Nicaraguans Say They Won't Delay Nov. 4 Elections," New York Times, September 24, 1984, p. A-1.
- 12 Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-up and Support for Central American Subversion, released by the Departments of State and Defense, Washington, D.C., July 18, 1984, p. 8.
- 13 Dr. Jack Wheeler, "Testimony before the Hearing on Violence and Repression in Nicaragua," in Congressman Bob Livingston, Violence and oppression in Nicaragua (Washington, D.C.: The American Conservative Union, 1984), p. 17.
- 14 Major John C. Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the US Army (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-210, July 1952), pp. 21-22.
- 15 Antonio Farach, "Prepared Statement of Antonio Farach," Livingston, Violence and Oppression in Nicaragua, p. 53.
- 16 Caitlin Randall, "12 Nicaraguan Students Bolt into Costa Rica During Torch Parade," The Tico Times, San Jose, Costa Rica, September 21, 1984, p. 1.
- 17 Diario de las Americas, April 19, 1984, p. 6.
- 18 Quoted in La Prensa, Managua, Nicaragua, September 1, 1983, p. 1.
- 19 Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Nicaragua (CPDH), Letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, May 12, 1984, p. 2. (Hereinafter cited as CPDH Letter to IACHR.)
- 20 Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Nicaragua, Los Derechos Humanos y su Vigencia en Nicaragua (Managua, December 1982), p. 8. (Hereinafter cited as CPDH Report.)
- 21 Humberto Belli, "Testimony before the Task Force on Central America," Livingston, Violence and Oppression in Nicaragua, p. 93.
- 22 CPDH Letter to IACHR, 1984, p. 2.
- 23 CPDH Report, 1982, pp. 3-4.
- 24 Bolanos, Senate Testimony, pp. 38-39.
- 25 Sworn statement of Prudencio Baltodano before the Nicaraguan Council for Human Rights, March 14, 1984.

- 26 Country Reports for 1983, pp. 636-637.
- 27 CPDH Letter to IACHR, 1984, p. 5.
- 28 Country Reports for 1983, p. 638.
- 29 CPDH Letter to IACHR, 1984, p. 10.
- 30 Doherty, "Revolution Betrayed," pp. 1-3, 8.
- 31 Ibid., p. 8.
- 32 Agrarian Cooperative Law of the Government of Nicaragua and its reglementation, June 1982.
- 33 Dr. Jack Wheeler, "Congressional Testimony for Ad Hoc Hearings on Nicaragua," Livingston, Violence and Oppression in Nicaragua, p. 21.
- 34 Doherty, "Revolution Betrayed," p. 8.
- 35 Sam Leiken, "Labor Under Seige," The New Republic, Vol. 191, no. 15 (October 8, 1984), p. 18.
- 36 For a contrasting view on the success of the Nicaraguan literacy efforts, see Robert S. Leiken, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories," The New Republic, p. 19. In two villages he checked, Leiken was unable to find graduates of the program who could read.
- 37 "Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinist People's Revolution," Political and Military Policies submitted by the National Directorate of the FSLN to the Assembly of Cadres on 21-23 September 1979, Managua, October 5, 1979, (also known as the "72-Hour Document.") pp. 9, 26.
- The 72-Hour Document describes the FSLN plan for the future of Nicaragua: "Our political tactics are to develop conditions more favorable to the revolution and because our most urgent task at present is to consolidate the revolution politically, economically, and militarily so that we can move on to greater revolutionary transformations." This process meant co-opting all indigenous institutions capable of resisting FSLN control over society, as well as rooting out all vestiges of "Yankee imperialism."
- 38 "Comunicado Oficial de la Direccion nacional del FSLN sobre la Religion," as published in Barricada, Managua, October 7, 198U.
- 39 "Contestacion al Comunicado del FSLN sobre la Religion" (Oct6-ber 17, 1980), Revista del Pensamiento Centroamerioano, July-December, 1980.

- 40 Sergio Ramirez Mercado, Radio Sandino, Managua, June 12, 1981. See Foreign Broadcast Information Service, June 18, 1981, p. P-25.
- 41 Nicaragua's Human Rights Record, The International League for Human Rights, March 1983, p. 26. See also Bolanos, Senate Testimony, pp. 42-44.
- 42 Bolanos, Senate Testimony, pp. 56-60. See also "Bolanos Transcripts," Heritage Foundation, p. 4.; Nicaragua's Human Rights Record, p. 27; CPDH Letter to the IACHR, 1984, p. 8.
- 43 Country Reports for 1983, p. 643.
- 44 Margaret Wilde, "Moravian-Sandinista Dialogue," Christian Century, May 4, 1983, pp. 431-432.
- 45 Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Ernest A. Miller, Salvation Army, to Morton Blackwell, Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, September 12, 1983 (files of Lt. Col. Miller).
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- 47 Archbishop John R. Roach, U.S. Catholic Conference, Washington, D. C., September 9, 1982.
- 48 Nicaragua's Human Rights Record, p. 2.
- 49 "72-Hour Document," pp. 29-30.
- 50 Nicaragua's Human Rights Record, pp. 5-6.
- 51 Report on the Situation of Human Rights of a Segment of the Nicaraguan Population of Miskito Origin, Organization of American States, Report to the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly, June 4, 1984, pp. 129-130.
- 52 Ibid., p. 131.
- 53 Juan O. Tamayo, "Nicaraguan Decries Need for Vote," The Washington Post, August 8, 1984, p. A-18. For a more complete excerpt, see "A Secret Sandinist Speech," Foreign Report (published by The Economist), August 23 and September 6, 1984.
- 54 Barricada, Managua, July 11, 1980. See also Henri Weber, Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution (London: Verso Ed., 1981), p. 75.

55 Arturo Cruz, in his article, "Can the Sandinistas Hold a Fair Election?" Washington Post, September 28, 1984, p. A-21, reported on the current conditions for the Nicaraguan election. He wrote: "Last week on four successive days in four different cities, my followers and I were physically harassed by Sandinista mobs as we tried to meet indoors with our organizers. The mobs (or turbas) brandished steel clubs and machetes. I, myself, was hit in the face with a rock, spat upon, and grabbed by the hair. To my shock, the international press headlined these incidents by referring to Sandinista police protection.' They failed to report that this "protection" arrived three hours late in Leon. And it goes without saying that such 'protection' would be unnecessary if the government was not organizing mob violence against us."

56 Country Reports for 1983, p. 645.

**For further information
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