Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua

by Paul Le Blanc

This study offers a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua. Based on a variety of English-language sources and translations, it explores the socio-economic and historical background of the 1979 revolution and the political forces that were involved. It goes on to examine the advances, the problems, and the general trajectory of the Nicaraguan Revolution from July 1979 to September 1983.

Another purpose of this study is to test the value of the revolutionary theories of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky in light of the Nicaraguan experience. In particular, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is examined. At the same time, the distinctive contribution of the Sandinistas themselves to revolutionary theory is suggested.

Published by
the Fourth
Internationalist
Tendency

P.O. Box 1947
New York, N.Y. 10009

PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

$3.00

PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three close friends and comrades in Pittsburgh had considerable input into the writing of this study and were a continual source of encouragement: Dianne Feeley, Carol McAllister and Tom Twiss. Tom participated in writing Chapter 5. Professor Harold Sims, who teaches Latin American history at the University of Pittsburgh (and who disagrees fundamentally with the politics of this study), was kind enough to alert me to the existence of valuable sources and to read through an early draft, offering extensive criticisms of both a technical and ideological nature. Three individuals who have not yet read this work, but whose discussions with me contributed to it, are George Black, Leonor Arqüello de Hüper, and Michael Löwy. All of the activists of the Central America Mobilization Coalition in Pittsburgh have contributed substantially to my education and morale. Most of all, I have learned from the Sandinistas of Nicaragua, and from the other revolutionaries of Central America who attempt to follow their inspiring example — and it is to these brave people that I dedicate this work.

Paul Le Blanc
Pittsburgh, September 7, 1983

PREFACE

Here is a first-rate study of the Nicaraguan revolution. It satisfies the need to know the essential facts about the revolutionary movement that succeeded in overthrowing the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship in 1979. At the same time it analyzes the dynamics of the revolutionary process that made that victory possible. And on top of all that it examines Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution in the light of the Nicaraguan experience up to September 1983.

That would be a big bite for even a much larger book than this one. But Paul Le Blanc carries it off without difficulty or awkwardness. Along the way he compares Russia in 1917 with Nicaragua in the 1970s with a method that really illuminates the similarities and differences, and gives a summary of permanent revolution that clarifies its content for anybody who wants to understand it.

For some readers, Le Blanc's study will have many areas of special interest, such as his treatment of the problems the Sandinista workers and farmers government has had to cope with since 1979. For others, its major attraction will be the fact that it effectively refutes the positions of two antagonistic (but complementary) tendencies in or around the Fourth International:

(1) Those who claim that the Nicaraguan revolution disproves the theory of permanent revolution, and therefore have discarded the theory. (2) Those who claim that the Nicaraguan revolution lacks the proletarian character advocated in Trotsky's theory, and therefore withhold the full political support that the workers and farmers government of Nicaragua has earned.

Le Blanc is a leading activist in the Central America Mobilization Coalition in Pittsburgh and was a member of the Socialist Workers Party until a few weeks before he finished writing this book. He was expelled for various alleged violations of discipline, but the real reason was his opposition to the SWP leadership's abandonment of the theory of permanent revolution and other hard-won acquisitions of the Marxist movement.

Up to now the only way you could get to read this book was by ordering a photocopy of the typed manuscript from the author, who performed non-authorial tasks (copying, mailing) to make it available at cost. Although Le Blanc is not a member of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, we think this work deserves a wider audience and therefore are publishing it in a printed, more conventional format, and at a cheaper price. We hope that it will strengthen the fight against imperialist invervention in Central America by counteracting both opportunist and sectarian misconceptions about the Nicaraguan revolution.

George Breitman
June 1984

Published by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency,
P.O. Box 1947, New York, N.Y. 10009
June 1984

INTRODUCTION

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. Theory must be a guide to action. Theory is gray, but green is the eternal tree of life.[1]

Taken together, these three epigrams which V.I. Lenin offered to his comrades highlight the tension between theory and practice for revolutionaries. This is a necessary tension for those seeking both to enrich our theory and illuminate the unfolding experience of the workers and the oppressed who are struggling for liberation. For revolutionary Marxists, of course, these two tasks are absolutely inseparable, and the tension is therefore hardly worrisome. Yet it is a tension which schematists seek to relieve whenever they face the dynamic complexity of life itself. If reality doesn't fit into rigid theoretical constructs, then one or the other has obviously got to go.

Nowhere is this better illustrated, unfortunately, than among those who've identified with Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Many of these adherents (or one-time adherents) perceive that the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua fails to correspond to the dictates of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The result: some are critical of the Sandinistas for not being Trotskyists, while others proclaim that "we have been too Trotskyist" and must look for other theoretical schemas. A consequence, in each case, is an impoverishment of revolutionary theory. This can have damaging effects on political practice.

The schematists have misunderstood Trotsky's theory and misperceived the Nicaraguan reality. In fact, those who are loyal to the program of the Fourth International which Trotsky founded will find that program both confirmed and enriched by the actualities of the Nicaraguan experience. And those who are abandoning that program will, if they maintain their present course, be subject to hopeless disorientation.

The purpose of the present contribution is to examine the Nicaraguan experience and its relationship to revolutionary theory, particularly the theory of permanent revolution.

Leon Trotsky developed and advanced this theory while participating in the revolutionary upsurge which swept Russia in 1905. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 that he helped to lead, Trotsky's 1906 work in which the perspective of permanent revolution had been articulated, *Results and Prospects*, was republished by the Russian Communist Party. In his 1919 preface, he commented with obvious satisfaction that "the events in which we are now participating, and even our methods of participation in them, were foreseen in their fundamental lines some 15 years ago," and that "the prospects outlined 15 years ago have become reality." By the late 1920s, particularly in light of the experience of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 (and in the face of the Stalinist revival and distortion of the outmoded perspective of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"), Trotsky concluded that the theory of permanent revolution has a general applicability.[2]

To say that a theory has general applicability, however, does not mean that the specifics of every concrete situation over the past sixty years can be ignored, taken for granted, or forced into the rigid confines of some intellectual construct. The complex and dynamic (that is, dialectical) nature of reality ensures that every new revolutionary situation, far from being a mere duplicate of "the Russian model," will have its own unique characteristics. To do justice to the Nicaraguan experience, our attention must be focused not on old texts, but on the specific realities of the Nicaraguan Revolution. The present contribution deals, therefore, primarily with a description of these realities.

The value of theory is that, by synthesizing previously-acquired experience and knowledge, it helps to orient us as we come to grips with unfolding realities, suggesting to us the underlying dynamics of the new situation. Before we turn our attention to the Nicaraguan Revolution, then, it may be useful to define the fundamentals of Trotsky's theory. Here is how he succinctly summarized it in 1919:

"... the Revolution, having begun as a bourgeois revolution as regards its first tasks, will soon call forth powerful class conflicts and will gain final victory only by transferring power to the only class capable of standing at the head of the oppressed masses, namely, to the proletariat. Once in power, the proletariat will not only not want, but will not be able, to limit itself to a bourgeois democratic program. It will be able to carry through the revolution to the end only in the event of the Russian Revolution being converted into a revolution of the European proletariat. The bourgeois-democratic program of the revolution will then be superseded, together with its national limitations, and the temporary political domination of the Russian working class will develop into a prolonged Socialist dictatorship. But should Europe remain inert the bourgeois counter-revolution will not tolerate the government of the toiling masses in Russia and will throw the country back — far back from a democratic workers' and peasants' republic. Therefore, once having won power, the proletariat cannot keep within the limits of bourgeois democracy. It must adopt the tactics of *permanent revolution*, i.e., must destroy the barriers between the minimum and maximum program of Social Democracy, go over to more and more radical social reforms and seek direct and immediate support in revolution in Western Europe."[3]

As we will see, the fundamental dynamics described by Trotsky are relevant to the Nicaraguan Revolution. Only by examining the specifics of that revolution, however, can the Trotskyist perspective be enriched. Such an examination must rely on journalistic and scholarly studies, but especially on the contributions of such Sandinista participants as Carlos Fonseca, Tomás Borge, Daniel and Humberto Ortega, Jaime Wheelock, Dora María Tellez and Orlando Núñez. After examining the Nicaraguan Revolution with the aid of these studies and contributions, it will be possible to more fully understand the dynamic of permanent revolution. With this enriched understanding, we will be able to more effectively advance the revolutionary process in our own country — which, as Trotsky would have told us, is essential for the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution itself.

1. THE CRISIS OF NICARAGUAN CAPITALISM

Nicaragua in the 19th century was torn apart by violent feuds within the country's backward capitalist elite, undermined by frequent foreign interventions, and warped by the pressures of the world capitalist market. The upper-classes — cattle ranchers, merchants, and the coffee-based "plantation bourgeoisie" — were able to acquire fortunes at the expense of the rural masses, and at the same time they dominated the country's political life. Yet they were politically divided into the fiercely antagonistic Liberal and Conservative parties, neither one of which was capable of providing effective resistance to U.S. imperialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The result was summed up by one knowledgeable observer in 1926: "Concessions of utterly ruinous character have been given to powerful American concerns, which have merely exploited the natural resources of the country for their own benefit without any benefit whatsoever to Nicaraguans." This situation generated considerable ferment in the country, especially among the rural poor who bore the brunt of this oppression. Consequently, U.S. troops were sent to ensure "stability" and protect "U.S. interests."[1]

Only the peasant army led by Augusto César Sandino in 1926-34 offered effective resistance against U.S. Marines and against the U.S.-trained National Guard commanded by Anastasio Somoza. A populist and uncompromising nationalist, Sandino vowed to continue waging guerrilla warfare as long as foreign soldiers occupied his homeland. When U.S. troops left Nicaragua, Sandino and his followers agreed to lay down their arms, as promised. Soon after, Sandino and his closest comrades were murdered by Somoza, who went on to establish his personal dictatorship in 1936. As Jaime Wheelock summed it up, "neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives could guarantee imperialist domination. So when it became impossible to check the vigorous advance of Sandino they [i.e., U.S. imperialists] had to intervene — first directly and then by means of a military dictatorship that placed itself above all the classes and parties and represented imperialist interests exclusively."[2]

Somozoa maintained a democratic façade, transforming the Liberal Party into his own personal vehicle, periodically conducting phony elections, and even allowing a loyal Conservative opposition to maintain a bloc of seats in the Nicaraguan Congress. Sometimes his regime adopted a less repressive and even reformist stance, sometimes it became more blatantly authoritarian, but never was there any question that he was in control (thanks to the unquestioned loyalty of the well-equipped and ferocious National Guard) or that he was the best friend that U.S. interests had in the region. In the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Somoza was "a son of a bitch, but our son of a bitch." The pattern remained the same after Somoza's assassination in 1956, when his boots were filled first by his son Luis, and then by his other son Anastasio II in 1967.[3]

To understand the development of the crisis and class forces which brought an end to the seemingly all-powerful Somoza dictatorship, it's necessary to look at the dynamics of the Nicaraguan economy. From Jaime Wheelock's description, we can clearly see the marks of combined and uneven development:[4]

"The main features of the Nicaraguan economy are economic backwardness, dependence on imperialism, and a predominantly capitalist socioeconomic structure, in which we nonetheless find many who subsist on precapitalist forms of production, both in the urban handicrafts and peasant sectors. . . .

"As is well known, Nicaragua is a country that produces enough food for its own people and has a quite efficient peasant economy. But it must also be taken into account that the economic power of capitalism was mainly brought to bear on agricultural exports, with the aim of meeting the requirements of the international capitalist market. This forced a weak and stagnant natural economy to serve as the basis of imported technology so as to meet the needs of a dynamic agricultural export sector."[5]

What is particularly important to note here is that Wheelock (along with other analysts) is not simply attributing the economic crisis of his country to "stagnation and underdevelopment," but instead is directing our attention to a dynamic transformation that has taken place in the Nicaraguan (and, in fact, the Central American) economy over the past two to three decades. This transformation, combined with the persistence and strengthening of old authoritarian political structures, has set the stage for revolutionary upheavals in the face of the international economic downturn which began in the 1970s.[6]

After World War II, a basic economic infrastructure was created in Nicaragua: electrification, highways, communications, port works, financial structures. This laid the basis for the intensive cultivation of cotton, a cash crop geared for the world market, which transformed Nicaraguan agriculture beginning in the 1950s. Cotton quickly surpassed coffee, livestock and sugar as the country's main export. The pressures of cotton production resulted in widespread land expropriations at the expense of the peasantry, driving many to the cities and transforming others into rural proletarians. There was also a significant expansion of light industry, especially chemicals and agri-chemicals, textiles, metal processing, and food processing.[7]

As James Petras has pointed out, "while most observers have noted the private wealth and corruption of Somoza, it is not usually pointed out that a portion of that wealth took the form of capital investments. The growth of capitalism was accompanied in part by the proletarianization of some of the peasants in the countryside and the artisans in the city, along with the displacement of others, and their incorporation into a large surplus labor pool which crowded the central cities in each region. The state — the Somoza clan — and foreign capital played a decisive role in implanting capitalism and capitalist social relations. The whole process was made possible by the autocratic dictatorship and its 'free market' and repressive labor policies. . . ."[8]

Other aspects of this process, which was taking place throughout Central America, have been identified by Norma Stoltz Chinchilla:

"The intensification of export-oriented agricultural production, coupled with a very high degree of monopolization of the production of goods and services outside of agriculture and the highly capital-intensive production, resulted in a rapid increase in inequality and poverty (including mass hunger) . . . . It also resulted in greater dependence on the United States (for capital and inputs to production) as well as provided an opportunity for greater political, military, and ideological control (through training, distribution of textbooks, advertising, and control of the mass media).

"Parallel to the process of growing inequality and uneven development internal to each country [in Central America] was a process of conflict between the bourgeoisies of different countries and within the bourgeoisie of a single country."[9]

Before examining this key development of conflicts within the ruling class, it's worth considering for a moment a fundamental contradiction of Nicaraguan capitalism to which Chinchilla has alluded. Economist Jaime Biderman has highlighted it in his observation that, "although historically 'progressive' in some respects, the cotton boom displaced and dispossessed small producers of corn, beans, rice and sorghum . . . . The expansion of cotton forced these small food producers to cultivate on smaller

plots or migrate to lower quality and less accessible land in the interior. Since they generally lacked access to credit and agrochemical inputs, average yields for food crops fell during the 1950s and in the following decades." This, combined with growing impoverishment of large sectors of the population, meant that capitalist "progress" resulted in malnutrition for many Nicaraguans.[10]

The development of Nicaraguan capitalism also meant the development of new divisions within the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. In the early 1950s, with U.S. encouragement, two groupings of Nicaraguan capitalists formed for the purpose of overcoming the economic stranglehold of the Somoza clan. Ranching, mercantile and sugar interests joined to create the Banco de América (BANAMERICA), and Managua merchants joined with cotton planters and coffee growers to establish the more dynamic Banco Nicaragüense (BANIC). BANAMERICA had direct ties with the Wells Fargo Bank and the First National City Bank, while BANIC had direct ties with the Chase Manhattan Bank as well as numerous U.S. transnational corporations and government development agencies. At the same time, as George Black has pointed out: "Shared economic interests, political convenience and the peculiarities of the Nicaraguan state made for considerable interpenetration as well as competition, not only between the two groups but also in partnership with Somoza. Whatever the relative strengths of BANIC and BANAMERICA, the new wealth of the post-war boom was dominated by the Somoza family."[11]

Frictions between the Somozas and other Nicaraguan capitalists were at a minimum from the late 1940s until 1955 thanks to the profitable cotton boom of that period, but they flared again in 1956 with the sharp fall of cotton and coffee prices on the world market and the consequent intensification of competition between the voracious Somoza group and the others. Alejandro Bendana has pinpointed the weakness of the bourgeois opposition: "Armed rebellions were attempted but easily aborted by the [National] Guard because they lacked any mass support. A business-led general strike in 1959 was brought under control when the government suspended the import licenses of strike supporters . . . . For their part, the bankers remained active in the political opposition, without actually challenging the system. After all, they too benefited from Somoza's repression of the revolutionary movement and mass discontent, as well as cartel and price fixing agreements."[12]

Economic growth and rising profits were buoyed up again in the early 1960s, once more easing tensions within the Nicaraguan ruling class. U.S.-backed "modernization" efforts — based on the creation of a Central American Common Market — substantially increased the economic integration of the countries in the region and opened up new investment opportunities. According to most analysts, "the major beneficiaries of the Common Market strategy for industrial growth were European, Japanese, and U.S. capital (primarily the latter), and the national and export-oriented agricultural bourgeoisies . . . ." U.S. investment rose 128 percent from 1959 to 1969, coming to represent 81 percent of all foreign investment in the region. In addition, the economic transformations discussed above accelerated even more rapidly.[13]

This situation was relatively short-lived. The balance among Nicaraguan bourgeois forces was upset by the increased authoritarian policies instituted when Anastasio Somoza II consolidated his power in 1967. The Somoza clan became more aggressive than ever in advancing its interests at the expense of others. This was exacerbated to a certain extent by drought-induced agricultural setbacks, even more by the 1972 Managua earthquake, and particularly by the international economic downturn of the 1970s. "Business sectors complained of a 'mafia-type' atmosphere at the highest levels of government," one observer noted. Jaime Wheelock pointed out: "There is no branch of economic activity in which the Somoza group does not own major assets, including those formerly controlled by the BANIC and BANAMERICA groups. Indeed, the Somozas have deeply penetrated these latter sectors, jeopardizing the stability of their competitors." There were rumblings about "disloyal competition" from the BANIC and BANAMERICA groups. Certain bourgeois elements were even more badly hit by Somocista corruption and monopoly. These were industrial and commercial interests that were, according to one observer, "less compromised with the Somozas, more developmental and nationalistic," and they began to move into open opposition. As one of them commented: "The problem is the man. He's taking over our market. We have no quarrel with anyone else or the system. Just get rid of him." These elements were gathered together in the Higher Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), with such spokesmen as the editor-publisher of the influential daily *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, and cooking-oil manufacturer Alfonso Robelo.[14]

Although the nationalist bourgeoisie had "no quarrel with the system," the decline of the world capitalist system took its toll on Nicaraguan business. Between 1969 and 1974, 37 percent of Managua's factories closed down. The 1974-75 recession brought the growth of the Nicaraguan Gross Domestic Product down to 2.2 percent, which was really a negative rate given the rise in population. In 1978 it had actually shrunk by 5 percent.[15]

The non-Somocista capitalists were faced with an insoluble dilemma. On the one hand, the intensification of the crisis in the capitalist economy made them resent ever more fiercely the incursions of Somocista "bandit capitalism." On the other hand, the very same crisis was compelling them to participate in austerity measures which were cutting ever deeper into the already low living standards of the working masses. In order to preserve political and social stability in this situation, they continued to rely on the repressive order that only the Somoza dynasty had been able to maintain. They were no less enmeshed in their interrelationship with U.S. economic interests. They also recognized the importance of the economic, political and military support that the U.S. government had traditionally provided — and U.S. imperialism was reluctant to abandon Somoza. The only other force they could utilize to reform or replace the Somoza regime was the mobilization of the profoundly discontented and increasingly volatile masses. The dangers of taking this course were clearly recognized by most Nicaraguan business interests. Even those inclined to experiment in this kind of politics, such as Pedro Joaquín Chamorro or Alfonso Robelo, sought severely limited efforts primarily "aimed at convincing the U.S. that [they] represented a 'non-revolutionary' alternative to the Somozas, worthy of State Department support." Such a strategy proved incapable of dislodging Somoza.[16]

Nor, if successful, would it have been capable of meeting the needs of the Nicaraguan masses who were suffering from the distorted economy and growing immiseration that are the legacy of imperialist domination and the world capitalist system. While the bourgeois opposition was incapable of offering genuine solutions, however, the rift among the capitalists contributed to their (and thus Somoza's) inability to maintain bourgeois dominance.

2. THE PROLETARIANIZATION OF THE NICARAGUAN MASSES

Carlos Fonseca, in evaluating the defeat of Sandino, had observed: "The struggle was carried out without an industrial proletariat existing .... The Sandinista resistance, which became the heroic vanguard of the people, had an almost totally peasant composition, and therein lies the glory and the tragedy of that revolutionary movement."[1] Fonseca, as a Marxist, believed in the necessity of a proletarian basis for the liberation of his country. In 1978, Jaime Wheelock was able to argue:

"In the last twenty years the growth of capitalism, first with the expansion of large-scale cotton cultivation and second with the Central American Common Market, was failing in an accelerated manner, as much for the peasants as for the artisans in the city. Where earlier there had been large areas of peasant production, these were replaced by agribusiness, and the peasants by way of a series of machinations began to work as laborers on these large haciendas. In the city artisans were very quickly liquidated by the growth of industry; already by 1975 there were more than 250,000 agricultural workers and more than 60,000 factory and construction workers in Nicaragua.

"Of course, the economy provides statistics, but these phenomena are translated into intense, and each time more frequent, new struggles. The political milieu in Nicaragua has been undergoing change. It is no longer possible for an elected Liberal or Conservative official to drag the people down the rough path of electoral fraud. Perhaps for the first time, the class struggle of the proletariat against the exploiters has been established with real clarity."[2]

It is crucial to understand this transformation of the Nicaraguan class structure in order to understand the revolutionary victory achieved under the leadership of the FSLN. The following table provides an approximation of the reality.[3]

Distribution of the Labor Force by Economic Sector (1976)

	No. of Workers	% of Total
Agriculture, hunting and fishing	315,127	46.1
Mines and quarries	5,146	0.8
Industry	65,578	9.5
Construction	29,637	4.3
Commerce	83,622	12.2
Transportation, warehouses, communications	28,960	4.2
Electricity, water, public service	5,216	0.8
Others	150,119	22.0
TOTAL	683,405	100

The economically active population in Nicaragua rose from 545,000 in 1970 to 740,000 in 1978 (the total population rising from 1,836,000 to 2,409,000 in the same period). In this time-span, the urban population for the first time became larger than the rural — each standing at 1,265,000 and 1,145,000 respectively. (Some studies indicate that the agricultural labor force decreased from 62 percent to 44 percent of the total labor force from 1960 to 1978.) Of the urban-dwellers, however, 50 percent lived in small rural villages, making this segment of the population both rural and urban. In this way, and in other important ways that we will examine, the Nicaraguan masses — particularly in regard to class formation — reflect the process of combined and uneven development.[4]

One way that this is high-lighted is by examining the mixed reality which is encompassed by the large but ambiguous category of "others" on the labor-force table above. Over 20 percent of this category constituted a similarly ambiguous category of "services." (In fact, certain studies have placed from 31 to 41 percent of Nicaragua's labor force in the "service" sector, perhaps by combining the last four categories on the above table.) They constituted an under-employed layer of displaced workers and peasants concentrated in the cities, and Orlando Núñez has described them as "masses of proletarians . . . who are not organically integrated into the centers of productive capital. They are forced, consequently, to eke out a meager existence on the margins of the sphere of circulation." Thus, an impoverished street vendor — while not selling his or her labor-power — can more accurately be perceived as part of the working class than of the petty bourgeoisie.[5]

A similar reality can be found in the Nicaraguan countryside. Consider the following table:[6]

Rural Class Structure, Nicaragua, 1978

	No. of People	% of Economically Active Population in Agriculture
Bourgeoisie		
Large (farms larger than 353 hectares)	1,607	0.4
Medium (farms 7 to 353 hectares in cotton & coffee production, or 35 to 353 hectares in basic grains)	38,663	8.9
Middle Peasantry (farms with 7 to 35 hectares in basic grains, or 3.5 to 7 hectares in export crops)	54,628	12.7
Semiproletariat (farms with 0.3 to 7 hectares in basic grains, or 0.1 to 3.5 hectares in export crops)	164,780	38.3
Proletarians (stable employment)	32,341	7.5
Subproletariat (landless workers without stable employment)	138,046	32.1
TOTAL	430,065	99.9

Approximately 40 percent of the agricultural economically active population were landless wageworkers, most of whom could find employment only during four months of the year for the harvests of coffee, sugar cane and cotton. These agricultural proletarians — as well as the masses of impoverished urban-dwellers — were primarily victims of the expanded cotton production of the 1950s and '60s, when tenants and sharecroppers were expelled from the haciendas; similar proletarianizing "land clearance" occurred in the 1960s and '70s with the expansion of cattle ranches. If we examine the 50 percent that could be termed peasants, however, we find that the vast majority of them did not have sufficient land to meet their subsistence needs — which compelled them to join with the rural proletariat for four months of the year in order to labor in the harvests of the big landowners. In short, about 78 percent of the rural labor force was in some degree proletarianized.[7]

While it constituted the largest sector of the Nicaraguan working class, however, it was also characterized by a remarkable fluidity. Orlando Núñez has pointed out that "although the seasonally-employed agricultural proletariat might be the most numerous group during four months of the year . . ., they survive unemployed or as semiproletarians, going from the cotton, coffee, and sugar harvests on the plantations back to their peasant plots, from the countryside to the city where they struggle for survival, unemployed or underemployed." At the same time, however, this very fluidity tended to draw together some of the most oppressed sectors of the population. As two astute observers have noted: "Middle peasant farmers who have sufficient access to land are organizationally isolated from one another. While they are also exploited by merchants and userers, their exploitation is not so

easily identified. In contrast, the vast sector of smallholders without sufficient access to land migrated for four months out of the year to the harvests to engage in wage work. There they lived in the most wretched conditions and worked 12 to 15 hours a day picking coffee or cotton only to be cheated out of a day's work by crooked measuring scales. For these months of the year, their conditions were one and the same with the landless rural workers and those workers either permanently employed on the haciendas or who were given access to land on the haciendas as sharecroppers or renters." In other words, "the material conditions for the rural worker-peasant alliance were provided by the pattern of Nicaraguan agrarian capitalist development."[8]

Among the majority sectors of urban dwellers, similar material conditions rapidly developed during the 1970s. We have already taken note of the impoverished urban masses, many of whom had close ties to the countryside, engaged in "services." Also increasingly important was the industrial proletariat, which constituted close to one-third of the economically-active population in the city and from 15 to 18 percent of the country's labor force. Although they were not concentrated in large economic units (few factories employed more than 100 to 500 workers), the rapid industrialization beginning in the 1960s had effectively destroyed the artisanal nature of much industry. While real average wages remained stable in urban areas between 1961 and 1970, they plummeted by 14 percent from 1970 to 1975, and even more so afterward. Unemployment followed an upward trajectory in the same period, although the length of the working week increased to 50-60 hours. This was exacerbated by a general decline in social services. Trade unions, while encompassing only 6 percent of the labor force, had been strongest among these sectors of the working class. Yet, in the words of Orlando Núñez, these workers were "characterized by a consciousness, organization and form of mobilization that was essentially economistic and was controlled by reformist or doctrinaire parties that never thought that the revolution would come so soon." In the face of rapidly deteriorating conditions, however, this modest variety of trade unionism made increasingly less sense to the organized workers.[9]

Núñez has also drawn attention to what he calls "the middle sectors," among whom he seems to include students, teachers, journalists, public employees, nurses, domestic-service employees (and others from the "service" sector). church people, etc. He argues: "The following list contains but a few of the factors which contributed to the subjection of the middle layers to a proletarianized status during the Somoza regime: the disregard for the minimum wage, the progressive deterioration of real income, the absence of a social wage based on need, the galloping inflation, the failure of the government to provide services, the levels of unemployment in the families, the indiscriminate repression and the climate of uncertainty."[10]

James Petras and Morris Morley have argues that this general situation has come to exist throughout Central America: "The dynamic growth of capital, with its voracious appetite for new sources of land, labor and resources has drawn into its vortex practically every segment of society .... By subordinating a great variety of social classes to the common yoke of repression and exploitation, by monopolizing all mechanisms of legality and representation, the process of capitalist development has homogenized the conditions of heterogeneous social classes, (salaried, wage, unemployed, smallholders, etc.)...."[11]

Increasing sectors of the population were becoming convinced, in their daily lives, that their needs and hopes could not be realized under the shadow of Somocismo. In fact, most of the sectors were also in rebellion against the underlying realities which had created and sustained the Somoza tyranny.

The development of capitalism in Nicaragua, rooted in the peculiarities of Nicaragua's own history and inseparably linked to the dynamics of the world capitalist system, had generated a process of mass proletarianization and immiseration. Out of this, a combination of social forces was forged that would be capable of changing the course of the country's history. All that was needed was an effective force capable of providing a vision of a better future and a program for organizing and mobilizing the Nicaraguan masses to fight for that future.

3. A LEADERSHIP FOR THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

The opposition to the Somoza dictatorship from 1944 to 1979 was composed of an alphabet soup of more than two dozen parties, organizations and coalitions varying in size, composition and durability. Standing out above all of them, of course, are the letters FSLN — the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The FSLN, because of its uncompromising nationalism and anti-imperialism, rooted in the rich traditions of Augusto César Sandino, was able to absorb diverse currents. "I believe the Nicaraguan revolutionary should embrace a doctrine which can lead the Nicaraguan people victoriously to liberation," Carlos Fonseca had written in 1964. "In my own thought, I welcome the popular substance of different ideologies: Marxism, Liberalism and Christian Socialism." This openness, as we will see, did not prevent the FSLN from advancing a revolutionary proletarian socialist program. Rather, it contribued to an essential critical-mindedness. "Socialist and national demands," Fonseca wrote, "are combined in the Sandinista People's Revolution. We identify with socialism while retaining a critical attitude to the socialist experiences." The FSLN's evolution from the early 1960s onward was characterized by an increasingly coherent revolutionary strategy — culminating in the capitalist state being smashed through an armed struggle that was based on mass mobilizations and a working-class uprising. As one observer has stated quite perceptively: "The Sandinistas have affirmed the principle that theory is not a dogma but a guide to action and that tactics must be flexible and creative even while the overall strategic perspective is constant and firm."[1]

To understand the FSLN triumph more fully, however, it is necessary to consider some of the other oppositional currents. There were two split-offs from the Somoza-dominated Liberal Party: the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), a left-liberal splinter formed in 1944 which, despite its limitations, helped to generate a milieu of radical opposition (which included both precursors and future activists of the FSLN) and which today supports the FSLN; and later the more moderate Constitutionalist Liberal Movement (MLC). Of course, the Conservative Party constituted the largest formal "opposition" party to Somoza, and at times this opposition appeared to be real — for example, during the brief presidency of the maverick Leonardo Arguello in 1947, whom Somoza allowed to take office only to impatiently overthrow him after 25 days. The consequent inclination of the Conservatives not to antagonize the dictator in the following years contributed

to split-offs from the Conservative Party, such as the Conservative Party Autentico and the more significant Conservative National Action (ANC), founded by *La Prensa*'s Pedro Joaquín Chamorro in 1970. There was also the Nicaraguan wing of the Christian Democracy, the small and conservative Social Christian Party (PSC) which was founded in 1957 and which also led a trade union federation, the Workers' Federation of Nicaragua (CTN); in the 1970s, a left-liberal split from the PSC established the People's Social Christian Party, which today is pro-FSLN. Also in the 1970s, two small oppositional parties, National Mobilization and National Salvation, were formed around prominent personalities, and in 1978 yet another group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) was established by the liberal millionaire-industrialist Alfonso Robelo. Not surprisingly, none of these oppositional groups was capable of developing a perspective that could overcome the power of the Somoza regime.[2]

Initially, the major left-wing oppositional group was the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), which was in fact a pro-Moscow Stalinist organization; it led a weak but significant trade union federation, the General Confederation of Labor-Independent (CGT-I). The PSN had three factions, one of which broke off in 1970 to form the Nicaraguan Communist Party (PCN), which also had a pro-Moscow orientation and which established its own small trade union federation, the Federation of Trade Union Action and Unity (CAUS). Also in 1971-72, a Maoist split-away from the FSLN resulted in the formation of the Peoples Action Movement (MAP), with its trade union current known as the Workers Front (FO) — both miniscule. (MAP-FO broke with Maoism and adopted a pro-Albanian orientation in 1977.) Even more miniscule was the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR), a sectarian grouplet which claimed to be Trotskyist. Of all these organizations, however, the one most deserving of our attention is the PSN.[3]

Although the PSN was formally founded in 1944, the roots of Nicaraguan Communism could be said to go back to 1925, when the Salvadoran revolutionary Agustín Farabundo Martí and other Central American intellectuals formed the Central American Socialist Party, whose members were drawn to the inspiring example of the Bolshevik Revolution and the orbit of the Communist International. In the late 1920s, Farabundo Martí and other Central American Communists joined in the struggle led by Sandino. As late as 1928, the Comintern could declare: "The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International sends fraternal greetings to the workers and peasants of Nicaragua and the heroic army of national emancipation of General Sandino, which is carrying on a brave and determined struggle with the imperialism of the United States." By 1929, however, as the extreme sectarianism of "third period" Stalinism gripped the Comintern, Sandino was being denounced for "petty-bourgeois *caudillismo*" and the Sandino-Communist alliance was terminated.[4]

(It's worth noting that Farabundo Martí, who served as one of Sandino's closest aides, has been characterized by biographer Jorge Arias Gómez as being only "loosely associated with the Third International," and that historian Thomas Anderson suggests that he had vaguely Trotskyist sympathies. He seems to have been part of a heterodox current within the Latin American Communist movement of the late 1920s and early '30s which included the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui and the Cuban Julio Antonio Mella. In any event, he wrote in 1931: "My break with Sandino was not, as is sometimes said, for divergence of moral principles or opposing norms of conduct .... He would not embrace my communist program. His banner was only that of national independence, ... not social revolution .... I solemnly declare that General Sandino is the greatest patriot in the world." Sandino is said to have lamented the loss of Martí "as much as the loss of a battle." Farabundo Martí was killed in the 1932 massacre in El Salvador that followed an abortive workers' and peasants' uprising led by the Salvadoran Communist Party.)[5]

Throughout most of the 1930s, the handful of Nicaraguan Communists functioned in a loosely-organized Nicaraguan Workers Party (PTN), which split in 1937 over the question of whether to support the presidential candidacy of Anastasio Somoza. Although the Nicaraguan Communists opposed Somoza at this time, they reversed themselves in 1941. As one historian has noted: "After Russia's entry into the Second World War the Nicaraguan Communists followed the general international policy of making friends with any Latin American ruler who would proclaim himself on the side of the United Nations [i.e., the anti-Hitler alliance], something which Somoza had hastened to do soon after the entry of the United States into the conflict." Carlos Fonseca later pointed out: "The Nicaraguan Socialist Party was organized in a meeting whose objective was to proclaim support to Somoza's government."[6]

It was out of the PSN that such FSLN founders as Carlos Fonseca and Tomás Borge emerged in the 1950s, and the criticisms which the Sandinistas have made of the Nicaraguan Stalinists tells us much about both groups.[7]

Fonseca pointed out that in the 1930s and '40s "the Nicaraguan workers' movement was basically made up of artisans" and that "the leadership of the Socialist Party was also of artisan origin, and not of proletarian roots as the Nicaraguan Socialist Party demagogically asserts." Indeed, it was among shoemakers, printing-trades workers and mosaic workers in Managua that the PSN seems to have had a solid base in its early years. Far more debilitating, in Fonseca's opinion, was "an extremely low ideological level" which made the PSN a "pseudo-Marxist sector." Thus, during World War II, "Yankee imperialism, the traditional enemy of the Nicaraguan people, became an ally of the world antifascist front. The lack of a revolutionary leadership in Nicaragua prevented this reality from being interpreted correctly, and Somoza took advantage of the situation to consolidate the rule of his clique." Somoza adopted liberal reforms, an impressive labor code (which was never enforced until after the 1979 revolution), and allowed the Communists to organize. They in turn, as Fonseca notes, advocated "conciliation with the capitalist class and with North American imperialism in Latin America." After World War II ended and the Cold War began, Somoza became a leader of the anti-Communist crusade. While the PSN became anti-Somoza, it tended simply to support a different bourgeois grouping, because it "did not possess the necessary clarity in the face of the Conservative sector's control over the anti-Somozaist opposition. It could not distinguish between the justice of the anti-Somoza opposition and the manuevers of the Conservative sector." From 1947 to 1967, it was inclined to support candidates of the Conservative Party.[8]

In 1972, an oppositional coalition was formed by Pedro Joaquín Chamorro — the Democratic Union of Liberation (UDEL). One commentator observed: "UDEL distinguished itself from earlier bourgeois initiatives by espousing progressive reforms, including free elections, agrarian reform and 'national self-determination.' It was also unique in uniting a broad spectrum of political and social forces, including the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), labor groupings, sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, ex-Somocistas, and Conservatives." Another commented: "It was a Popular Front alliance against the dictatorship, bringing together on a moderate democratic program both liberal bourgeois formations and organizations representing the workers' movement. Bourgeois hegemony was evident in the Union's program, methods of struggle, and

leadership." The PSN was not disturbed by this "realistic strategy of broad and pluralistic democratic unity" that was dominated by capitalist politicians because, in the words of one PSN leader, "We believe that what is needed in Nicaragua is not a socialist revolution but a profoundly democratic revolution." The PSN was to participate in a similar formation, the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), which came together briefly in 1978-79.[9]

It was precisely this orientation which was rejected by the leadership of the FSLN. As Orlando Núñez put it: "The FSLN came into being as an alternative to the Somocista military dictatorship. It was also an alternative to the Conservative bourgeois opposition and to all the reformist parties that had converted the rising energy of the workers and the middle sectors into pacts with Somoza. Finally, the FSLN was an alternative to the so-called leftist parties which failed to put into practice the truly necessary methods for achieving the ends they formally professed to be working towards." (For its part, the PSN condemned the FSLN's "ultraleft strategy" and "sterile adventurism" and "Maoist, almost Trotskyist influences.")[10]

In 1969, Carlos Fonseca wrote his classic essay "Nicaragua: Zero Hour." The following lengthy passage is crucial for understanding the fundamental perspectives to which the FSLN adhered for the next decade:

"...at the current time it is necessary for us to strongly emphasize that our major objective is the socialist revolution, a revolution that aims to defeat Yankee imperialism and its local agents, false oppositionists, and false revolutionaries....

"One must be alert to the danger that the reactionary force in the opposition to the Somoza regime could climb on the back of the revolutionary insurrection. The revolutionary movement has a dual goal. On the one hand, to overthrow the criminal and traitorous clique that has usurped power for so many years; and on the other, to prevent the capitalist opposition — of proven submission to Yankee imperialism — from taking advantage of the situation which the guerrilla struggle has unleashed, and grabbing power. In the task of barring the way to the traitorous capitalist forces, a revolutionary political and military force rooted in the broad sectors of the people has a unique role to play. Sinking these roots is dependent on the organization's ability to drive out the Liberal and Conservative influences from this broad sector....

"The above statements do not contradict the possibility of developing a certain unity with the anti-Somozaist sector in general. But this is a unity at the base, with the most honest sectors of the various anti-Somozaist tendencies. This is all the more possible due to the increase in the prestige of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the discrediting and splintering of the leadership of the capitalist parties and the like."[11]

The FSLN split into three distinct tendencies in the mid-1970s — the Insurrectional Tendency, the Prolonged Peoples War Tendency, and the Proletarian Tendency. The differences of these currents will be touched on below. Here, it is necessary to stress their unity — even in the midst of sharp, public disagreements — around the basic position articulated by Fonseca. Consider the words which Daniel Ortega, a leader of the allegedly "moderate" Insurrectionals, used in 1978:

"We have urged the creation of a wide anti-Somoza front. It would aim at joining together all the anti-Somoza sectors and mass organizations of the country including sectors of the opposition bourgeoisie. As the Frente Sandinista, we help mass associations politically and militarily. In doing so, we seek to conserve the political hegemony of the FSLN and in this way, as our platform signifies, we avoid the possibility of the bourgeoisie becoming the political leader of an anti-Somoza front. [We cooperate with the opposition bourgeoisie] since the struggle it is pursuing and directing coincides with the objectives that we promote. We assign a tactical and temporary character to this front....

"We consider the unity of all the revolutionary forces in the popular democratic process as something vital to overthrow the pretensions of the bourgeoisie and imperialism .... This is the challenge, and the popular Sandinista revolution, we are sure, will turn it into victory. Our revolutionary program and platform, linked to the proletarian, campesino, and middle classes, prevents us from falling into popular-frontism in which the winner has always been the bourgeoisie."[12]

In the same year, Henry Ruíz of the Prolonged Peoples War Tendency, explained: "Imperialism, which is the mentor of political escapism through negotiations, is looking to consolidate bourgeois power, to continue somocismo, to annihilate the Sandinista movement and, in the worst of cases [for imperialism], to stem the revolutionary process according to its own criteria .... [The Sandinistas,] as guarantors of the entire process of democratization, will maintain their rifles and organized armed struggle not in the function of a short-run offensive but in the function of the long-term crisis — inasmuch as Sandinistas consider Somoza to be just part of the problem."[13]

Also in 1978, Jaime Wheelock of the Proletarian Tendency asserted: "Up to now we have said that we will not accept any solution which means the continuation of somocismo and the military dictatorship, which is more than just that. We are ready and willing to come to an understanding [with bourgeois oppositionists], but first it must be recognized that the majority of Nicaraguans want the overthrow of Somoza and that this majority, in number and social condition, should determine the road to follow and that the majority is made up of workers, peasants, youth, and democratic women. We could never accept submission to the leadership of the bourgeoisie. We are able to work together while preserving our independence and making sure that the struggle of our people not serve as an instrument of or stepping stone for the ambitions of corrupt political leaders."[14]

The 1969 Program of the FSLN called for "a social system that wipes out the exploitation and poverty that our people have been subjected to in past history," asserting: "The Sandinista people's revolution will establish a revolutionary government that will eliminate the reactionary structure that arose from rigged elections and military coups, and the people's power will create a Nicaragua that is free of exploitation, oppression, backwardness; a free, progressive, and independent country." A 1977 FSLN statement spoke of "a worker-peasant alliance prepared ... to initiate a struggle to overthrow the Somoza gang. We then plan to form a revolutionary popular democratic government, to allow us, proceeding from a proletarian ideology and Sandino's historic behests, to make socialism triumphant and create that society of free people of which Sandino dreamed." It went on to assert that Nicaragua's liberation from imperialism and exploitation "will be secured, given a Marxist-Leninist approach and a firmly-knit vanguard to direct the revolutionary process." In a 1978 unity statement of the three FSLN tendencies, despite the absence of references to "Marxism-Leninism," these commitments were repeated, and the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship was specified as the first step to achieving socialism; specifically, the FSLN was committed to "opening a popular democratic process permitting ... the enjoyment of full democratic liberties as the most appropriate framework ... for the march toward full national liberation and socialism."[15]

4. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

It is not sufficient simply to look at the unvarying revolutionary principles or militant statements of the FSLN if one wishes to understand its triumph. If this were enough, any sectarian — or any opportunist who indulged in leftist rhetoric — could be a Lenin, and all of us would be luxuriating in the sunshine of pure communism. One must also look at what the Sandinistas *did*, how they interacted with the Nicaraguan reality, how they learned from their mistakes, how they grew into a force that was capable of providing decisive revolutionary leadership. It will be neither possible nor necessary here to repeat in detail the history of the FSLN and the revolutionary struggle. An indication of the evolution of strategic and tactical perspectives will suffice.

The inspiring example of the Cuban Revolution of 1959 drove home the truth that armed struggle is needed to destroy the power of brutal, imperialist-supported tyrannies and that relatively small bands of committed idealists can help bring about revolutionary situations. Revolutionary militants in Nicaragua and elsewhere embraced the partial lesson that an essential element in the overthrow of a vicious dictatorship must be the commitment of revolutionaries to challenge it militarily. Yet any truth, no matter how profound, can be transformed into a costly error if it overshadows other truths. New lessons were learned through the bitter experiences flowing from this one-sided perspective. In describing the *people's war* perspective that was consequently adopted, Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, an analyst with significant Central American experience and contacts, gives a vivid sense of the evolution of FSLN thinking:

" 'People's War' is a philosophy and methodology of revolutionary struggle that emerges out of the experiences of the Vietnamese in their battles first against the French and then the United States. Its increasing influence on the thinking of Latin American revolutionaries came only after a painful and sobering examination of the 'foquista' guerrilla experiences of Che Guevara in the 1960s which were, in turn, an attempt to overcome the generally notorious nonrevolutionary stance of most Latin American Communist parties (their compromise with bourgeois forces, their tailing of mass uprisings, their mechanical-stage theories of development and of peaceful transition to socialism, etc.). The guerrilla *foco* — a small group of militarily trained armed professional revolutionaries — was seen as capable of creating the subjective conditions for convincing the masses of people to revolt, of setting off the spark that would light the revolutionary fire. In contrast to the traditional communist parties, which refused to accept the necessity of armed struggle by refusing to prepare for it either in theory or in practice, the guerrilla army was seen as a proto-party organization, a fighting unit that could unite in a single command the political and military leadership for an embryonic vanguard party. The foco could accomplish this, for example, by contributing to a general breakdown in law and order . . . which would cause a general political crisis.

"But the foco conception, encouraged by Regis Debray's writings on the Cuban revolution, suffered from what turned out to be fatal distortions: it emphasized military-tactical training and perspectives over political-ideological ones. It was subjective, idealist, and voluntarist in understanding the strength of the Latin American bourgeoisies backed up by their U.S. military advisors and in thinking that their daring and commitment could, in themselves, create the subjective conditions, i.e., organizations and consciousness. Foco groups failed to analyze carefully the objective economic and political factors or to build patiently on the existing levels of organization and consciousness of the mass movement and generally left an active, conscious working class out of the formula . . . . The FSLN . . . went through almost a decade of relative isolation from the masses and virtual military defeat before mastering the art of integrating various aspects and dimensions of struggle that resulted in the victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979."[1]

(It is worth reflecting on the point Chinchilla makes about the impact of the Cuban and Vietnamese struggles on the Nicaraguan struggle. Consider Orlando Núñez's comments: "It is important to note here the role played by internationalism. The examples of previous struggles and the inspiration provided by the triumphs in other social formations is crucial in the construction of the new society. Remember the enthusiasm which the Cuban revolution sparked throughout Latin America twenty years ago? Think back on the international solidarity that the Vietnam war awakened! Political consciousness and an understanding of the tactics of struggle cannot be mechanically generated in our respective social formations in isolation. In Latin America we cannot wait for the objective conditions to give rise to the contradictions which will eventually engender the Marxist consciousness by which we want our revolutionary struggle to be guided. Today the superstructure of any given society is a product not only of its own domestic infrastructure but also of other societies . . . . Our class analysis must transcend the physical frontiers within which we live." The dynamics of combined and uneven development operate not only in the way that capitalism and class formations evolve, but also in the realm of revolutionary theory and struggle.)[2]

An examination of Carlos Fonseca's "Nicaragua: Zero Hour" reveals that much of this 1969 essay is a painstakingly self-critical analysis of FSLN practice in the 1960s. A comparison of its perspective with subsequent events shows it to be a reflection of a yet-to-be-completed transition in FSLN strategic and tactical thought. While continuing to stress the necessity of utilizing "armed revolutionary force" in confronting the Somoza dictatorship, Fonseca asserted that "the Front vacillated in putting forward a clearly Marxist-Leninist ideology," and he criticized "the lack of both adequately developed leading cadres and the necessary determination to organize the struggle of the popular masses," suggesting the need "to train cadres to organize the struggle of the diverse sectors of the Nicaraguan people." At the same time, one can see a continued stress on rural guerrilla warfare and work among the peasantry, but no specifics on developing revolutionary work in urban areas.[3]

In the coming decade, this is precisely the gap which the FSLN began to fill. One observer noted: "Contacts were made in the labor movement: in the powerful construction union and among health workers, the FSLN helped promote the ousting of pro-government leaders. Organizing also took place in indigenous communities, urban slums, secondary schools, and among other workers to extend unionization drives." Humberto Ortega later recalled: "We didn't have a big mass organization, but we did have our activists and the organizational potential which little by little allowed us to organize and mobilize the masses."[4] It is important to understand, however, that the specifics of Nicaragua's socio-economic development dictated against a narrow focus in this mass work. As Orlando Núñez has explained:

"According to Marxist theory and the experience of the developed countries, the relationship between capital and labor manifests itself as the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whereby capitalist development nurtures the rise of the bourgeoisie which simultaneously produces its own executioners: the proletariat. The reformist parties in Latin America frequently refer to this analysis when they talk of the objective conditions or of the democratic-bourgeois phase of

capitalist development in Latin America. When we transcend theory, that is to say when we proceed to the method and the application of the method to a concrete reality, we find that the relation between capital and labor includes the participation of the middle sectors which complement both logically and historically this contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It also becomes clear that the class struggle is not restricted to the confines of the factories or the productive centers; it goes beyond the contradictions between workers and management; it reaches the sphere of reproduction of capital, penetrating the local neighborhoods and even the ideological world of the high schools, the churches, and the newspapers .... We must understand that mass movements — or social movements according to the jargon of the sociologists — are not a reality or a concept isolated from the class struggle. They are an integral part of the struggle and should, accordingly, be analyzed in that context."[5]

While the FSLN had rejected economist and workerist perspectives (i.e., rejected an exclusive focus on economic reforms and on industrial workers) from the beginning, it was only in the 1970s that it was able to develop such a comprehensive orientation as suggested by Núñez's comments. This was accomplished only after sharp internal disputes. According to Humberto Ortega: "The truth is that we always took the masses into account, but more in terms of their supporting the guerrillas, so that the guerrillas as such could defeat the National Guard." In the early 1970s, a debate opened up in the FSLN over whether the organization should have an urban or rural focus. Soon, however, the debate deepened over how to relate to the struggles of the urban and rural masses. As Ortega later remarked, "we had to overcome a certain conservative frame of mind which led our movement to passively accumulate forces .... It's a passive view which holds that it's possible to pile up weapons and gain in organization and numbers without fighting the enemy, while sitting on the sidelines, without involving the masses..." A growing number of FSLN activists began to feel, in the words of Jaime Wheelock, "that Sandinismo, within the new political and economic reality in Nicaragua, was more than simply a guerrilla force or an organization of more or less radicalized university students, but the vanguard organization of the working class, and through that class the leader of all our people in the struggle against the military dictatorship." Ortega was later to stress the importance of "a creative combination of all forms of struggle wherever they can take place: countryside, city, town, neighborhood, mountain, etc., but always based on the idea that the mass movement is the focal point of the struggle and not the vanguard with the masses limited to merely supporting it."[6]

Initial rigidity on the part of some FSLN leaders, a certain amount of internal disorganization which prevented a full discussion among the revolutionary cadres, and the loss of some of the FSLN's most seasoned leaders (for example, Carlos Fonseca was killed in 1976) resulted in an open split among the Sandinistas. Later Tomás Borge self-critically described the leadership's "inability to assimilate the criticisms of the proletarian perspective," and Humberto Ortega speculated that better internal organization would have facilitated "encouraging criticism while maintaining unity." Dora María Tellez later recalled: "The split and the process of reuniting were difficult times for us. An organization which many of us thought indestructible and indivisible fell apart right before our eyes. Perhaps the division wasn't necessary, but the process that gave rise to it was — the internal discussion of our problems, our line, our strategy and its application to our people's struggle." As it was, those concerned about organizing workers and proletarianized sectors into unions and mass organizations were expelled and went on to organize the Proletarian Tendency, while those determined to maintain the orthodoxy of rural guerrilla warfare assumed the name of the Prolonged Peoples War Tendency. Soon another current — with international contacts ranging from certain reformist-bourgeois governments of Latin America and the social-democratic Second International to the government of revolutionary Cuba (which had predominant influence in the current) — formed the Insurrectional Tendency: this tendency insisted on the possibility of broad alliances and mass mobilizations for an anti-Somoza insurrection, to be initiated in the immediate future.[7]

Despite sharp polemics between the tendencies, their separation tended to assume the character of a practical division of labor. Each was concerned to translate its perspectives into action (rather than settling simply for polemics and propaganda), and none was inclined to interfere with the others' work, and all were able to assimilate and adjust to new experiences. As Ortega has commented: "Actually the efforts made by the three separate structures were furthering a single strategy for victory." Before the end of 1978 they were coordinating their work, and they were able to re-unite in early 1979. It was possible, in Ortega's words, "to gather and synthesize into a single practical line all the achievements that the various tendencies had accumulated."[8]

Norma Stoltz Chinchilla has pointed out that the FSLN perspective incorporates "a variation on the classical Leninist conception of the vanguard as a party of the working class and peasantry, formed as a precondition for taking power." Or, in the words of Orlando Núñez, the revolutionary organization is "the mediation between theory and practice" which is able "to link the aspirations of the majority of the working people with the current historical possibilities and necessities." Dora María Tellez expresses yet another dimension: "There are a few men and women who at a given monent in history seem to contain within themselves the dignity of all the people. They are examples to all of us. And, then, through the struggle, the people as a whole reclaim the strength and dignity shown by a few." The FSLN cadres at no time numbered more than 500, which made this dynamic interaction — a process of mutual education and encouragement — absolutely essential.[9]

Through the armed struggle, the FSLN was able to sharpen the crisis of the Somoza regime, frustrating attempts to create a stabilization of the *status quo* and concretely posing a revolutionary alternative. But central to the victory was a rising crescendo of activity on the part of mass organizations — demonstrations, economic and political strikes, spontaneous insurrectional attempts. "The crux of the victory was not military in nature, it was the masses' participation in the insurrectional situation. We always struggled to keep the activity of the masses going," Humberto Ortega later explained. "As far as we were concerned, the entire strategy, all the political and military steps taken were focused on the masses, on preventing a decline in their morale. This is why we undertook operations that did not fit within a specific political-military plan but they did serve the purpose of continuing to motivate the masses, to keep the mass movement going in the cities, which in turn allowed us to gain in strength. The masses made it possible for the armed movement to accumulate the forces the masses themselves needed."[10]

As Ortega was later to admit, the specifics of the FSLN's combined strategy of the nationwide strike, mass uprisings, and the FSLN military offensive were not blueprinted beforehand, but evolved from practical experiences in the course of the struggle. Orlando Núñez writes: "The battle against Somocismo in Nicaragua was expressed in many forms: among them the struggle of students, of organized women, of nurses, of journalists, teachers, public employees, youth, of poor neighborhoods, and of peasants over the problem of access to land. There was also the struggle of the guerrillas in the countryside, in the mountains, and

in the cities, that of the armed revolutionaries of the clandestine organizations, and that of the construction and factory workers."[11] From Núñez's description, we get a graphic description of what this looked like:

"The mass movements in the poor neighborhoods in the Pacific zone of Nicaragua politicized the issue of the public services denied by Somocista capital through neighborhood demands for water, electricity, sewage facilities, and transport. They protested as well against the cost of living, the lack of work, the injustices, the repression and the Somocista dictatorship; they supported the FSLN and expressed solidarity for other popular groups. . . .

"With the development of the mass organizations, social hegemony began to change and Sandinismo replaced Somocismo as the legitimate force in the eyes of the Nicaraguan people. The questioning of Somocismo waged by the mass movements had an important voice in the organized journalists of all the national media. This questioning began with a democratic character and progressively became revolutionary. The complaints became increasingly sharp and daring anti-government criticism. The marches and demonstrations of the women, journalists, shantytown dwellers, students, and peasants became takeovers of schools, churches, and public buildings."[12]

In July 1978, twenty-two of the mass organizations came together to form the United Peoples Movement (MPU), whose program — made up primarily of far-reaching democratic, social and economic demands — paralleled the program presented by the FSLN in 1969, constituting in fact a *transitional program* for Nicaragua. As Leon Trotsky explained in 1938, such a program is designed to facilitate "the systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution" through "a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." This is precisely the function that the FSLN program for the mass organizations was to serve. FSLN analysts noted in the autumn of 1978 that "in a dependent economy such as ours, subservient to the world capitalist market, there doesn't appear to be any margin sufficient for the 'national bourgeoisie' to make democratic concessions which the masses demand: land for the peasants, permanent employment for the thousands of workers in the agro-export economy, full employment and health, etc., and for this reason there are no possibilities to maintain within [bourgeois] democratic margins all of the aspirations of the people . . . . The September days [of mass struggles] have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the masses, contradicting the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, that the movement cannot limit itself to demanding 'justice' and 'democracy,' but tends to surpass (although with its ideological limitations) all the bourgeois plans and tends to place the established order in danger."[13]

Early in 1979, with full support of the FSLN, the MPU formed an alliance — the National Patriotic Front (FPN) — with some fragments of the disintegrating bourgeois-oppositional front, the FAO. At the time, certain leftist critics were inclined to denounce this: "To go before the masses in a permanent bloc with the bourgeoisie is to spread confusion about what class camps confront each other in Nicaragua." Such criticisms displayed a profound misunderstanding of the actual dynamics of the FSLN's policy of alliances. Alluding to the contradictions discussed earlier in our analysis of Nicaraguan capitalism, Orlando Núñez has explained: "The very contradiction inherent in the functioning of capital in the imperialized countries rendered it impossible for these mass social forces to be taken advantage of by the bourgeois opposition to Somoza." Of course, nothing is inevitable, and Núñez offers an important qualification: "The mass movements . . . could have ended in a stagnant reformism as had been the case in previous years *had it not been for the historic eruption of a revolutionary organization*." (Emphasis added.) The bourgeois-oppositional fragments, whose aid could benefit the struggle, particularly in regard to the *international* balance of forces, at this point had little independent power of their own and were quite unable to impose significant limitations on the struggle. "We won the right to establish alliances," Humberto Ortega later argued, "we imposed our right . . . . The [bourgeois] progressives realized that ours was a revolutionary movement and that we weren't totally in accord with their ideology, but they also realized that we had a political program that was, to a certain extent, of interest to them [i.e., the overthrow of Somoza] and that we had military power . . . . We made no agreement of any kind. We just set down the rules of the game and acted accordingly, and as a result we went on gaining political ground."[14]

Some theorists have been inclined to view all alliances between bourgeois and proletarian organizations as unacceptable "class collaborationism." This, however, was not the view of Leon Trotsky. Trotsky recognized that under certain conditions, such as democratic and anti-imperialist struggles in colonial and semi-colonial countries, sectors of the capitalist class might play a revolutionary role. As he noted: "It is absolutely self-evident that the bourgeoisie in joining the camp of the revolution does so not accidentally, not because it is light-minded, but under the pressure of its own class interests." These interests, he argued, were distinct from and ultimately counterposed to the interests of the proletariat and oppressed masses. Thus, while acknowledging the value of "rigidly practical agreements" between bourgeois and proletarian forces, he insisted: "The sole 'condition' for every agreement with the bourgeoisie, for each separate, practical, and expedient agreement adapted to each given case, consists in not allowing either the organizations or the banners to become mixed directly or indirectly for a single day or a single hour; it consists in distinguishing between the Red and the Blue, and in not believing for an instant in the capacity or readiness of the bourgeoisie either to lead a *genuine* struggle against imperialism or *not to obstruct* the workers and peasants." The necessity of the political independence of the working class was essential, he believed, even for the realization of short-term gains to be won through such alliances: "Marxism . . . [has] invariably taught that the revolutionary consequences of one or another act of the bourgeoisie, to which it is compelled by its position, will be fuller, more decisive, less doubtful, and firmer, the more independent the proletarian vanguard will be in relation to the bourgeoisie, the less it will be inclined . . . to overestimate its revolutionary spirit or its readiness for a 'united front' and for a struggle against imperialism." He predicted that even "revolutionary" sectors of the bourgeoisie would shift as the revolutionary process deepened: "For fear of the masses the bourgeoisie subsequently deserts the revolution or openly displays its concealed hatred of the revolution."[15] The fundamental thrust of the Sandinistas' orientation and the actual trajectory of the Nicaraguan Revolution coincide with these insights.

Based on the FSLN program which had been embraced by the mass organizations, increasing numbers of Nicaraguans were mobilized as 1979 unfolded. Charles-André Udry has described the situation well: "In the course of the insurrection, organs of the power of the masses began to develop. The insurrection was characterized by a strong tendency toward self-organization. This reflected the breadth of the forces that had come into motion, which went far beyond anything foreseen by the FSLN leadership." Indeed, Humberto Ortega notes that "the masses moved faster than the vanguard" and that it was difficult for the FSLN "to harness the avalanche, to organize the uprising for the victory that was to follow." From October 1978 up to the July victory of

1979, popular Civil Defense Committees (CDCs) proliferated throughout the country — organizing against repression and for democratic rights, distributing food and organizing health care, sometimes providing general civic administration, and forming popular militias (armed on a catch-as-catch-can basis) to hurl against Somoza's hated National Guard. Ortega commented afterward: "What happened was that it was the guerrillas who provided support for the masses so that they could defeat the enemy by means of insurrection."[15]

To understand the revolutionary struggle, in Nicaragua as elsewhere, it is necessary to set aside the "purity" of schematism. Then it will be possible to absorb the lessons which Orlando Núñez attempts to summarize:

"In our countries, all forms of struggle are necessary; all the sectors involved can be brought together in practice; all the experiences can be built upon. We are faced in our countries by great historic and cultural limitations. The objective conditions are not at the same level as the projects we dream of; and in the beginning stages of the struggle, the proletariat does not present itself as the social force for transformation *par excellence*. Furthermore, the doctrinaire parties have not been able to become the political nucleus of a revolutionary organization. Given these conditions, revolutionary 'purism' must cede to the concrete possibilities for a coherent struggle led by that revolutionary organization which dedicates itself to the destruction by force of the apparatus of power of the established order. The politics of unity of the Sandinista revolution meant the utilization of all the forms of struggle — legal, clandestine, unionist, subversive. It signified politics based on alliances with hegemony guaranteed by the FSLN. That is to say, the FSLN guaranteed the hegemony of an armed organization, ensuring the development of the struggle in favor of the working classes independent of the support of those who participated in the movement that opposed the established order."[17]

This important experience must be integrated into the general theoretical framework of revolutionary Marxism. A Trotskyist who is sympathetic to the perspective articulated by Núñez and his comrades might describe the permanent revolution in the following manner: "The moment that mediates between bourgeois revolutions and proletarian revolutions develops through democratic-popular movements, which in the Third World take the form of national liberation movements. These movements are essentially armed struggles that are nationalist and anti-imperialist and which arise out of democratic demands that are supported by a broad popular base that struggles to overthrow a reactionary government in power. The leadership is composed of a popular bloc, an alliance of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, workers, and peasants. It mobilizes and polarizes all those social sectors which have been alienated in one way or another by the established order. The principal task and historical obligation of these movements in the transition to socialism is to seize power in order to promote the transformations which the former dominant classes were unable to bring about." These, too, are the words of the Sandinista Orlando Núñez[18]

5. DYNAMICS OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION*

Before examining the course of the Nicaraguan Revolution after the overthrow of Somoza, it may be useful to pause to look more carefully at Trotsky's theoretical perspective. In the introduction, we presented Trotsky's brief 1919 summary of the theory of permanent revolution. Here we will give attention to the way he developed and applied it in pre-revolutionary Russia. What follows is: a) an outline of his analysis of the economic background and class forces of the Russian Revolution; b) a brief comparison of certain aspects of this with Nicaraguan realities; and c) a sketch of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

a) *Economic Background and Class Forces in Russia*

Trotsky shared other Russian Marxists' beliefs in the bourgeois-democratic character of the Russian Revolution:

"Marxism long ago predicted the inevitability of the Russian Revolution, which was bound to break out as a result of the conflict between capitalist development and the forces of ossified absolutism. Marxism estimated in advance the social character of the coming revolution. In calling it a bourgeois revolution, Marxism thereby pointed out that the *immediate objective* tasks of the revolution consisted in the creation of 'normal conditions for the development of bourgeois society as a whole.[1] Marxism has proved to be right, and this is now past the need for discussion or proof."[1]

At the same time, in contrast to other Marxists of that time, Trotsky's analysis went considerably beyond this starting-point. He asserted that "the general sociological term *bourgeois revolution* by no means solves the politico-tactical problems, contradictions and difficulties which the mechanics of a *given* bourgeois revolution throw up." Marxists needed "to discover the 'possibilities' of the developing revolution by means of an analysis of its internal mechanism." The key to the dynamics of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky felt, was to be found in the peculiar character of the development of Russian capitalism.[2]

Russian economic development had always lagged behind that of the West. At least initially this was a consequence of "unfavorable natural conditions and a sparse population," circumstances which had "delayed a process of social crystallization" and "stamped the whole of our history with the features of extreme backwardness." An additional factor was the voracious appetite of the tsarist state. At an early stage, Russia had been confronted by aggressive peoples and nations, some of which had more advanced economies. In order to survive, the Russian state constructed a large and expensive military apparatus, matching the West in military technology. In doing so, "it had to outpace its own economic relations, swallowing up, under pressure from outside, a disproportionately large part of the nation's vital juices." When even these "vital juices" proved to be insufficient for Russia's military needs, the state was increasingly compelled to borrow large sums of money from abroad. The additional burden of paying the interest on the national debt caused the tsarist state to absorb an even larger part of the country's surplus product, thereby inhibiting the country's economic and social development.[3]

The tsarist autocracy had its roots in Russia's landed nobility, but historically its relation to this sector had been complex. The tsarist regime of the early 19th century, "vigilantly protecting its own independence, never for a moment allowed the nobility to escape from the grip of police supervision, putting the muzzle of state control on the maw of its natural greed." At the same time, however, the nobility dominated positions in the government

*This section owes much to the assistance of Thomas Twiss and in important ways is as much his product as it is mine.

bureaucracy and in the rural local governments. Despite the appearance of one or another "liberal" landowner, the nobility was inclined to resist all attempts "to 'democratize' the rural administrations or to weaken the chains of estate slavery which bind our peasantry hand and foot." By the early 1900s, Trotsky observed, "the nobility is the commanding estate in the fullest sense of the word: it makes the provincial governors dance to its tune, threatens the ministers and openly dismisses them, puts ultimata to the government and makes sure that these ultimata are observed. Its slogan is: not one square inch of our land, not a particle of our privileges!"[4]

Yet the further development of Western capitalism had compelled the Russian state to initiate a dramatic change — fostering its own industrial development for military and financial purposes: "From a certain moment — especially from the end of the seventeenth century — the State strove with all its power to accelerate the country's natural economic development. New branches of handicraft, machinery, factories, big industry, capital, were, so to say, artificially grafted on the natural economic stem. Capitalism seemed to be an offspring of the State."[5]

If Russian capitalist development was imposed from above, it was also largely imported from abroad. Europe supplied both technology and capital in the form of loans to the tsarist state. By the end of the nineteenth century, after the semi-liberation of the serfs in 1861 had created a pool of "free" labor, European capital began to pour across the border to invest directly in Russian industry. "The very money, payment of which absorbed a good part of the Russian State budget," wrote Trotsky, "returned to the territory of Russia in the form of commercial-industrial capital attracted by the untouched natural wealth of the country, and especially by the unorganized labor-power, which so far had not been accustomed to put up any resistance."[6]

This "artificial" development resulted in the rapid and dramatic growth of Russian industry. Trotsky explained: "Large-scale factory and plant production has not grown in Russia in any 'natural' or organic manner. It did not grow gradually out of artisanal trade and manufacture since artisanal trade itself had no time to grow out of the cottage industries and was doomed to economic death, even before its birth, by foreign capital and foreign technology." One important result of this was the concentration of the majority of industrial workers in large-scale factories — 57.7 percent working in establishments of 500 or more workers by the early 20th century. This concentration was much higher than in such "advanced" industrial countries as Belgian or Germany.[7]

Yet the Russian proletariat, including dependent family members, comprised not more than one-fifth of the population. As Trotsky put it, "this highly modernized industry of a highly capitalistic type involves only a minority of the population, while the peasant majority continues to struggle under the net of class enslavement and pauperism. This fact, in turn, sets narrow limits on the development of capitalist industry in our country." The peasant majority, scratching out bare subsistance on inadequate land holdings, faced a situation which Trotsky described in this way: "Both technology and crops over the vast expanse of central Russia today are the same as a thousand years ago .... The new commodity and financial relations on the one hand, and fiscal obligations on the other, compel [the peasant] to transform all his natural resources and economic surpluses into ready cash which is immediately swallowed up by the payment of rents and taxes."[8]

Trotsky argued that the way in which Russian capitalism had developed would ensure that the coming revolution in Russia would unfold in a qualitatively different manner than had been the case in previous bourgeois revolutions. Particularly in the French Revolution of 1789, the bourgeoisie had been "enlightened, active, not yet aware of the contradictions of its own position, upon whom history had imposed the task of leadership in the struggle for a new order, not only against the outworn institutions of France but also against the reactionary forces of the whole of Europe. The bourgeoisie, consistently, in all its factions, regarded itself as the leader of the nation, rallied the masses to the struggle, gave them slogans and dictated their fighting tactics." During the Russian upheaval of 1905, on the other hand, the bourgeoisie was incapable of playing such a role. As Trotsky noted, "the tremendous part played in this process [of economic development] by foreign capital has had a fatal impact on the Russian bourgeoisie's power of political influence. As a result of state indebtedness, a considerable share of the national product went abroad year by year, enriching and strengthening the European bourgeoisie. But the aristocracy of the stock exchange, which holds the hegemony in European countries and which, without effort, turned the Tsarist government into its financial vassal, neither wished nor was able to become part of the bourgeois opposition within Russia, if only because no other form of national government would have guaranteed it the usurers' rates of interest it exacted under Tsarism .... Neither could our indigenous capital take up a position at the head of the national struggle with Tsarism, since, from the first, it was antagonistic to the popular masses — the proletariat, which it exploits directly, and the peasantry, which it robs indirectly through the state."[9]

There were differences within Russia's national bourgeoisie. The capitalist sector engaged in heavy industry "is everywhere dependent on state activities and, principally, on militarism. True, it is interested in 'a firm civil rule of law,' but it has still greater need of concentrated state power, that great dispenser of bounties." This reliance on the repressive tsarist regime was strengthened because of the radicalization of the highly-concentrated work force: "The owners of metallurgical enterprises are confronted, in their own plants, with the most advanced and most active section of the working class for whom every sign that Tsarism is weakening is a signal for a further attack on capitalism." In contrast, "the textile industry is less dependent on the state, and, furthermore, it is directly interested in raising the purchasing power of the masses, which cannot be done without far-reaching agrarian reform." Therefore, this particular capitalist grouping was inclined to function as a militant bourgeois opposition to the tsarist autocracy during the 1905 revolution. "But when the revolution revealed the whole of its social content and, by so doing, impelled the textile workers to take the path that the metalworkers had taken before them, the [bourgeois oppositionists] ... shifted most resolutely, 'as a matter of principle,' in the direction of firm state power."[10]

Trotsky also gave some attention to the urban petty bourgeoisie. He recalled the French Revolution and "the sturdy middle class" of independent craftsmen and artisans "which first lived through centuries of schooling in self-government and political struggle and then, hand in hand with a young, as yet unformed proletariat, stormed the Bastilles of feudalism." The peculiarities of Russian capitalist development had not permitted the development of such a stratum. Instead, there was a "new middle class" of professionals (lawyers, journalists, doctors, engineers, teachers). "Deprived of any independent significance in social production, small in numbers, economically dependent, this social stratum, rightly conscious of its own powerlessness, keeps looking for a massive social class upon which it can lean."[11]

As we have seen, the peasantry was the largest, and in some ways the most oppressed, class in Russia. Nonetheless, Trotsky — along with other Marxists — believed that "the peasantry are absolutely incapable of taking up an independent political role." Again, looking back at the French Revolution, Trotsky saw the

revolution's triumph resulting from "the cooperation of the peasantry with the urban plebs, that is, the proletariat, semi-proletariat, and *lumpenproletariat* of the time. This 'cooperation' took the form of the Convention, that is, of the dictatorship of the city over the countryside, of Paris over the provinces, and of the sans-culottes over Paris." The very nature of the peasantry, in Trotsky's opinion, had precluded its political domination of the revolutionary process: "Dispersed, cut off from the cities which were the nerve centers of politics and culture, dull-minded, its intellectual horizons hedged in like its meadows and fields, indifferent towards everything that the cities had created by invention and thought, the peasantry could not assume any leading significance." This did not mean that the peasantry was not significant. History had demonstrated that peasant support and involvement had been essential for the success of every bourgeois revolution. It had also demonstrated that in each case in which the peasantry had participated in a bourgeois revolution, they had done so under the leadership of revolutionary forces from the towns.[12] This remained true in early 20th-century Russia:

"The knot of Russia's social and political barbarism was tied in the countryside; but this does not mean that the countryside has produced a class capable, by its own forces, of cutting through that knot. The peasantry, scattered in 500,000 villages and hamlets over the 5 million square versts of European Russia, has not inherited from its past any tradition or habit of concerted political struggle. During the agrarian riots of 1905 and 1906, the aim of the mutinous peasants was reduced to driving the landowners outside the boundaries of their village, their rural area and finally, their administrative area. Against the peasant revolution the landed nobility had in its hands the ready-made weapon of the centralized apparatus of the state. The peasantry could have overcome this obstacle only by means of a resolute uprising unified both in time and effort. But, owing to all the conditions of their existence, the peasants proved quite incapable of such an uprising. Local cretinism is history's curse on all peasant riots. They liberate themselves from this curse only to the extent that they cease to be purely peasant movements and merge with the revolutionary movements of new social classes."[13]

Trotsky, with other Marxists, saw the proletariat as the new social class capable of leading the revolution in Russia. He saw that the "importance of the proletariat depends entirely on the role it plays in large-scale production . . . . Its social power comes from the fact that the means of production which are in the hands of the bourgeoisie can be set in motion only by the proletariat. . . . This position gives the proletariat the power to hold up at will, partially or wholly, the proper functioning of the economy of society, through partial or general strikes. From this it is clear that the importance of the proletariat . . . increases in proportion to the amount of productive forces it sets in motion." The level of industrial concentration in Russia gave the Russian working class tremendous social weight.[14] Trotsky stressed this and other characteristics:

"While the peasantry is scattered over the entire countryside, the proletariat is concentrated in large masses in the factories and industrial centers. It forms the nucleus of the population of every town of any economic or political importance, and all the advantages of the town in a capitalist country — concentration of the productive forces, the means of production, the most active elements of the population, and the greatest cultural benefits — are naturally transformed into class advantages for the proletariat. Its self-determination as a class has developed with a rapidity unequaled in previous history. Scarcely emerged from the cradle, the Russian proletariat found itself faced with the most concentrated state power and the equally concentrated power of capital. Craft prejudices and guild traditions had no power whatsoever over its consciousness. From its first steps it entered upon the path of irreconcilable class struggle."[15]

Thus, in Trotsky's opinion, "the principal driving force of the Russian revolution is the proletariat, and that is why, so far as its method is concerned, it is a proletarian revolution." At the same time, a worker-peasant alliance would be an essential feature of this proletarian revolution: "As the petty-bourgeois urban democracy in the Great French Revolution placed itself at the head of the revolutionary nation, in just the same way the proletariat, which is the one and only revolutionary democracy of our cities, must find a support in the peasant masses and place itself in power — if the revolution has any prospect of victory at all."[16]

b) *Russia and Nicaragua*

There are obvious differences between tsarist Russia and Nicaragua under the Somoza dictatorship, not the least of which is the immensity of geographical size and population of the former in comparison to the latter. Also, despite similarities between Russia's semi-feudal estates and Nicaragua's *latifundia*, there was a complete absence of a landed nobility in the latter, and the actual history and traditions of the peasantry were quite different. Nor did Nicaragua have the heritage of tsarism. Russia's subservience to foreign imperialism was not nearly so pronounced as in Nicaragua.

Nonetheless, the initial economic backwardness of Nicaragua, and the combined impact of U.S. imperialism and the Somoza dictatorship, had created a national bourgeoisie no less compromised than that which had existed in Russia. At the same time, both countries experienced periods of rapid (yet uneven) capitalist development which combined with national peculiarities to create striking contradictions — and potentialities.

The development and concentration of heavy industry which characterized Russia was absent in Nicaragua, and this resulted in an industrial proletariat with different characteristics. On the other hand, Nicaragua experienced a general proletarianization of its labor force (including majority sectors of the peasantry) which had been unknown in Russia. In fact, Nicaragua in the 1970s was considerably more urban and more proletarian than was Russia in the early 1900s.

On urbanization, consider the following table:

	Russia 1913	**Nicaragua 1970**
Urban Population	18%	35%
Rural Population	82%	65%

(The Nicaraguan figures in this table are drawn from sources defining "urban population" as living in population centers of 10,000 or more people. The Russian sources for 1913 do not provide such a definition. Sources for the USSR in 1926 give an urban population of 17.9 percent but claim that only 14.4 percent lived in population centers of 10,000 or more. Thus, if anything, the chart *understates* the contrast between pre-revolutionary Russia and pre-revolutionary Nicaragua.)[17]

On the character of the labor force in Russia as opposed to that in Nicaragua, consider the following tables:

Russia (1913)[18]		**Nicaragua (1976)**[19]	
Agriculture & forestry	75%	Agriculture, hunting, fishing	46.1%
Industry & construction	9%	Industry, construction, mines	13.8%
Commerce	9%	Commerce	12.2%
Transport, communication	2%	Transport, warehouses, communication	4.2%
Public sector, services, and other	5%	Public sector, services, and other	22.8%
Total	100%	Total	100%

From the preceding tables, we can see that the relative size of the urban working class in Nicaragua was significantly greater than in Russia. As the first two sections of this contribution suggest, the process of proletarianization in both urban and rural areas was much further advanced in Nicaragua. The nature of the Nicaraguan "peasantry," the bulk of which was proletarian or semi-proletarian, facilitated cohesion between this sector and the urban proletariat. Also, the smaller size of Nicaragua's land mass and population facilitated even greater cohesion of these proletarianized sectors than was possible in Russia.

No less important is the nature of the urban "middle layers" in each country. In Russia this was a relatively small sector, tending to form a distinct petty-bourgeois layer, tending also to gravitate in its majority toward bourgeois-liberal political formations which became more conservative as the revolutionary process deepened. In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the urban "middle layers" were relatively large, containing distinct petty-bourgeois elements, but generally tending to blend into a larger proletarianized population; while initially gravitating to left-liberal political formations (e.g., UDEL), these layers tended to be drawn into a revolutionary orbit as the revolutionary process deepened. These particular differences hardly seem to indicate that Trotsky's perspective was invalidated by Nicaraguan conditions. At the very least, it can be argued that the kinds of dynamics which Trotsky perceived in tsarist Russia (i.e., those dynamics on which he based his theory) were *no less* present in Nicaragua under the Somoza dictatorship.

c) *The Meaning of Permanent Revolution*

We have seen that Trotsky saw the Russian Revolution as having a dual character: "So far as its direct and indirect tasks are concerned, the Russian revolution is a 'bourgeois' revolution because it sets out to liberate bourgeois society from the chains and fetters of absolutism and feudal ownership. But the principal driving force of the Russian revolution is the proletariat, and that is why, so far as its method is concerned, it is a proletarian revolution."[20] This contradictory formulation reflected the dialectical contradiction in reality itself, which Trotsky sought to highlight while suggesting what it implied:

"It is possible to limit the scope of all the questions of the revolution by asserting that our revolution is *bourgeois* in its objective aims and therefore in its inevitable results, closing our eyes to the fact that the chief actor in this bourgeois revolution is the proletariat, which is being impelled towards power by the entire course of the revolution.

"We may reassure ourselves that in the framework of a bourgeois revolution the political domination of the proletariat will only be a passing episode, forgetting that once the proletariat has taken power in its hands it will not give up without a desperate resistance, until it is torn from its hands by armed force.

"We may reassure ourselves that the social conditions of Russia are still not ripe for a socialist economy, without considering that the proletariat, on taking power, must, by the very logic of its position, inevitably be urged toward the introduction of state management of industry. . . ."[21]

It may be best, however, to step back from this to see how Trotsky sees the process actually unfolding.

First of all, the revolution will *not* simply be a narrowly-composed project of the working class. "The proletariat can only achieve power by relying upon a national upsurge and national enthusiasm . . . [and by acting] as the revolutionary representative of the nation, as the recognized national leader in the struggle against absolutism and feudal barbarism." While Trotsky did not believe that the worker-peasant alliance would mean that both classes would have equal weight in the government (because he argued that, unlike the working class, the peasantry was incapable of being an independent political force), he believed that the peasantry would "rally to the regime of workers' democracy" because "the domination of the proletariat will mean not only democratic equality, free self-government, the transference of the whole burden of taxation to the rich classes, the dissolution of the standing army in the armed people and the abolition of compulsory church imposts, but also recognition of all revolutionary changes (expropriations) in land relationships carried out by the peasants."[22]

More than this, however, Trotsky foresaw a multi-class governmental coalition. He insisted that the victory of a proletarian revolution "by no means precludes revolutionary representatives of non-proletarian social groups entering the government. They can and should be in the government: a sound policy will compel the proletariat to call to power the influential leaders of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, of the intellectuals and of the peasantry." He was no less insistent that "the hegemony should belong to the working class." Trotsky saw this as the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. He was quite willing to utilize other labels ("workers' democracy" or "dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry" or "coalition government of the working class and petty bourgeoisie"), but he stressed that the reality must involve the "dominating and leading participation" of the working class, "the rule of the proletariat."[23]

The new regime would eliminate the corrupt and bureaucratic state apparatus of tsarism — "cleansing the Augean stables of the old regime and driving out its inmates, [a task which] will meet with the active support of the whole nation. . . ." Beyond this, it would "reconstruct the State upon democratic principles, that is, upon the principles of the absolute sovereignty of the people. Its duty will be to organize a people's militia, carry through a vast agrarian (land) reform, and introduce the eight-hour day and a graduated income tax."[24]

Yet the revolution at this stage would hardly have eliminated classes and class tensions, and the necessary policies of the new workers' government would in fact sharpen those tensions. "Every passing day will deepen the policy of the proletariat in power, and more and more define its *class character* . . . . [The] antagonism between the component sections [of the population] will grow in proportion as the policy of the workers' government defines itself, ceasing to be a general-democratic and becoming a class policy." Trotsky stressed: "The political domination of the proletariat is incompatible with its economic enslavement. No matter under what political flag the proletariat has come to power, it is obliged to take the path of socialist policy. It would be the greatest utopianism to think that the proletariat, having been raised to political domination by the internal mechanism of a bourgeois revolution, can, even if it so desires, limit its mission to the creation of republican-democratic conditions for the social domination of the bourgeoisie."[25]

This hardly meant an immediate socialist transformation, however. Trotsky explained that "our countryside is far too benighted and unconscious. There are still too few real socialists among the peasants. We must first overthrow the autocracy, which keeps the masses of the people in darkness. The rural poor must be freed of all taxation; the graduated income tax, universal compulsory education, must be introduced; finally, the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat must be fused with the town proletariat into the single social democratic army. Only this army can accomplish the great socialist revolution." In addition to these political and cultural prerequisites, however, there were also economic prerequisites: "The revolutionary authorities will be confronted with the objective problems of socialism, but the solution of these problems will, at a certain stage, be prevented by the country's economic backwardness. There is no way out from this contradiction within the framework of a national revolution."[26]

The dynamics of the revolution, then, necessarily lead both to a *deepening* of the revolutionary process and also to an *expansion* of the revolution. "The proletariat, once having taken power, will fight for it to the very end. While one of the weapons in this struggle for the maintenance and the consolidation of power will be agitation and organization in the countryside, another will be a policy of [economic] collectivism. Collectivism will become not only the inevitable way forward from the position in which the party in power will find itself, but will also be a means of preserving this position with the support of the proletariat." With the "deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property," Russia's "democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution." At the same time, however, "socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, must inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to civil wars and externally to revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an old capitalist country which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism." In other words: "The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable.... The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word: it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet."[27]

As these dynamics begin to come into play, however, sharp tensions and conflicts will make themselves felt within the multi-class coalition which had supported the initial democratic revolution. Trotsky warned that "the more definite and determined the policy of the proletariat in power becomes, the narrower and more shaky does the ground beneath its feet become .... The two main features of proletarian policy which will meet opposition from the allies of the proletariat are *collectivism* and *internationalism*." Yet the moderating influence (or stiff resistance) of these allies would be counteracted by the pressures generated through the international bourgeoisie's intense hostility toward the new regime. "Thus permanent revolution will become, for the Russian proletariat, a matter of class self-preservation. If the workers' party cannot show sufficient initiative for aggressive revolutionary tactics, if it limits itself to the frugal diet of a dictatorship that is merely national and merely democratic, the united reactionary forces of Europe will waste no time in making it clear that a working class, if it happens to be in power, must throw the whole of its strength into the struggle for a socialist revolution."[28]

d) *Summary*

In 1929, after he had concluded that the theory of permanent revolution had general applicability beyond Russia, Trotsky sketched out "three lines of thought" that are intertwined in his theory.

1. "First, it embraces the problem of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist .... It pointed out that democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. Therein lay the central idea of the theory...."

2. "The second aspect ... has to do with the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation .... Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals, and everyday life develop in complex reciprocal action and do not allow society to achieve equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such."

3. "The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, flows from the present state of the economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national foundations — but it cannot be completed within these foundations .... In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-contained whole; it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution constitutes a permanent process, despite temporary declines and ebbs."[29]

6. AFTER THE SANDINISTA INSURRECTION

Although it will be impossible here to offer a full account of the Nicaraguan Revolution since the July 1979 overthrow of Somoza, even a brief examination will clearly reveal the dynamic of permanent revolution. We have seen that the FSLN had been committed to the hegemony of a worker-peasant alliance, organized around a proletarian-revolutionary program of social transformation. We have also seen that it sought to advance the struggle through broad alliances that would involve even bourgeois oppositional forces in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. The Insurrectional Tendency of the FSLN had even been willing to work with the popular-frontist FAO. Yet the Insurrectional Tendency's revolutionary firmness at the decisive moment splintered this bourgeois-led coalition, discrediting major components of the bourgeois opposition that had preferred to compromise the struggle in the hope of strengthening ties with the U.S. government (and of dampening the popular ferment within Nicaragua). Of course, the FSLN continued a policy of broad alliances, including with bourgeois forces, under the banner of anti-Somozaism. Yet "anti-Somozaism" spilled over into anti-imperialism, and it blended democratic demands with a proliferation of immediate social and economic demands, some of which took on an increasingly far-reaching character. And central to the Sandinista strategy was a popular insurrection of the proletarianized Nicaraguan masses. Thus, Henri Weber's stark assertion succinctly sums up the reality: "On 19 July 1979, despite certain appearances to the contrary, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie as a whole suffered a historic defeat: it lost political power."[1]

This was not immediately apparent.

Three months after the revolutionary victory, an often astute

left-wing commentator, James Petras, offered a now out-dated but still useful analysis of the new regime — useful because it cogently articulated misperceptions which were current in certain left-wing (and some not so left-wing) circles. Petras took note of the provisional structure of the new government. The Governing Junta of National Reconstruction, served by a large staff of technical experts, trained public administrators and social scientists, appeared to play an essentially executive role of elaborating public policy. It was apparently "made up predominantly of personalities from the non-revolutionary forces, only two of the five members having direct contact with armed insurrectionary movements." In fact, three of the members appeared to be representatives of the anti-Somoza bourgeois opposition. A Council of State, with which the Junta shared legislative powers, was slated to have 33 representatives, drawn from the FSLN, the FAO, and business, civic, religious and other bodies. According to my calculations," Petras wrote, "...the left has 6 representatives, the center 19 and the right 8." The Cabinet, responsible for executing government policies through ministries (such as foreign relations, defense, housing and human settlements, agriculture, etc.), included 12 posts. In Petras' opinion, "the cabinet appears to be overwhelmingly controlled by liberal professionals," with only three posts going to members of the FSLN. Noting the new regime's stated commitment to a "mixed economy," Petras gloomily concluded: "Independently of the good intentions of the governmental figures, efforts at forming a reform capitalist 'mixed economy' have certain objective limits: foreign aid is dependent on the nature and direction of socio-economic change, arms control, demobilization of the masses, and the reconstitution of a bourgeois social order. The capitalist forces in the 'mixed economy' depend on finance, imports, credits, investments from abroad — all premised on disarming the masses and creating a new democratic, capitalist state. This perspective has substantial and articulate representation in each of the new political organs established at the top. Only the combative masses are underrepresented."[2]

But this analysis, as soon became clear, did not reflect the reality of the situation — which was shaped by the FSLN and the mass organizations that had smashed Somoza's dictatorial state apparatus. The actual power resided in the self-organized and armed masses and in their revolutionary leadership.

First of all, the Junta did not shape policy by itself but in collaboration with the FSLN National Directorate, made up of nine leading Sandinistas. According to Daniel Ortega, the National Directorate of the FSLN "is the highest conducting [leadership] organ of the Revolution. The Government of National Reconstruction reflects the line established by the National Directorate." And Alfonso Robelo, when he was still the leading bourgeois representative of the Junta, agreed that "the FSLN Directorate is the head of the revolution. The vanguard." The bourgeois representatives in the Junta had no hope of functioning effectively unless they adapted to the Sandinistas. Thus, Robelo initially found himself telling a group of businessmen that he favored a step-by-step socialization of the means of production, and when they angrily denounced him, he responded: "I will fight in the Sandinista government for a process of socialization that will always represent justice." Before long, of course, Robelo, along with the other leading bourgeois representatives, decided that he was unwilling to be either a convert or a captive, and he resigned from the Junta to defend "the private sector" and "liberty" from the "totalitarian" incursions of the FSLN. (Tomás Borge later bitterly recalled that "some of us thought that Robelo would be able to evolve to the point of becoming a human being. Unfortunately, he is one of those who does not evolve, either ideologically or mentally.")[3]

In late October 1979, the National Directorate of the FSLN announced that the Council of State would not be convened until May of the following year, in order to allow the inclusion of new representatives from the mass organizations. In late December, the FSLN asserted that "yesterday the government defended the oppressing and exploiting classes, while now it defends the interests of the oppressed and exploited classes of Nicaragua. And defense of this government means increasing the workers' participation in all economic, social, political, and ideological decisions of the revolution, both national and international .... We won the war of liberation, in which a people armed primarily against an army professionally equipped by imperialism. We will also win the economic war against a system that has been enriched by the poverty of the workers and of a people who despite their poverty do not sell out and do not surrender." There was a major reorganization of the Cabinet in order to ensure that key posts were in revolutionary hands, and the mass organizations were encouraged to draw in even larger segments of the working masses and to assume ever-greater responsibilities. In May 1980, a 47-member Council of State convened, 33 of the delegates representing working-class parties, unions, mass organizations and other groups that supported the revolutionary course of the Sandinista revolution.[4]

Henri Weber has pointed out that "such a regime is what revolutionary Marxists term a 'workers' and farmers' government.' " As Trotsky explained in *The Transitional Program*: "This formula, 'workers' and farmers' government,' first appeared in the agitation of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and was definitely accepted after the October Revolution. In the final instance it represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat."[5] Certainly by the spring of 1980 it should have become clear that this was an apt characterization of the new order in Nicaragua.

If this is the case, how can we explain the Sandinistas' commitment to a "mixed economy"? A key to understanding this is an insight recently articulated by Tomás Borge in this manner: "Mixed economies in other countries that have not had revolutions are not the same as the one in Nicaragua. There are more private enterprises here, relatively speaking, than in Venezuela, for example, but here political power is not in the hands of the businessmen. The revolution wants to cooperate with them in production and economic planning. In Nicaragua there does exist a truly mixed economy, within the revolution. We provide the businessmen with many concessions, credits, facilities, but many of them remain discontented. They will not resign themselves to losing political power!" Jaime Wheelock stressed, as early as December 1979, that "the state now is not the same state, it is a state of the workers, a state of the producers, who organize production and place it at the disposal of the people, and above all of the working class."[6]

In a widely-reproduced speech to 2000 members of the teachers' union at the beginning of 1983, Borge offered this vision of the goals of the Nicaraguan Revolution:

"This battle [to transform Nicaraguans' consciousness through education] is going to complete the liberation of Nicaragua. It will open the way for the transformation of a society where man can unleash all his physical, spiritual, scientific, and artistic faculties, that is, a society that develops man's freedom to create, construct, and fabricate beauty and culture, to master science. A society where a new morality will be born, a society of abundance of man's material and spiritual needs. A society that ends ignorance, a society that halts the degradation of man, a society that ends competition between individuals, a society that does not put aside social interests for individual interests, a society without robots or mental slaves. A society where education is not an obligation but rather a vital necessity. We are going to create a new education so that men will be masters of machinery instead of machines

mastering men — a new education to establish the reign of freedom, a paradise on earth. Workers must take over the productive forces and means of production to create this new society, so that one day, relatively soon, the resources our people need to construct this paradise will burst forth like water from an uncontainable spring."[7]

In other words, the goal of the revolution is not a "mixed economy" but the most advanced form of socialism, a communist society in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.[8]

Yet as Jaime Wheelock bluntly stated: "Economic doctrines and romantic ideas are no good if the people are hungry." With Somoza's overthrow, the Nicaraguan people literally faced hunger, inheriting an economy that was in shambles. Somoza's looting had left a mere $3.5 million in the Treasury, not enough to pay for two days' worth of imports. Somoza's bombers had destroyed schools and workplaces in Nicaragua's major towns, including several dozen factories owned by the oppositional bourgeoisie. Capital flight during the civil war had also taken its toll: $220 million in 1978 and $315 million in the first half of 1979. Even in Managua, over one-third of the labor force was unemployed. Production levels had plummeted to those of 1962 — a seventeen-year regression. As a result of the war, 70 percent of cultivable land had not been sown, affecting both cash crops and food staples. The foreign debt of $1.64 billion was the highest per capita in Latin America.[9] Even before Somoza's flight, the situation was becoming desperate for the average Nicaraguan. One writer, John Booth, described it this way:

"In mid-June, famine had appeared in the cities and towns as the last bits of hoarded food ran out. The starving populace then sacked every food store and warehouse in Managua for supplies that ran out within days. Fuel supplies too were virtually exhausted. The Nicaraguan Red Cross and international agencies had begun to distribute food in early July. In Managua alone, a hundred thousand a day had lined up for rations; a family of eight received daily one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rice and a half kilogram each of sugar and milk. Nevertheless, relief workers estimated that six hundred thousand hungry people received no relief at all. Various epidemics had spread as the public water supply became contaminated, health services broke down, and medical supplies ran out. By 19 July, bodies of the thousands of recent dead were decomposing in Managua's streets and in the rubble of houses, spreading contamination and disease to the living."[10]

The primary responsibility of the Sandinistas after assuming power, obviously, was to obtain emergency assistance for the Nicaraguan people and to make the country's economy functional once again. It was necessary, first of all, to secure hundreds of millions of dollars of aid — both grants and loans — from foreign governments, which necessarily included major capitalist and imperialist powers. Secondly, it was necessary to convince capitalists to invest in the Nicaraguan economy in order to revive the country's economic life. Also, as the FSLN leadership fully understood, the bulk of the revolutionaries were not administrators with experience in managing agricultural and industrial enterprises, and they needed "the cooperation of the class which *knows* about production." As Orlando Núñez summed it up: "We have to permit the bourgeoisie to reactivate the economy in order to protect the revolution. We must feed the people or they will throw us out like they did Somoza."[11]

The aspirations and consciousness of the Nicaraguan masses are decisive. Once the impending economic catastrophe was averted and the economy once again began to function (by 1981), production levels had risen to approximately 90 percent of those of 1978, and unemployment had fallen to about 15 percent), class contradictions began to intensify. However, these were complicated by ideological contradictions rooted in decades of Cold War anti-Communism. In the summer of 1980, one FSLN cadre explained: "Tell a Nicaraguan factory worker — as much in the CST [the FSLN-led labor federation] as in the other labor unions — that we are building a system in which workers will control the means of production, in which income will be redistributed to benefit the proletariat and he will say 'yes — that's what we want.' Call it socialism and he will tell you he doesn't want any part of it. Tell a peasant — in whom the problem of political education is even more acute — that the revolution is all about destroying the power of the big *latifundistas*, that the agrarian reform and the literacy campaign will incorporate the peasantry into political decisions, show how the Council of State and the mass organizations are giving that person a voice at every level of government, and he will be enthusiastic, he will recognize that this is right and just. Mention the word communism and he will run a mile." By May Day 1982, this ideological gap had been bridged to the extent that a demonstration of 100,000 in Managua, in response to a speech by Tomás Borge, chanted for "socialism! socialism!" By early 1983, a massive national educational campaign on socialism could be launched and FSLN leader Victor Tirado could explain that "Marxism is a basic component of this revolution. Without Sandino and Marx this revolution couldn't have been made."[12]

More elemental than the masses' comprehension of Marxist theory, however, and at the root of this radicalization, is their thirst for justice and for control over their own lives — and this came into play from the very beginning. In the midst of the insurrection, the mass-based CDCs (civil defense committees) took control of neighborhoods and communities throughout Nicaragua, and in the aftermath of victory, renamed the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs), they assumed a wide array of functions to assure that the revolution continued to move forward in the interests of the masses. In the rural areas, the pro-FSLN Rural Workers Association (ATC) carried out land take-overs before, during and after the insurrection, establishing rural communes on the estates formerly held by Somoza and his supporters. Factory committees, most of which became part of the CST, took control of workplaces belonging to Somocista capitalists or to business interests seeking to close down and dismantle their enterprises; the factory committees demanded that they be nationalized and run under workers' control. These largely spontaneous impulses toward economic restructuring and popular controls have acted as a positive and persistent revolutionary pressure upon the Sandinistas. In his 1982 May Day speech, Tomás Borge made an analogy between this revolutionary dynamic and the massive demonstration in which he had just marched: "The crowd was so compressed, the mass of workers was so compact and so combative that if Daniel [Ortega] and I had wanted to turn back — something that will never happen — this mass of workers would never have allowed us to take a step backward."[13]

Even though 50 to 60 percent of the Nicaraguan economy has remained in private hands and FSLN leaders have given numerous assurances of state support for "patriotic businessmen" who assist in the rebuilding of the economy, the bourgeoisie perceives the dynamic of the Nicaraguan Revolution as meaning the gradual phasing out of capitalism in that country.[14] That this is the intention of the FSLN regime is clear from Sergio Ramírez's explanation of the "mixed economy":

"*At this point* the revolution continues to favor the mixed-economy project. We do not understand this as the juxtaposition of two economic models, where one of them would represent the same old mechanisms of merciless capitalist reproduction — as though the revolution could permit a kind of 'free zone' for an untouched and archaic system of private capitalism. Rather, the

mixed economy must start from *the harmonious and limited insertion of the private economy into the overall strategic framework of the People's Property Sector*. The latter, on the whole, must bear the political responsibility for directing the entire national economic system toward change and toward the production and distribution of wealth." (Emphasis added.)[15]

Statistics also indicate that this has been the actual trajectory of Sandinista economic policy. In 1981, 80 percent of all agriculture and 75 percent of all manufacturing was in private hands. By 1983, these figures had dropped to 70 percent and 60 percent respectively. At the same time, the revolutionary government has felt unable to initiate sweeping or rapid nationalizations. "We can't afford it," one government economist has explained. "We haven't enough capital to run that which we have already taken over. We need the private sector to help keep the economy going." Regardless of the time-table of economic transition, however, the socialist commitments of the Sandinistas have been made clear in word and deed.[16]

7. PROBLEMS OF TRANSITION

From the beginning, the Nicaraguan Revolution has not limited itself to "bourgeois-democratic" tasks. Instead, it has smashed capitalist political power and has increasingly eroded capitalist economic power. Only by going beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy, by carrying out changes which go in the direction of socialism, has it been possible to realize key aspects of even the "minimum program" of the revolution. Efforts of Nicaraguan and international bourgeois elements to "de-radicalize" the revolution — to ulilize aid and cooperation in order to encourage alleged "pragmatists" and "moderates" in the FSLN to assert themselves over "revolutionary dogmatists" — have not borne fruit.[1] Efforts to "de-capitalize" and "de-stabilize" the economy have primarily succeeded in accelerating the revolutionary process.

Yet the process of moving toward socialism faces major obstacles. Some of these were listed by Victor Tirado:

"It is necessary to take into account that socialism is going to be constructed in a backward country, without large-scale industry, and in a country whose economy basically revolves around agriculture and the processing of agricultural products. In a country that has few trained cadres to organize, administer, and direct industrial, agricultural, and service enterprises. That has a cultural backwardness that has been overcome, but not completely, and that is struggling to provide all workers at least a fourth-grade education. A country that has a very small accumulation of capital, and for that reason only a distant perspective for the creation of large-scale industry.

"In a nutshell, socialism will not be constructed from great abundance, as would be ideal, but rather from the little that we have. These are objective facts that we should not lose sight of, otherwise we might think it is enough to proclaim socialism and then by magic the problems will be resolved."[2]

In fact, over the past year the problems facing the Nicaraguan people and their revolution have intensified. Two natural disasters — the May 1982 floods, followed by a three-month drought — caused over $400 million worth of damage which wreaked havoc on the country's economic projections. Man-made disasters are also taking their toll: U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary sabotage and raids, threats of war with U.S. imperialist proxies such as the right-wing government of Honduras, etc. In addition to direct loss of life and property, and the intensified psychological strain engendered by these military threats, there has been a necessary diversion of energies and resources away from economic reconstruction in order to meet defense needs. No less damaging, however, has been the continued crisis of the world capitalist economy, to which Nicaragua is "tied by a thousand invisible threads" (as Tomás Borge aptly put it), and which has a particularly severe impact throughout Central America. A growing balance of trade deficit, rising unemployment, and rising inflation and indebtedness are damaging Nicaragua's economy and cutting into the masses' living standards. What's more, the U.S. government and other imperialist institutions have systematically maneuvered since late 1981 — with mixed success — to restrict loans to Nicaragua from the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and other sources. Potential assistance from certain sources, such as the International Monetary Fund, would require a scuttling of Nicaragua's revolutionary priorities, a choice which the FSLN has rejected.[3]

These growing pressures have sharpened contradictions within the country's revolutionary process.

Perhaps one of the sharpest contradictions has been between the Pacific Coast region and the Atlantic Coast region, which contains less that 200,000 people — including English-speaking blacks (descendants of Jamaican migrants and British-imported slaves) and three Indian groupings, the largest being the Miskitos. FSLN ties with the Atlantic Coast population — whose ethnic, cultural, historical, economic and political backgrounds are fundamentally different from those of most Nicaraguans — had been weak, at best. Sandinista militants who went to the area after the 1979 victory in order to help carry out the FSLN program of "reintegrating" the Atlantic Coast region into the rest of the country were shocked to find that they were not perceived as liberators but as intruders bent on disrupting established patterns. Sharp antagonisms developed which, in the context of imperialism's concerted efforts to undermine and push back the revolution, escalated into what otherwise might have been avoidable confrontations. The most serious problem was the relationship with the Miskitos.[4] Tomás Borge's terse account, in a December 1982 interview, indicates that the problem is far from being resolved: "When the revolution came to the Atlantic Coast, it knew nothing of the Indians. It had no knowledge of ethnology. It made blunders, using methods that were at times over-hasty. The Miskitos rebelled; some of them took up arms against us. We were forced to repress them. It was neither in the nature nor in the intentions of the revolution to repress them, but we had to do it." In another interview, Borge noted that certain FSLN reforms "have succeeded in substantially raising the living standards of the Miskito population," but in the next breath added that "there is still much to be done." It is unlikely that such problems can be fully resolved, however, until Nicaragua is able to overcome the pressures imposed by world capitalism and U.S. imperialism.[5]

Contradictions between the Catholic Church hierarchy and the FSLN leadership have also sharpened. For the most part, this has paralleled class differences and political antagonisms within the church itself. FSLN leaders have shown a sensitivity to Catholic sensibilities and have been especially adept at blending Catholic values with socialist principles. As the National Directorate of the FSLN noted in a 1980 statement on The Role of Religion in Nicaragua: "We Sandinistas state that when Christians, basing

themselves on their faith, are capable of responding to the needs of the people and of history, those very beliefs lead them to revolutionary activism." In fact, masses of working-class and peasant Catholics, numerous priests and nuns, and even certain bishops have made similar connections, constituting an essential base of support for the Nicaraguan Revolution. In 1979, the Church hierarchy as a whole felt compelled to embrace the Sandinistas and to assert that, "If socialism means the exersise of power from the perspective of the masses, and increasingly shared with the organized people so that there is a genuine transfer of power towards the popular classes, it will find nothing in the Christian faith but motivation and support." As the revolutionary process began to move forward, however, and the broad anti-Somoza opposition began to separate into FSLN and bourgeois antagonists, much of the hierarchy became increasingly hostile and confrontational toward the FSLN. While this has had an impact on sections of the Catholic masses in Nicaragua, it has also resulted in cleavages within the clergy and has undermined the authority of the Catholic hierarchy among a majority of Nicaraguans. It may be that impatience on the part of the FSLN (so far avoided, for the most part) toward the antagonistic hierarchy could result in greater popular confusion. A greater danger, perhaps, would be a failure of the revolution to move forward, a failure to satisfy the masses' expectations for a better life, which could breed discontent that the conservative elements in the hierarchy might seek to take advantage of. Up to now, however, most Catholics in Nicaragua refuse to counterpose their religion to the revolution, and many of the clergy share the sentiments of one priest who said: "We've lived and died with the people and this idea that we're somehow separate doesn't make any sense to us. We are an integral part of the revolution." [6]

Genuine revolutions combine the process of self-emancipation and of the liberation of society. No genuine revolution can succeed without the participation of women in this dual process. The aspirations of women for dignity and for the realization of their potential as full and creative human beings came into play powerfully in the Nicaraguan Revolution, in large measure because of the impact of today's international women's liberation movement. FSLN leader Dora Maria Tellez has commented that "The Nicaraguan revolution has had the largest participation of women because it is the most recent. In the next revolution, no matter where it happens, there are going to be more women." One militant later noted Nicaraguan women's "double oppression — oppressed by Somocismo, oppressed by machismo. . . ." In the face of this, women played a cntral role in the organizing, the demonstrations and the fighting (fully 30 percent of the FSLN combatants) which brought down the Somoza dictatorship. Of particular importance was AMPRONAC, the Association of Women Confronting the National Problem, which was renamed after the 1979 victory AMNLAE (Association of Nicaraguan Women "Luisa Amanda Espinoza") to honor the first woman killed as an FSLN combatant. AMNLAE has played a leading role in advancing paternity and divorce legislation, the establishment of child care centers, the elimination of sexist advertising, equality of women before the law and in the workplace, and the facilitation of women's involvement in the political life of the country. Birth control is widely available also, despite the disapproval of traditionalists. At the same time, the cultural effects of *machismo* and of restrictive traditions in regard to sex-roles and family patterns (not to mention ambiguities over the legality of abortion) are still powerfully felt. Gloria Carrion, executive secratary of AMNLAE, has indicated some of the limitations imposed by the present circumstances on the women's liberation struggle in Nicaragua: "When Western feminists come here to interview us, very often the first question is: 'What are you doing about abortion, or sexual politics?' Of course, these are important questions for women; but we have to go one step at a time, and our priorities are determined by our social, political and historical circumstances." Unfortunately, even some of the priorities which AMNLAE has selected — for example, the expansion of child care centers — have suffered from the growing economic pressures and imperialist threats facing the revolution. At the same time, the mobilization of Nicaraguan women for the struggle to achieve their own liberation and that of their country has become more important than ever for the forward movement of the revolution.[7]

The urban working class has been one of the most substantial forces in the revolutionary process. Yet here too circumstances have heightened contradictions. Henry Ruiz identified one of the contradictions in 1980: "The aim [of the revolution] is to free ourselves from exploitation and create truly human conditions of equality and justice. But that, companeros, needs a solid material base to work from." In fact, since 1981 the FSLN government has felt compelled to enforce strict austerity measures. There has also been a temporary ban on two of the most important class-struggle weapons of the Nicaraguan workers —strikes and factory take-overs. Despite the deepening economic, political and military crisis, there has been an expansion of the "social wage" — public services designed to improve popular living standards — yet the crisis has, in the words of Victor Tirado, put the FSLN "in the situation of not being able to show all the advantages that this revolution could give to its people if we could dedicate ouselves entirely to the economic and social rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua." Actual economic wages have increased only slightly and have been far outstripped by inflation (prices increasing by about 30 percent in 1982). There have been some food shortages, and unemployment continues to be a serious problem. As two sympathetic observers have commented: "The revolution has brought big social improvements, literacy campaigns, schools, clinics, day-care centers. But that is easily forgotten when families cannot make ends meet, or when their breadwinners lose their jobs. And at the moment the FSLN can promise nothing but continued hard times." Jaime Wheelock, in early 1983, cogently pointed out that the economy of Nicaragua is "not doing so bad" and is in fact enjoying "sustained growth" when compared with the rest of Central America. But as Richard Fagen has suggested: "That things are much worse in Costa Rica is not important or even known to the Nicaraguan shopper buying vegetables. The point of comparison is much closer to home: last month a squash cost one *córdoba*, and this month it costs one-and-a-half."[8]

How do the urban workers respond to this situation? The largest trade union federation in Nicaragua is the pro-Sandinista CST. Some partisans of the revolution have voiced concern over dangers flowing from limitations imposed on this union:

"The CST can, to be sure, take up problems, but how can it attack them? Strikes are banned on the grounds of the crisis situation, and since it is a loyal Sandinista union it knows that the most important thing is to increase production so that imports can be increased and more foreign currency can be brought in. So, the editorials in the CST paper stress that workers should not demand [pay increases or] that administrators be thrown out, because that could endanger production. Instead, workers are encouraged to start discussions with the factory management about how production can be maintained and unemployment avoided.

"Reading such statements, a number of thoughts occur to you. Isn't there a danger that justified discontent will be shouted down by revolutionary appeals? Isn't there a danger that the most conscious and active groups inside the FSLN and the mass organizations may isolate themselves from the broad masses, who despite everything have to be able to look forward to improvements in their standard of living?"[9]

The fact is, however, that if the unions or mass organizations led by the FSLN prove insufficiently responsive to the needs of the workers, then the workers are able to join or organize different organizations — as has happened more than once. Nicaragua's "political pluralism" has compelled Sandinista mass organizations to maintain a significant degree of autonomy, which appears to be consistent with the intentions of the FSLN leadership. Tomás Borge put it this way: "The Sandinista Government does not want an official or governmental union movement. What we need is a trade union organization responsive to the interests of the workers. The working class in Nicaragua must have the right to say 'no' where appropriate, and must even have the right to confront the government when it is necessary." Such ideas have been repeated often by FSLN leaders and supporters alike, expressly advanced in order to counteract elitism, bureaucracy and inefficiency and to strengthen popular controls. Such ideas are translated into practice — for example, the recent public criticism by the Managua CDS aimed at the Ministry of Trade: "We are having a hard time explaining to the people in the neighborhoods why there is no rice in the stores. And it does not make things easier when you still have not even answered our earlier questions." Hardly an indication that justified discontent is being "shouted down"![10]

Democratic-revolutionary ferment continues to counteract tendencies toward quiescence and disillusionment. While such ferment is not by itself sufficient to solve the problems of the Nicaraguan working class, it is a necessary component of the solution.

Some of the problems besetting the urban areas are felt far less intensely in the countryside, where the rise in the "social wage" has had a qualitatively bigger impact, where food shortages are less likely to occur, and where labor shortages are a bigger problem than unemployment. Even here, however, contradictions have come into play. FSLN leaders had initially hoped that because such a high percentage of those who owned small plots of land were also agricultural wage-workers for part of the year, the property instinct might not be deeply rooted, and that agrarian reform could move rapidly to collectivization. To the contrary, a more flexible approach has been necessary. Between state-owned collective farms and individual peasant small-holdings, there are credit and service cooperatives (small-holders pooling their resources to obtain credit and technical assistance) and production cooperatives (small-holders pooling their privately-owned land together and working it collectively). Through these and similar measures, the FSLN has maintained considerable popularity among the bulk of the rural population. On the other hand, land take-overs — encouraged in the case of the vast holdings of Somoza and his followers — have been forbidden in regard to wealthy landowners who have not openly worked against the revolution. (One disappointed peasant expressed the feeling of many in the days following Somoza's overthrow: "I don't understand it at all. One minute seizing the land is revolutionary, then they tell you it's counter-revolutionary.") Yet the FSLN-initiated truce is an uneasy one. Mutual resentments and suspicions between the upper and lower classes in the rural areas are further intensified by the bourgeoisie's covert subversion of the revolution's priorities — ranging from black-marketeering and de-capitalization to giving material aid to counter-revolutionaries — and by the determination of such mass organizations as the ATC to ferret out and combat such activities. Although class tensions have not disappeared in the countryside, the intensity of the exploitation of the rural labor force has significantly diminished. This has had a paradoxical impact on the economy of revolutionary Nicaragua: the fact that the exploitation of labor on the big plantations is less intense has meant that productivity has decreased. What's more, the fact that masses of semi-proletarians and sub-proletarians no longer roam the countryside looking for work has created a labor shortage, further cutting into the output of cash crops that are vital to Nicaragua's well-being. On the other hand, great successes have been achieved in the harvest of basic grains produced by small farmers aided by governmental financial assistance. Nicaragua is on the way to becoming self-sufficient in rice, beans, and corn. Yet even here there is a serious paradox, as James Petras has noted: "The problem is that the harvest may be so successful that prices may drop, which may help alleviate some of the pressures emanating from wage workers, but may not make the peasants very happy."[11]

Carmen Diana Deere and Peter Marchetti have offered important insights into the future of agrarian reform in Nicaragua which have profound implications for other sectors of the Nicaraguan economy:

"The very FSLN policies which have benefited the rural masses and forged the worker-peasant alliance are eroding the old agro-export model and will thereby continue to increase tensions between the bourgeoisie and the vast majority of the Nicaraguan people. The transition to the new model may begin only after the old has been substantially destroyed. More than likely, the transition will not be smooth although much effort is being spent in attempts to gain that objective.

"... [T]he long-run success of the broader worker-peasant alliance depends on productivity increases in both agriculture and industry, on the reshaping of the national consumption package [i.e., greater equality], and on the development of exports which expand the national market. But the future of the worker-peasant alliance in Nicaragua is also tied to the international situation. The level of foreign assistance that is forthcoming will be important in resolving the domestic economic situation. Foreign assistance, however, is a political question based both on the degree of support for the Nicaraguan revolution as well as on the political conjuncture posed by Central America and the Caribbean for U.S. imperialism."[12]

In other words, the kinds of problems we've been examining here can only be solved through the deepening and expansion of the revolution. Imperialism seeks to check such developments through a variety of measures. One of the most important was described by a top U.S. government official (Viron P. Vaky, a Carter Administration "dove") in a 1980 *Foreign Affairs* article. He wrote that Nicaragua's "integration into the international economic system is one of the greatest deterrents to the consolidation of a Marxist system," adding that the FSLN government's agreement on the rescheduling of $600 million in debts incurred by Somoza with 120 foreign banks "locked Nicaragua into the private money market." The Reagan Administration, apparently not confident that this is enough to stop the revolution, has gone on to supplement this with a "get-rough" policy designed to engineer the violent overthrow of the Sandinistas. This has only served to generate an anti-imperialist mobilization of the Nicaraguan people, greatly enhancing the authority of the revolutionary regime.[13]

The FSLN leaders have realized that their revolution has entered a "new phase," highlighted by the call for socialism. Tomás Borge has explained: "...in this new phase, serious internal contradictions begin to come to the surface, when the revolution is forced — by its own dynamic and to remain in harmony with the political, economic, and social principles that were its reason for being — to determine which social sectors shall be given priority within the revolutionary process. Our people already know who the privileged ones were yesterday, and our people already know which classes have priority today, for whom this revolution was made."[14]

8. MOVING TOWARD SOCIALISM

The dynamic of permanent revolution can be seen in the unfolding realities of Nicaragua's recent history. Because the FSLN is a revolutionary leadership of a particularly high caliber, the experiences and insights of the Sandinistas greatly enrich our understanding of this dynamic. At the same time, Trotsky's perspective may offer some insights into the future course of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

The intense pressures, contradictions and dilemmas which currently bear down on the Nicaraguan people and their revolutionary leaders obviously must create tensions within the revolutionary movement itself, giving rise to differing inclinations and views on how best to comprehend the situation and move forward. The Sandinistas' essential unity in the face of the imperialist threat has been noted by enemies as well as friends, but this unity hardly negates the dialectical quality of human reality. This dialectic can be perceived, for example, through the nuances in the way such questions as democracy and socialism are defined within the revolutionary camp. Victor Tirado has recently pointed out: "The Nicaraguan working class — we believe its big majority — sees socialism as the radical long-term solution (and some see it as the short-term solution) to its problems. Ideas about what socialism will or should be in Nicaragua are still diffuse, not very clear, and it is natural that it be that way." One reason that this is natural was identified by Nicaraguans who, talking with writer George Black shortly after the insurrection, noted that "we've never known what democracy was, so how can we know what socialism is?"[1] The definitions are worked out not simply from books and not only from aspirations, but especially through the complex struggles of the Nicaraguan people to survive and to create their own future.

The interrelationship between democracy and socialism was of particular concern to one of the foremost revolutionary leaders of the 20th century, V.I. Lenin, and it may be useful to consider some of his insights before exploring how the question is being grappled with in Nicaragua.

Writing in 1915, Lenin expressed the classical revolutionary Marxist standpoint in this way: "Basing ourselves on democracy as it already exists [in a capitalist democracy], exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we advocate the overthrow of capitalism, expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for a complete and manifold realization of all democratic reforms. . . . It is quite conceivable that the workers of a certain country may overthrow the bourgeoisie *before* even one fundamental democratic reform has been realized in full. It is entirely inconceivable, however, that the proletariat as an historical class will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie if it is not prepared for this task by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and determined revolutionary democracy."[2]

Lenin deepened this perspective in 1917, in the midst of the working-class upsurge which led to the world's first socialist revolution. He wrote in *The State and Revolution*: "Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents on the one hand, the organized, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism — the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine . . . in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

"Here 'quantity turns into quality': *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganization. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. . . ."[3]

Not surprisingly, as FSLN commandante Dora María Tellez has recounted, Lenin's *State and Revolution* was one of the basic texts of the Sandinista cadres before the revolution.[4] Some of them might well have been influenced, also, by another 1917 text, "Letters From Afar," in which Lenin urges the workers to utilize their own mass organizations, the soviets (democratic councils), to carry through the socialist revolution:

"The workers, guided by their class instinct, have realized that in revolutionary times they need an entirely different organization, of a type above the ordinary. They have taken the right attitude suggested by the experience of our revolution of 1905 and by the Paris Commune of 1871: they have created a *Soviet of Workers' Deputies*, they have set out to develop it, widen and strengthen it, by attracting to it representatives of the soldiers and no doubt of the hired agricultural workers, as well as (in one form or another) of the entire poor peasantry. . . .

"We need the state, but not the kind needed by the bourgeoisie, with organs of power in the form of police, army, bureaucracy, distinct from and opposed to the people. All bourgeois revolutions have merely perfected this government apparatus, have merely transferred it from one party to another.

"The proletariat, however, if it wants to preserve the gains of the present revolution and to proceed further to win peace, bread, and freedom, must *'destroy,'* to use Marx's word, this 'ready-made' state machinery, and must replace it by another one, *merging* the police, the army, and the bureaucracy with *the universally armed people.* Advancing along the road indicated by the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1905, the proletariat must organize and arm *all* the poorest and most exploited sections of the population, so that they *themselves* may take into their own hands all the organs of state power, that they *themselves* may constitute these organs."[5]

This expresses the essence of the Sandinista perspective, as articulated by FSLN leaders on innumerable occasions. In 1980, the National Directorate of the FSLN issued a particularly important statement in response to bourgeois critics who were demanding immediate elections. The critics were hoping, in the name of "democracy," to stem the revolutionary tide through the creation of a conventional bourgeois-republic. The Sandinista response reflected not only the revolutionary-democratic spirit of Lenin, but also the intense experience of the Nicaraguan Revolution:

"For the Frente Sandinista democracy is not measured solely in the political sphere, and cannot be reduced *only* to the participation of the people in elections. Democracy is not *simply* elections. It is something more, much more. For a revolutionary, for a Sandinista, it means participation by the people in political, economic, social and cultural affairs. The more the people participate in such matters, the more democratic they will be. And it must be said once and for all: democracy neither begins nor ends with elections. It is a myth to want to reduce democracy to that status. Democracy begins in the economic order, when social inequalities begin to diminish, when workers and peasants improve their standard of living. That is when true democracy begins, not before.

"Once these aims are achieved, democracy is immediately extended to other fields: the field of government is broadened; when the people influence their government, *when the people determine their government*, whether this pleases some people or not. In a more advanced phase, democracy means the participation of the workers in the running of factories, farms, cooperatives and

cultural centers. To sum up, democracy is the intervention of the masses in all aspects of social life. We point out all this to establish on a principled basis what the FSLN understands by democracy." (Emphases added.)[6]

Needless to say, the bourgeoisie was horrified by this definition of democracy, which flows into a definition of socialism. Surprisingly, at least one left-wing sympathizer of the revolution, Henri Weber, has also interpreted this statement critically: "What is wrong in this conception is that it counterposes *in general* the class content of government policy to the holding of elections. It thereby tends to discredit not just particular forms of bourgeois manipulation of universal suffrage, but the actual principle itself. For who will decide that the content of government policy is in accord with the workers' interests, if the workers do not give their own verdict in a free and secret ballot after the various conceptions of their true class interest have been discussed in the country at large? Clearly the government itself will decide."[7] Yet the emphasized words in the FSLN statement suggest that this is not the case. The principle of free elections is *not* rejected, but the Sandinistas *are* insisting that genuine democracy both includes and goes beyond this principle, as indeed it does.

As even Weber himself has acknowledged, Nicaragua is one of the most democratic countries in Latin America: "A *revolutionary democracy* really exists in Nicaragua, whatever its contradictions, excesses, and limitations. In a country backward in every respect, with no tradition of democracy, bled white for half a century by a ferocious dictatorship, a socialist revolution brought forth a pluralist and open society in which democracy is more or less respected."[8] Other observers have made the same point. Consider the impressions of Richard Fagen:

"A visitor to Nicaragua soon becomes aware of opposition to the revolutionary government, for among the Reagan administration's many falsehoods about Central America, none is more gratuitous than the characterization of Nicaragua as 'totalitarian.' A vast array of political, social, and cultural forces are at work in the country. Professional and business associations in deep disagreement with government policy meet openly and protest loudly. Opposition political parties, although not able to mobilize wide popular support, are nevertheless active and vocal. The opposition trade union movement is small but vigorous. The Catholic Church, some of whose members are supportive of the Sandinist revolution and some of whom are in opposition, continues as a major cultural and political force. A multitude of Protestant sects flourish. Private schools, both religious and secular, remain open. Even in the state of emergency decreed in March [1982] as a result of multiple threats from the Reagan administration and the constant incursions of ex-National Guard members across the border from Honduras, the opposition newspaper *La Prensa* continues to publish — albeit under the censorship which is also applied to other publications. And certainly in the streets, markets, churches, bars, and buses of the country one hears plenty of openly voiced complaints and criticisms — hardly what one would expect in a 'totalitarian' society."[9]

As Fagen's description suggests, however, the circumstances confronting Nicaragua's "revolutionary democracy" are of the kind which could well encourage honest revolutionaries to seek more restricted definitions of democracy (and therefore of socialism too) in order to enhance the security of the revolutionary regime. Of course, there is the real question of whether policies flowing from such restricted definitions would leave actual democracy intact and facilitate the evolution of a genuinely socialist society. There appear to be ambivalences among the Sandinistas on this which are reflected, for example, in FSLN reactions to recent events in Poland.

In August 1980, in the FSLN daily *Barricada,* Orlando Núñez offered an account of the Polish events that was highly sympathetic to *Solidarnösc*, whose struggles "do not endanger the social form of production but enrich it. The strike movement of the workers in the Baltic region of Poland can only mean one thing — more and more steps on the road of workers' participation in the management and administration of enterprises and in the political organs of the society." He added that "the Polish workers are fighting for a society in which wealth and power belong more and more to the majority of organized workers," and that "it is an illusion to think that movements among the workers mean the weakening of Polish socialism." Núñez grounded this interpretation in the following perspective, which he indicated was as applicable to Nicaragua as to Poland:

"Socialism is attained neither by decree nor by elections. It is attained through the tenacious, organized, and consistent struggle of the working class.

"The building of socialism takes place through the struggle against large-scale private property and through the nationalization of great wealth. But history does not end there. 'The productive forces do not cease to be capital simply by passing into the hands of the state, but only when they begin to be administered by the workers' (Engels). Participation by the workers is achieved neither by decree nor by the will of an individual or of a party; it is a process of consciousness, of organization, and of raising technical, political, and cultural capacities. This takes a long time.

"The building of workers trade unions, both to defend the interests of the working class and to defend the interests of the nation as a whole, is one of the acquisitions of this long long process . . . . [T]he life of a union, of a party, and of the state that fights for the construction of socialism is also full of difficulties and limitations. Lenin himself indicated the need for the trade unions to watch over the party and the state, so that the latter would always act in the interests of the working class. What is under discussion here is not the choice between socialism and imperialism, but the tortuous steps of continuing the uninterrupted development of an even more socialist society."[10]

There are indications that there was not unity among the FSLN leaders around this particular interpretation. Accounts in *Barricada* of the Polish situation also showed the influence, perhaps, of the official position of the Cuban Communist Party, which was not particularly friendly to *Solidarnösc.*[11] Yet in an interview in the spring of 1981, Tomás Borge, while stressing that "we feel very close to the Cuban Revolution," added that "we are also aware that our Revolution is different from Cuba's in many ways: we have political pluralism and a mixed economy. . . . We also have a collective administration . . . . Without going into detail, in international policy the Nicaraguan Revolution has its own opinion about Afghanistan and Poland."[12]

With the Polish Stalinists' crackdown on *Solidarnösc*, however, interpretations came to the fore which were similar to the official opinions of the Cuban Communist Party. They also implied a vision of socialism which contained different qualities than those stressed in Núñez's earlier analysis. According to Nicaragua's Ministry of Propaganda and Information: "In Poland it is not the working class that is being repressed but counter-revolutionary elements who wanted to deliver Poland to imperialism." A story in *Barricada* explained that "the persistence of errors" and "the lack of a precisely defined way to face the [economic, social, political and ideological] crisis" on the part of the Polish Communist Party had generated discontent among the workers, causing them to join an independent union whose "leadership more and more took a rightward course, through its links both to local organizations of that tendency as well as with imperialist sectors abroad." The article asserted that "the tension reached its height when the Solidarity congress was held . . . where a line

won that called for using strikes to take political power .... The new government headed by General Wojciech Jaruzelski ... exposed these conspiratorial plans .... He decided to form a Military Council of National Salvation....General Jaruzelski outlined a new policy to preserve socialism." A later article in *Barricada* explained that the Polish Communist Party had been unable to outline such a policy because its leadership "fell into serious deviations ... such as abuses, corruption, and bureaucratism." What's more, "the virtual absence of any revolutionary ideological guidance made it possible for the new proletariat, which socialist industry had created, to lose confidence in the ideas that are the basis of that system."[13] In other words, instead of a socialism of the workers, there was a socialism *in spite* of the workers — which is a strange variety of "socialism" indeed.

It could be argued that such accounts are propagated in order to avoid antagonizing the USSR, whose material assistance is becoming increasingly important to Nicaragua in the face of imperialist-sponsored economic and military pressures.[14] The fact remains, however, that this is also consistent with restrictive impulses which have cropped up in FSLN statements and actions *within* the country itself. It is not a question of the FSLN simply shifting from democratic to undemocratic perspectives, but rather of a tension within the perspectives themselves — a tension arising from the intense contradictions facing the revolution at this time.

The tension is expressed in the 1982 May Day speech of Tomás Borge: "In a society where, as in Nicaragua, the power of imperialism and of the bourgeoisie has been decapitated, it is correct that the workers should continue putting forward their economic demands. But to struggle for economic demands, and leave in a secondary place the consolidation of their political power as a social class, would mean going against common sense and against history." Borge goes on to discuss serious problems undermining the power of the workers, and he asserts: "To face these problems — abuse of power, bureaucracy, the limited participation of workers in the enterprises — there is only one road: the unity of the working class." By this, as he makes clear, he means unity of the trade unions. The program which they should unite around, Borge argues, involves "taking care of machinery, saving materials, monitoring the quality of production and also acquiring new technical skills, [through which] the workers will raise productivity, which means that they will produce more per workday. And the more we produce, the more we will be able to raise the standard of living to which men in a revolution are entitled." In the same speech, Borge stated that "the Sandinista Front was the living instrument for the conquest of power by the workers, and the living instrument for the consolidation of the power of the workers .... The Sandinista Front is the vanguard of the workers and peasants, ... is the living instrument of the revolutionary classes, is the guide leading toward a new society."[15]

There is profound truth in all of this, and yet there is at the same time a potential for bureaucratic interpretations and policies. Thus, there has been a tendency to denounce unions and workers not following the line of the FSLN-led CST as "counter-revolutionary" and "imperialist-inspired," even when this is obviously not the case, and sometimes there has even been resort to repressive tactics against them. A complicating factor has been the irresponsible provocations by certain right-wing unions belonging to the CNT and CUS and of ultra-left elements in CAUS and the FO. Fortunately, there has been the restraining influence of certain FSLN leaders (for example, Borge himself) in mitigating the repressive impulses. Similar problems have arisen with political groups that have positioned themselves to the right and to the left of the FSLN. Also indicative of the tensions within the FSLN position is a 1981 comment of Borge's that "now it is up to the businessmen to see that the mixed economy — which is basic to political pluralism — does not disappear .... But if the entrepreneurs decapitalize the companies, if they conspire against the Revolution, they will bring an end to mixed economy and pluralism." The problem with this is that different and sometimes differing *working-class* elements are also a part of Nicaragua's "political pluralism," and if pluralism is eliminated within the working class, then the workers will be weakened in their struggle for self-emancipation. Even though the FSLN's capacities as a revolutionary vanguard are incontestable, FSLN leaders themselves have often cited examples of inefficiency, insensitivity, abuses of power, elitism and bureaucratism on the part of government personnel and even FSLN cadres. Pluralism for the working-class majority is essential for the kind of socialist democracy that Lenin describes in *State and Revolution*.[16]

Another indication of tensions within the FSLN perspective are such views as these, offered by Herberto Incer in a 1980 article in *Barricada*: "The essence of our democracy is to do the most possible, in the best possible way, for the greatest number of Nicaraguans .... Democracy is a government in the service of the toiling class .... Now that we have indicated the essential element of democracy (namely legislation or government by the people), there is the question of its formal, non-essential elements. We shall merely point out one of these: elections." In fact, as the statement on democracy by the FSLN's National Directorate indicates, elections are an assumed, not a non-essential, aspect of democracy. Incer's distortion, far from being a definition of genuine democracy, is a reflection of pressures on the Nicaraguan Revolution which threaten its revolutionary-democratic course. As Jaime Wheelock has explained: "The organization of the working class in trade unions will be the basic support of the Revolution, and likewise the rest of the mass organizations. The organized people must prepare themselves to run the state, through all the channels which the Revolution is creating." And as another FSLN leader, Hugo Torres, specified: "If we make a mistake and pass a law which is against the interests of the people, then the people must protest. And [if we fail them] ... they must go as far as exercising their right to dismiss us as their representatives."[17] This too is a part of socialism's very meaning.

Yet the obstacles to achieving socialism in Nicaragua cannot be wished away. To avoid utopianism it may be helpful, once again, to look at the Russian experience. After the workers brought Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power, a collapsing economy and Russia's isolation in a capitalist-dominated world caused the revolutionary democracy of which Lenin spoke to wither away within two years. As the Russian Revolution sought to consolidate itself amid intense internal and external pressures restricted and bureaucratic re-definitions of socialism and democracy evolved. Despite the immense gains made through the revolution, the defeat of revolutions in other countries meant that backward Russia was unable to attain the kind of socialism that Lenin had discussed in *State and Revolution*. Instead, a bureaucratic dictatorship arose, despite Lenin's resistance and the later resistance of Trotsky and the Left Opposition.[18]

The situation facing Nicaragua is not as dire as that which pushed the USSR into its trajectory to Stalinism. It would be absurd to expect a simple replay of the Russian tragedy. George Black's expression of anxiety and hope seems more apt: "...a harsher, more conventional transition to socialism seems imminent. But this new phase is accompanied by increased popular participation. Autonomous action — consonant with but not subordinate to leadership orientation — has taken firm root around military defense and in response to the catastrophic floods of May-June 1982. Increased democracy inside a highly

disciplined and creative mass movement may be the compensation for abandoning many of the original premises of pluralism within a polyclass alliance of 'national unity.' "[19]

The fact remains, however, that Nicaragua's forward movement toward socialism is not simply dependent on the revolutionary-democratic sensibilities of the Sandinistas, but also on the fortunes of revolutionary struggles beyond Nicaragua's borders. In the late 1920s, Trotsky denounced those in the Soviet Union who had displaced the "revolutionary and historical dialectic ... by a skinflint reactionary utopia of self-sufficient socialism, built on a low technology, developing with the 'speed of a tortoise' within national boundaries, connected with the external world only by its fear of intervention."[20]

As Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution would suggest, the Nicaraguan Revolution requires the implementation of socialist measures and the deepening of workers' democracy within the country *combined with the spread of socialist revolution outside of Nicaragua.*

There are pressures on the FSLN to shy away from "permanent revolution" in order to concentrate on "reconstruction." (These are terms used by the official of a U.S. foundation involved in giving material aid to Nicaragua.) Such pressures have not simply been felt from the United States — in the policies of both "doves" and "hawks" — and from the capitalist lending agencies and European bourgeois and social-democratic governments, whose assistance has been crucial for Nicaragua's initial survival after the 1979 insurrection. It comes also from such important tactical allies closer to home as the bourgeois-nationalist Mexican government, which seeks a reform-fostered "stability" in the Central American region. And it comes from such important new allies as the USSR, whose longing for "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist countries has for decades led the Soviet Union's leaders to prefer maneuver and compromise to revolutionary struggle.[21]

As the 1980s opened, the late General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, explained: "It is universally recognized that in many ways the international situation depends on the policy of both the USSR and the USA. As we see it, the state of relations between them at present and the acuteness of the international problems requiring a solution necessitate a dialogue, at all levels." He stressed that "the central direction in the foreign policy of our Party and government" has been to find "a sensible solution" with the imperialists that "would enable us to slacken the intensity of the international situation and let the nations breathe with relief." Brezhnev also asserted: "The great unifying principle, a powerful factor furthering cohesion and enhancing the prestige of the world communist movement, is the Communists' unremitting struggle for peace, against imperialism's aggressive policy, and the arms race that carries with it the danger of nuclear disaster." While the Stalinists' concern to avoid nuclear war makes obvious good sense, this does not reverse the impossibility of finding a "sensible solution" with U.S. imperialism that would be consistent with the aspirations of the oppressed for social justice. The policy of the USSR acts as a direct deterrent to the expansion of socialist revolution (which could hardly be perceived as "sensible" to the imperialists): to the extent that the USSR has influence in Nicaragua, it can be expected to discourage the Sandinistas from becoming a "destabilizing" factor in the Central American region. What's more, the perspective outlined by Brezhnev, in his words, provides "dependable guidelines" for the Communist Parties of Latin America.[22]

Thus, leaders of the Communist Parties of Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Paraguay and El Salvador authored a 1982 article which argued that, "while bearing in mind that the interests of the working people and the bourgeoisie come into collision and will go on doing so, it must be seen that there is a long road ahead that can and must be traversed jointly by everybody who wants democratic changes. It is vital to form coalitions and unite the opposition forces in order to uproot fascism and anti-people dictatorships, defend national property, and create the possibilities for real development and defeating the plans of the imperialists. In other words, the struggle of the working class for unity and broad based alliances is *not a short-term tactic; it can go on for a relatively long time.*" (Emphasis added.)[23] These writers even cite the Nicaraguan experience as a confirmation of their perspective! While this projects a "democratic opposition" which might be palatable to the more "sensible" doves among the imperialist policy-makers, it suggests a strategic perspective at variance with the Nicaraguan experience.

Yet there is not unanimity around the application of this "peaceful coexistence" perspective — particularly in Cuba, which has been Nicaragua's most steadfast ally. Two leaders of the Cuban Communist Party, writing in the same year and on the same question, offer an orientation for Latin America far closer to the experience and needs of the Nicaraguan Revolution: "Everywhere there is evidence of a desire for revolutionary transformations. The fight against fascism and resistance to imperialism and oligarchy merge dialectically into one stream. *The struggle for democracy, fundamental structural changes and socialist objectives is inseparable from the fight against monopoly and imperialist domination, the mainstay of oligarchy and reaction.* The strategic and tactical pivot of the revolutionary movement is resistance to the chief common enemy, U.S. imperialism." (Emphasis added.)[24]

Even certain currents within the government of revolutionary Cuba, however, have suggested that Latin America as a whole is not ripe for socialism and that alternatives to revolutionary conflict should be sought. International negotiations, an international military "peace-keeping" force, and internationally-supervised elections have therefore been suggested as means to bring peace to the Central America region.[25] Yet, just as in Nicaragua, tensions and complexities can be found in the positions developed by the Cuban leadership. Thus, in an interview on foreign policy, Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez asserts that "we believe in peaceful coexistence. But it is necessary to understand it in a dialectical manner, meaning a coexistence that does not mean a halt to the struggle." He insists that the Cuban leadership has "convergent views with the USSR ... because we have the same compass, which is Marxism-Leninism." Yet he also makes reference to "variations" and "differences" with the USSR on specific (though rather vaguely-expressed) points regarding the implementation of these "convergent views." He says: "We can — as we are doing in El Salvador — support a political solution in lieu of an armed solution. But we do it because we think, in accord with the revolutionary forces of El Salvador, that that's the best solution for the Salvadoran people, and not because the Americans want to prevent a solution through arms." At the same time, he stresses that "the first principle of the Cuban revolution is to work for socialism," and that "we support negotiations as an element of the historic reform-revolution dialectic."[26]

There are ambiguities in Rodríguez's remarks which can be resolved in either a revolutionary or non-revolutionary manner. The actual meaning of this perspective, and the extent of its impact on Nicaraguan (and Salvadoran) perspectives, will best be comprehended as the Central American revolution continues to unfold, and particularly as the more aggressive imperialists such as President Ronald Reagan themselves close off "peaceful" options.

Yet the dynamic of permanent revolution continues to assert itself in Central America. As the martyr of the Latin American revolution Che Guevara noted: "No other alternatives exist; it's

either a socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution." This is recognized by revolutionaries in El Salvador and Guatemala today. It is clear that the FSLN and the Nicaraguan masses see the success of the struggle in El Salvador and the rest of Central America as essential for the strengthening of their own revolution. At a recent rally in Managua, one heroic FSLN militant, fifteen-year-old Brenda Rocha, made the link: "Reagan will never be the owner of Nicaragua, nor will he be the owner of El Salvador." And, while making it clear that the Sandinistas do not seek to export their revolution but rather their revolutionary example, FSLN leaders such as Tomás Borge have continually advanced the outlook of revolutionary internationalism: "The whole world has its eyes on Nicaragua .... Now it is part of the wave of revolutions in our era. It is a country with great moral authority, not only in Central America, not only in Latin America, but in the whole world .... This revolution transcends national boundaries."[27]

Indeed, we live in the age of permanent revolution.

9. POSTSCRIPT: SUMMER 1983

The dynamics and tensions traced here continue to manifest themselves in Nicaragua. A survey of reports which have accumulated over the summer of 1983 appears to confirm the analysis offered here. Consider the comments of an unnamed "leading European Social Democrat, who has come to Managua many times." According to an anti-Sandinista *New York Times* article: "He accepted the idea that there were conflicting theoretical convictions in the [FSLN] leadership and that 'there is a danger of this country developing into a new Cuba.' He advanced the idea that the Reagan Administration's policies were pushing Nicaragua in this direction, strengthening the hand, he said, of 'the Marxist-Leninists here, those who wanted this from the beginning.' " There is certainly diversity in Nicaragua, including — as this Social Democrat indicates — within the FSLN. Also, as he suggests, the insights of the more revolutionary-minded elements *are* being confirmed by events. The same Social Democrat also commented: "I am very much less comfortable here now." This is hardly surprisng, since Nicaragua has clearly moved far beyond the social-democratic ideal of the capitalist welfare state. As one leading Sandinista put it, "we are aiming for socialism, even if there are some differences over strategy."[1]

The policies of U.S. imperialism have continued to harden dramatically. A central component in its fierce anti-Sandinista propaganda campaign is the persistent charge that Nicaraguan democracy has been "betrayed" and that the country is succumbing to an increasingly grim and violent "totalitarianism." Yet even a hostile *New York Times* correspondent like John Vinocur is forced to concede: "Unlike Eastern Europe, anyone can get a passport and leave; hundreds of thousands who want to stay have learned to read and are receiving health care and land for the first time." A less hostile reporter for the *New York Times*, Stephen Kinzer, says it more positively: "Many Nicaraguans, most of them poor, say they feel freer now than they did under Somoza's rule. Certainly, Nicaragua is a safer place for its citizens than Guatemala or El Salvador under their right-wing regimes: Nobody, no matter how opposed to the Sandinistas, need fear soldiers or death squads bursting into his home and massacring everyone inside."[2]

Claude Devilliers, writing for *International Viewpoint* (a Paris-based journal of the Fourth International), goes further: "Despite the imperialist aggression that Nicaragua is suffering, the fundamental democratic rights of the popular masses are being extended ... 1985 is being maintained for general elections, and the fundamental democratic liberties are being guaranteed in the context of a country under siege." Devilliers is inclined to go into more detail on such matters than many bourgeois journalists:

"The details of the rights given to recognized parties — today about a dozen of them — are in Article 6 of the law on parties, and are not without interest. All the more so as there was a real debate on this law. Political parties are authorized to carry on propaganda and recruitment work continuously throughout the country, to 'hold private meetings and public demonstrations,' to have access to the media during electoral campaigns, to 'criticize the public administration and propose constructive solutions,' to make alliances between themselves to 'accredit representatives to [what will be called] the National Assembly of Political Parties, to ask for their integration into the Council of State, to compete in the elections and present their own candidates, to have their own resources and offices throughout the country,' and to 'collect the funds necessary for their functioning.' "[3]

There are two major political blocs in Nicaragua today. The Patriotic Revolutionary Front includes the FSLN, the Independent Liberal Party, the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, and the Popular Social Christian Party. The oppositional Ramiro Sacasa Democratic Coordinating Committee is made up of the Social Christian Party, the Social Democrat Party (a new, but small formation comprised largely of businessmen and professionals), and the Liberal Constitutionalist Party; also the business alliance, COSEP, and the two conservative labor federations, CNT and CUS. The other labor federations, on the other hand, have formed a pro-revolutionary liaison committee, the Trade Union Coordination of Nicaragua, which includes the CST and ATC, the CGT-I, CAUS, and the FO. Finally, three political parties remain independent of the two major political blocs — the Nicaraguan Communist Party, the Popular Action Movement (MAP), and the Democratic Conservative Party.[4]

The present leader of the Conservatives, Miriam Arguello, reports to the *New York Times*: "We are being repressed and forbidden to function freely." Despite restrictions, however, the Conservatives maintain a public headquarters, hold meetings and publish a regular newsletter. Stephen Kinzer describes the Conservative leader: "Although trained as an attorney, the middle-aged, well-coiffed Mrs. Arguello does not maintain a law practice. Instead, she devotes herself to party business on a virtually full-time basis, taking only enough time to keep her flower shop and a few other small businesses running."[5]

Perhaps the form of "repression" that the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie feels most poignantly is economic. As John Vinocur sympathetically explains, "about 60 percent of the economy is thought, nominally at least, to be in private hands. But because the Government controls all the banks, all access to foreign currency and all jurisdiction over imports and sets production quotas and designates priorities, the businessmen are not much more than crown agents whose salaries the Government does not need to pay." Indeed, significant sectors of the business community feel increasingly hemmed-in by the Sandinista revolution. "They have killed my motivation," complains one young factory-owner. "I would like to expand my business, buy some more farm land and build an addition to my house. But I don't feel comfortable here...." The social pressures have also become almost unbearable for this stratum. Another wealthy Ni-

caraguan complains: "Everything is mixed up. Nothing is the way it used to be. Everybody I know is either gone or planning to go. I used to be able to invite two or three hundred people to a fancy party, with champagne and everything, but now I have trouble finding 20 or 30 for a sit-down dinner. When I see all these people running through the streets waving flags and chanting, I ask myself, 'Who are these people? Where did they come from?' "[6]

It is not difficult to understand why elements of the old capitalist opposition to Somoza feel that the revolution which they (more or less) supported has been "betrayed." But as yet another *New York Times* reporter, Marlisle Simons, writes from Managua: "Sentiment toward the Government varies widely by social class and topic." She observes: "Today, at least some of the promises to the poor appear to be coming true. The Government says illiteracy has been reduced from 50 to 12 percent and one in three Nicaraguans is in school or adult classes. It cites health programs that have lowered infant mortality from 120 per 1,000 in 1978 to 90 in 1982 and reduced most diseases." She adds: "At the same time, the former 'silent majority' has gained a voice in neighborhood committees and town councils. 'Poor people are talking back to Government workers and even to the army and the police,' said a longtime American resident. 'Let me tell you, no one talked back to the Guardsmen in the old days.'. . . " Stephen Kinzer has emphasized the meaning of this: "The Sandinistas have given many downtrodden Nicaraguans something as precious as it is rare for poor people in Latin America: hope for the future. So long as they can keep [such] people . . . happy, the Sandinistas can count on a solid base of popular support."[7]

Thus, reports about the "death" of Nicaraguan democracy are highly exaggerated, to say the least. Obviously, the massive propaganda campaign about "totalitarianism" in that country would not by itself pose a serious threat to the Nicaraguan Revolution. But imperialism is never simply a verbal affair. The economic assault has been escalating as well. A U.S. missionary who has worked in Central America for the last decade has shrewdly observed: "The Reaganites no doubt want to do what Nixon and Kissinger did in Chile — make the economy scream. They hope that will generate discontent and weaken the government." There has been a step-up in efforts to strangle the Nicaraguan economy — drastic reductions of U.S.-Nicaraguan trade, the blockage of loans, mounting military threats which force the Nicaraguans to divert precious resources from social programs to defense, and also the $70 million worth of damage caused by U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary attacks in 1983 (as of mid-July). This, combined with economic difficulties analyzed earlier, has meant a 1.4 percent drop in the Gross Domestic Product, inflation of 24.8 percent, unemployment of 19.8 percent, and growing shortages of such staples as eggs, fresh milk and cooking oil. Rationing has been instituted for some items, and popular discontent *has* increased. Stephen Kinzer reports: "The grumbling I heard in the wretched urban slums and flimsy huts in the countryside was different from the complaints of the well-to-do . . . . The disillusionment now setting in among ordinary Nicaraguans has more to do with chronic shortages, ration cards and long lines at stores." Sometimes those who are *responsible* for the need to ration are forgotten, as irritation is vented at those carrying out the rationing. In the angry words of one of the impatient: "The Sandinistas are messing with people's stomachs. If this keeps up, they will have to go."[8]

(It is interesting to note that about 50 percent of economic aid to Nicaragua continues to come from Western European and Latin American countries, while only 20 percent has come from Communist countries. Stephen Kinzer has written that "the Russians have made clear that they cannot afford to prop up Nicaragua," and Tom Wicker has put it even more sharply: "Moscow has never formally adopted Nicaragua and has no apparent wish to.")[9]

The Sandinistas have felt compelled to seek relief from the intense pressures to which their people are being subjected. As Daniel Ortega eloquently put it in a speech of July 19: "To continue building schools, we want peace. To continue raising production, we want peace. To improve attention to the people's health, we want peace. To wipe out hunger and poverty, we want peace. In order that mothers, children, brothers, families do not live through the martyrdom of war, we want peace."[10] In an effort to accomplish this, the Nicaraguan government adopted a six-point peace plan that had been suggested by Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama (known as "the Contadora Group"):

1. A commitment to end any existing war-like situation through the immediate signing of a nonaggression pact between Nicaragua and Honduras.
2. The absolute end to all supplies of arms from any country to the conflicting forces in El Salvador, so that these people can resolve their problems without outside interference.
3. The absolute cessation of all military aid — in the form of arms shipments, training, use of territory to launch attacks or any other form of aggression — to the forces opposing any of the Central American governments.
4. Commitments to ensure absolute respect for the self-determination of the peoples of Central American and the noninterference in the internal affairs of each country.
5. An end to aggressions and economic discrimination against any Central American country.
6. No installation of foreign military bases on Central American territory and the suspension of military exercises in the Central American area with participation of foreign armies.

Ortega added: "If agreements are reached with the help of the Contadora Group and with their approval, the United Nations Security Council, as the highest international body charged with overseeing international peace and security, would have to supervise and guarantee compliance with these agreements by all countries." As Sergio Ramírez pointed out several days later: "We are open to discussing all of these items immediately and multilaterally. . . ."[11] This proposal obviously contains, in the opinion of the bourgeois-nationalist Contadora Group, the potential for bringing a new "stability" to the Central American region, a compromise that could enhance the chances for a non-revolutionary "solution." Overwhelming pressures are compelling Nicaragua's revolutionary leaders to explore possible alternatives to a head-on confrontation with imperialism, including the option being proposed by the Contadora Group. Nonetheless, Ortega also felt it necessary to insert in his address a profoundly revolutionary and typically Sandinista proviso:

"We share these criteria because our ideals and principles — people's power, the socioeconomic transformations to benefit the great majority of the nation, the sovereignty and full independence of our homeland, the determination to build a new, free, democratic, and pluralistic society without exploitation — are facts and convictions deeply rooted in the hearts of millions of Nicaraguans. The Sandinista people's revolution is an irreversible political reality, with national and international repercussions recognized by the whole world."[12]

It is this very reality which made the Reagan Administration respond to the Sandinista peace initiative in the most brutal fashion. As Tom Wicker summarized that response: "Henry Kissinger, the Great Destabilizer of Chile, the scourge of Cambodia, is named to head a study of Central American policy. Maneuvers involving [5,500] U.S. ground forces are announced for neighboring Honduras. An American flota de guerre [i.e., a war fleet involving 19 ships] is ordered to each of Nicaragua's

coasts amid talk of blockade and quarantine. Mr. Reagan himself, waving the biggest stick since Theodore Roosevelt seized Panama, says he doesn't see how the U.S. could reach an agreement with the Sandinistas." Reagan and his spokesmen explicitly refuse to rule out the possibility of a U.S. invasion. In the meantime, the 10,000-man army of Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries (the *contras*), composed of Somocista ex-Guardsmen, as well as followers of Alfonso Robelo and Eden Pastora, has received significant increases in U.S. aid and encouragement, and in 1983 have killed over 600 of their countrymen — including civilians of all ages and both sexes — in terrorist raids. As one U.S. official had stated several weeks earlier: "We succeeded in Chile, in Bolivia, in Guatemala militarily .... That's the only thing they understand: might is right." (Tomás Borge has replied: "Perhaps the gravest error is to believe that the force of arms is superior to the force of truth, or to the force of people who have conquered their liberty.") There have also been increased moves to further the "regionalization" of counter-revolutionary efforts.[13]

In fact, "regionalization" remains a key to both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary victories. It is unlikely that U.S. policy-makers are so ill-informed that they believe the immediate overthrow of the Sandinista regime is possible, given the massive support that it continues to enjoy and the organization of large sectors of the population into armed militias. By weakening the revolution through military threats and economic pressure, however, U.S. policy-makers may hope to force the Sandinistas to participate in region-wide negotiations and "stabilization" schemes that would check the revolutionary dynamic or isolate revolutionary forces outside of Nicaragua, particularly in volatile El Salvador. If the FMLN of El Salvador and other such forces could be finally eliminated, thereby isolating the Sandinistas, then chances would be greater for de-stabilizing and overthrowing the Nicaraguan Revolution itself. The recognition by the Sandinistas of this very fact, however, is one of the greatest obstacles to the success of such an imperialist strategy. But the costly and devastating pressures and assaults against the Nicaraguan people are being intensified in an effort to wear down that obstacle. Nor is it impossible that U.S. policy-makers may, out of exasperation, commit U.S. troops to an invasion — resulting in a revolutionary war engulfing the entire region.

A recent eyewitness offers these suggestive perceptions from the town of Jalapa, an embattled town near the Honduran border:

"The images are many: the brigades of volunteer Sandinista Youth who come from the capital to spend three months at a time living with the peasants, helping them build homes and teaching them to use arms; the 15-year-old Nicaraguan border patrol soldiers who come into Jalapa on leave to sip Cokes and exchange battle tales; the tobacco processing plants, where under pictures of Che Guevara workers assemble to fix production quotas, knowing that the revenue from cigar sales pads the national treasury; the seven-year-old wall-eyed boy of the La Estanzia cooperative farm, his head shaved for fear of lice, dancing and singing mariachi songs ten weeks after his father had been decapitated by the *contras*; and the weekly Saturday-night meeting of the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), where 300 peasants crowd into a converted barn next to the one church in Jalapa to listen to music from Allende's Chile and discuss plans to enlarge the militia."[14]

The mobilization of an entire people prepared to defend their homeland, their recent gains and their hope for the future — will U.S. policy-makers be willing to test the tremendous power of such a revolutionary force as this? That would truly be a desperate adventure, and the results could accelerate the dynamic of permanent revolution throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The contradictions and tensions in the realities which we have examined in this study suggest that different potentialities are inherent in those realities. Events clearly continue to move in a revolutionary direction, but while they are not haphazard, they are complex. There are ambiguities, things of which we cannot be certain, that will become clear only as reality unfolds. Our own understanding and commitments, and especially what we *do* or fail to do about such things, will be a factor in the way in which that reality unfolds.

CONCLUSION

The three key strands of permanent revolution come together in the unfolding experience of the Nicaraguan Revolution:

1. The democratic needs of the nation could only be met through a revolution based upon a worker-peasant alliance resulting in a dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry, a dictatorship which will be prepared to push beyond the limits of capitalism. The establishment of such a dictatorship can only be understood as a socialist revolution.

2. The revolution can only maintain itself by increasingly making inroads into the capitalist economy with socialist measures. As part of the same dynamic, it must involve the masses more and more in the process of social transformation, of self-transformation, of establishing their genuinely democratic control over society.

3. The socialist future of the revolution can only be secured by spreading the revolution throughout the region and, ultimately, beyond. The momentum and repercussions of the revolution itself help to advance this international revolutionary process.

This has applicability not only to Nicaragua but to the rest of Central America, where the development of capitalism has taken a path quite similar to that of pre-1979 Nicaragua. In fact, political economic developments throughout "underdeveloped" countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa suggest that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution has general applicability.

There are, however, many who are not inclined to utilize this analytical tool. A major reason for this can be found in the history of Communism in the 1920s and '30s. That was the era of bureaucratic-conservative ascendancy and domination in the USSR and in the world Communist movement, personified in the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. The bureaucratic degeneration was accompanied by a sharp rejection of the theory of permanent revolution. This has had a profound effect on the orientation of revolutionary-minded activists and others who have been influenced by that movement, which attacked (and continues to attack) Trotsky's theory as "counter-revolutionary." Many have felt unwilling or unable to utilize the theory, and have been inclined to accept or adapt to the Stalinist reversion to Lenin's 1905 perspective of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."[1]

Yet this reversion hardly provides a superior analytical tool for understanding the Nicaraguan Revolution. There are important similarities between Lenin's 1905 perspective and Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The revolutionary alliance of the

workers and peasants, the central role of the working class, and the rejection of bourgeois political leadership were key points of agreement of both Lenin and Trotsky in 1905. In one of his articles Lenin even formulated his perspective in a manner that came quite close to the distinctive quality of Trotsky's, speaking of an "uninterrupted revolution." Yet in his central text of 1905, *Two Tactics of Social-Democrary in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin clearly advances the key idea in his perspective which differentiates him from Trotsky in this period:

"Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does this mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system, and the social and economic reforms that have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism, the undermining of bourgeois rule; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid, European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class .... [T]he idea of seeking salvation for the working class in anything save the further development of capitalism is *reactionary*. In countries like Russia the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is, therefore, *most certainly interested* in the broadest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism."[2]

It was only on the basis of developed capitalism and bourgeois democracy, Lenin argued in *Two Tactics*, that the working class could successfully develop a movement capable of making a socialist revolution. In order to allow the development of such a broad and free development of capitalism, however, the feudal vestiges of Russian tsarism would have to be swept away by a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Russian bourgeoisie was too weak, too willing to compromise with the tsar, too frightened of the worker and peasant masses to be able to lead such a revolution. Instead of a decisive victory, the bourgeoisie would settle for "a wretched deal." Thus, instead of a relatively full bourgeois democracy such as existed in the United States or Switzerland, the result would be a compromised, stunted bourgeois democracy such as existed in Germany. "He would be a fine Marxist," Lenin commented, "who in a period of democratic revolution failed to see this difference between the degrees of democratism and the difference between its forms...." Consequently, a worker-peasant alliance would be necessary to drive the revolution forward, establishing a provisional revolutionary government dominated by workers and peasants (the democratic dictatorship) in order to sweep away all vestiges of and compromises with the tsarist past, and allowing for "the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism."[3]

As we have seen, however, such a development of capitalism was simply not possible in Nicaragua — either before or after the Sandinista revolution. Nor was it possible in Russia in 1917. To advance this as a possible option or as an element in the strategy for revolutionaries of today could lead to tragic disorientation. Lenin explained in 1918, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: "Beginning with *April* 1917, however, long before the October Revolution, that is, long before we assumed power, we publicly declared and explained to the people: the revolution cannot now stop at this stage, for the country has marched forward, capitalism has advanced, ruin has reached fantastic dimensions, which (whether one likes it or not) *will demand* steps forward *to socialism*."[4] The change in perspective to which Lenin alludes here was not made light-mindedly. In addition to twelve years of revolutionary experience after 1905, and largely flowing from that experience, Lenin carried on intensive studies which resulted in such theoretical milestones as *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and *The State and Revolution*. This provided a more adequate framework for understanding the dynamics of the Russian Revolution.

On the fourth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin reviewed the revolutionary process which had unfolded in Russia. The perspective he sketched at this time corresponds both to the theory of permanent revolution and to the realities of the Nicaraguan Revolution:

1. "In order to consolidate the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the peoples of Russia, we were obliged to go farther; and we did go farther. We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely *proletarian*-revolutionary, socialist activities. We have always said that reforms are a by-product of revolutionary class struggle. We said — and proved it by deeds — that bourgeois-democratic reforms are a by-product of the proletarian, i.e., of the socialist revolution."

2. "The Soviet system is one of the most vivid proofs, or manifestations, of how the one revolution develops into the other. The Soviet system provides the maximum of democracy for the workers and peasants; at the same time, it marks a break with *bourgeois* democracy and the rise of a *new*, epoch-making *type* of democracy, namely, proletarian democracy, or the dictatorship of the proletariat."

3. "This first victory is *not yet the final victory*, and it was achieved by our October Revolution at the price of incredible difficulties and hardships, at the price of unprecedented suffering, accompanied by a series of serious reverses and mistakes on our part. How could a single backward people be expected to frustrate the imperialist wars of the most powerful and most developed countries of the world without sustaining reverses and without committing mistakes! ... We have made the start. When, at what date and time, and the proletarians of which nation will complete this process is not important. The important thing is that the ice has been broken; the road is open, the way has been shown .... *The first Bolshevik revolution* has wrested *the first hundred million people* of this earth from the clutches of imperialist war and the imperialist world. Subsuquent revolutions will deliver the rest of mankind from such wars and from such a world."[5]

Just as the perspective of Lenin and Trotsky helps us to understand the dynamics of the Nicaragua Revolution, so will the serious study of the Bolshevik and Sandinista experiences help us to advance the struggle in those countries which have yet to make socialist revolutions. Developing a genuine understanding of the lessons and insights acquired through such experiences, and applying this in a critical-minded and creative way to our own specific circumstances, we will be better able to make our own contributions to the liberation of humanity.

APPENDIX

The following is reprinted from *NACLA Report on the Americas*, November-December 1978. As argued in section 4 of the present contribution (pp. 10-13), it constituted a transitional program capable of mobilizing majority sectors of the Nicaraguan people against the Somoza dictatorship in a manner which quickly posed a challenge to imperialism and to the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie as well. It should also be compared with "The Historic Program of the FSLN," which can be found in Bruce Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 13-22.

PROGRAM OF THE MPU
[Movimiento del Pueblo Unido]

The program of the Movimiento del Pueblo Unido (MPU) is the plan for a post-Somoza government with the broadest support from the left. In addition to the more than 20 member organizations of the MPU, all three tendencies of the FSLN have endorsed the plan. This program differs from that of the Frente Amplu Opositor (FAO) in its emphasis on the radical economic restructuring of the economy under state direction to assure a minimal standard of living for the entire population. The FAO program emphasizes the protection of civil and political rights, basically the same rights recognized in the MPU program, but the FAO program leaves economic goals and reforms largely undefined. The obvious reason for the differences between the two programs is that the MPU was organized primarily to represent workers, peasants and the urban poor while the FAO is directed by progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie, trying to appeal to both labor and business.

PROGRAM OF THE MOVEMENT OF POPULAR UNITY

1) **UNITY:** The **Movimiento del Pueblo Unido** (MPU) considers fundamentally important the unity of all progressive forces of the country interested in eliminating the Somoza dictatorship and promoting a change in government that would profoundly transform the nation's economic, social, political and cultural structures, constituting a response and a concrete solution for the needs of all sectors of the Nicaraguan people. Without a real struggle on the part of all active forces, the fight against Somoza becomes an idle dream.

2) **GOVERNMENT:** The MPU proposes to form a government with the representative participation of all political, economic, labor and cultural forces committed to raising the country from the stagnation, dependency and underdevelopment imposed by the dictatorship and its allies. To this end the government will declare a TOTAL AND UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY for all prisoners jailed for acting to bring about a just change in Nicaragua and will permit the immediate return of all those exiled for the same reason. . . . The government will guarantee respect for civil rights and liberties:

a) freedom of thought and of the press;

b) freedom to form union, worker, peasant, youth, student, cultural and sport organizations;

c) freedom to travel and to work.

3) **ECONOMY:** To raise the nation out of its economic stagnation and promote economic development, the unity government will take the following measures:

a) expropriation of all goods, property, haciendas and companies of the Somoza family and the formation of government organizations to administer them;

b) nationalization and expropriation of all natural resources and of the companies that exploit them (minerals, petroleum, wood, etc.);

c) nationalization and expropriation of all maritime and air transport and mass-passenger land transport and the creation of a ministry responsible for their regulation and administration;

d) price regulation for goods of basic necessity, thereby putting an end to speculation and unwarranted increases in the price of foods;

e) the creation of a National Economic Plan to coordinate the private and state sectors of the economy with the goal of initiating economic development that corresponds to the social necessities of all Nicaraguans.

4) **FINANCE:** the resources required to guarantee fulfillment of public financing objectives will be obtained from three principal sources:

a) the total revision of all direct and indirect taxes, abolishing those that are detrimental to the majority of consumers, principally direct taxes on foodstuffs, and articles used in education, medicine, sports, and on recreational and cultural activities;

b) nationalization of the domestic and foreign banking system and regulation of the financial institutions serving the private sector;

c) a review and proper use of all foreign loans contracted by the Somoza government, renegotiating the terms and repayment of those that were actually used for works for the public good and national interest.

Likewise, the government will begin negotiations to obtain foreign aid from any country, regardless of its ideology, always at the most favorable terms.

5) **NATIONAL PLAN:** The National Plan will provide domestic industry with guidelines to follow for the fulfillment of national goals in both the state and private sectors of the economy. The participation of private interests in the economy will be promoted and directed toward those productive sectors that require a technology obtainable under more favorable terms by private companies and whose production will not be in contradiction with the collective or national interests. A coherent industrial policy will be formulated for both the state and private sectors with participation of all the active forces (government, unions, entrepreneurs, etc.) in such a way that the economic actors will have concrete knowledge of the effect on their personal prospects and on the national interest.

6) **COMMERCE:** The government will suppress all archaic forms of commerce of the people's basic necessities, regulating prices so that each Nicaraguan will be guaranteed the highest standard of living permitted by our natural resources . . . . To this end, a body will be created and charged with the regulation of interior and exterior commerce whose objective will be to obtain the best conditions for buying and selling and to guarantee prices

for national producers of commodities subject to price speculation in international markets.

7) **AGRICULTURE:** A comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program will be developed to put an end to the formation of *latifundios* and to institute, with the lands expropriated from the Somoza family, a program of cooperatives and state enterprises in which will participate all landless peasants or those with land insufficient to maintain a family. In the agricultural sector the emphasis will be on the production of basic grains and on those products necessary to maintain a balanced diet for the nation (fruits, vegetables, etc.).

Through the state finance system the government will grant loans for agricultural production to all producers, large, medium and small. The government will also provide technical assistance, especially to small producers, to raise harvest yields and guarantee an income level which will enable them to meet the needs of their families (education, housing, health, food, etc.).

8) **WORK:** A Labor Code will be formulated which will guarantee workers and peasants a 48-hour week divided in a manner appropriate to the particular exigencies of each economic sector and always respecting rest periods and time dedicated to collective union activity. There will be an end to unemployment and underemployment with work guaranteed for all. "Black lists" will be abolished and all workers will have wages guaranteed to cover their personal and familial needs. Sexual discrimination against women in labor practices will be ended. Women will be incorporated on a large scale into all economic, political, social and cultural tasks (establishing the principle of equal work for equal pay). Exploitation of child labor will be prohibited and school attendance will be mandatory. . . .

9) **EDUCATION:** Measures will be put into immediate effect to end illiteracy through a massive national plan involving all students, teachers and voluntary workers who will carry education to every corner of the country. Programs of teacher training and school construction will be increased so that there will be no valley or district without access to education. The university budget will be increased to meet the great demand from all those, mostly workers and peasants, who have the capacity for higher education but lack the resources to obtain it . . . . Education will be obligatory and all Nicaraguans will have access to it.

10) **HEALTH:** The unity government will initiate health and hygiene programs for the large numbers of poor workers, peasants and Indian communities, and will eradicate the diseases which now ravage children and affect great sectors of the population, such as malaria, gastroenteritis, tuberculosis, etc., as well as those diseases caused by malnutrition and hunger. Medicine will have a social character and all Nicaraguans and resident foreigners will have access to it. The government will regulate the cost of medical services of those doctors and specialists who are not part of the national system of social security, immediately abolishing commerce in the health of the people. To fulfill these objectives, rural "health centers," regional first aid hospitals, and specialized hospitals for treating more serious cases, will be built. . . .

11) **HOUSING:** The popular unity government will develop programs to guarantee a home for each family immediately, undertaking new construction programs in both urban and rural zones . . . . Rent will be regulated so that it will neither be the intolerable burden that it now is nor constantly threaten eviction by the merchants of workers' necessities.

12) **MILITARY:** The popular unity government will take immediate steps to create a national army which will watch over the national interests of the people and the defense of the nation. It will cease to be an instrument of repression in the hands of one family that has used it to perpetuate its power. In the formation of this army, purged of its corrupt and evil members, the rank and position of all officers who take an active stand against the dictatorship will be respected. The pedagogical, technical and professional levels of all privates and ranked officers will be raised. The special stipends and privileges of military men of high or low rank will be abolished. Parasitism within the ranks will be eliminated and the army will be made to take an active part in the development of the country.

NOTES

Introduction

[1] V.I. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 150, 421, 424.
[2] Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969), pp. 2, 34.
[3] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

1. The Crisis of Nicaraguan Capitalism

[1] George Black, *Triumph of the People, The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua* (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 4; Henri Weber, *Nicaragua, The Sandinist Revolution* (London: New Left Books, 1981), p. 10. Also see Jaime Biderman, "The Development of Capitalism in Nicaragua: A Political Economic History," *Latin American Perspectives*, Winter, 1983, p. 12. Helpful summaries of Nicaraguan history are provided in these works and also in the introduction of Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), pp. 11-17.
[2] Bruce Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982), p. 118.
[3] Black, *Triumph*, p. 174. Anastasio II had been commander of the National Guard since 1950.
[4] The classic statement of the theory of combined and uneven development is in the first chapter of Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 1977), pp. 25-37. Also see Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* (London: New Left Books, 1981), pp. 87-88, and George Novack, *Understanding History, Marxist Essays* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1979), pp. 82-160.
[5] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 114-115.
[6] See James Petras and Morris H. Morley, "Economic Expansion, Political Crisis and U.S. Policy in Central America," *Contemporary Marxism*, Summer 1981, and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, "Class Struggle in Central America: Background and Overview," *Latin American Perspectives*, Spring 1980.
[7] Alejandro Bendana, "Crisis in Nicaragua," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, November-December 1978, p. 13; Weber, p. 23; Biderman, pp. 15-17, 25.
[8] James Petras, "Whither the Nicaraguan Revolution?" *Monthly Review*, October 1979, p. 3.
[9] Chinchilla, pp. 4-5.
[10] Biderman, pp. 16-17, 21.
[11] Bendana, p. 13; Black, *Triumph*, p. 38.
[12] Bendana, pp. 13, 14.
[13] Bendana, p. 14; Weber, p. 24; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 39-41; Chinchilla, pp. 4-7; Biderman, pp. 25-26.
[14] Bendana, pp. 14, 15; Weber, pp. 17, 32-34; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 64-65; Susanne Jonas, "The Revolutionary Challenge," *Latin American & Empire Report*, February 1978, pp. 28, 30.
[15] Weber, p. 26; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 25-29; Charles-André Udry, "Nicaragua: A Revolution on the March," *Intercontinental Press*, October 8, 1979, p. 947.
[16] Biderman, pp. 25-29; Jonas, pp. 29-30; Bendana, pp. 15-17; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 65-66, 108-112; Weber, pp. 39-41.

2. The Proletarianization of the Nicaraguan Masses

[1] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 30.
[2] Jaime Wheelock, "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives*, Winter 1979, p. 121.
[3] Weber, p. 28.
[4] Udry, p. 947; Petras and Morley, p. 72; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 114.
[5] Carmen Diane Deere and Peter Marchetti, "The Worker-Peasant Alliance in the First Year of the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform," *Latin American Perspectives*, Spring 1981, p. 41; Weber, p. 29; Petras and Morley, p. 75; Udry, p. 947; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 68-70; Orlando Núñez, "The Third Force in National Liberation Movements," *Latin American Perspectives*, Spring 1981, p. 7.
[6] Deere and Marchetti, p. 42.
[7] Ibid., pp. 43, 44, 45; Weber, pp. 27-28; Biderman, pp. 15-17, 19-21.
[8] Núñez, p. 11; Deere and Marchetti, pp. 46, 48, 50; Biderman, pp. 15-16, 28.
[9] James Petras, "Nicaragua: The Transition to a New Society," *Contemporary Marxism*, Winter 1980, p. 95; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 68-70; Weber, p. 29; Petras and Morley, p. 75; Núñez, pp. 10-11; Chinchilla, pp. 6, 11: Udry, p. 947; Wheelock, "Interview," p. 121.
[10] Núñez, pp. 11, 13, 20-21.
[11] Petras and Morley, pp. 69-70.

3. A Leadership for the Nicaraguan Revolution

[1] Black, *Triumph*, p. 90; Chinchilla, p. 22; Weber, p. 21. Also see Harry E. Vanden, "The Ideology of the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Monthly Review*, June 1982.
[2] Black, *Triumph*, pp. 29-31, 65, 73, 115, 139; Weber, pp. 19, 39; Harold Jung, "Behind the Nicaraguan Revolution," in Stanford Central America Action Network (SCAAN), ed., *Revolution in Central America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 24-25; John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 97-108.
[3] Black, *Triumph*, pp. 30, 71-72; Weber, p. 108; Pedro Camejo and Fred Murphy, "How to Answer Ultra-Left Sectarianism in Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press*, May 19, 1979. Examples of a sectarian "Trotskyist" analysis of Nicaraguan events, representing the views of the LMR but sharply at variance with the approach of this contribution, can be found in Fausto Amador, "The Deepening Crisis of the Somoza Regime," *Intercontinental Press*, October 16, 1978, and Fausto Amador and Sara Santiago, "Where Is Nicaragua Going?" *Intercontinental Press*, June 11, 1979. As the Sandinista revolution was accelerating toward victory, these articles confidently explained that it wouldn't happen.
[4] Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, *El Salvador, The Face of Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1982), p. 21; Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), pp. 378-380; Weber, p. 14; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 20, 25; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 31.
[5] Thomas P. Anderson, *Mantanza, El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), pp. 36, 37-38; Löwy, pp. 190-192.
[6] Alexander, pp. 379-380; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 31.
[7] The early involvement of many Sandinistas in the PSN, and their break from that party, is indicated in a number of sources and is frankly acknowledged by these Sandinistas themselves. See: Tomás Borge, "Carlos Fonseca Amador and Nicaragua's Fight for Freedom," *International Socialist Review*, July 1980, pp. 6-7; Doris Tijerino, *Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981); and many of the interviews in Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).
[8] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 30, 31, 32; Alexander, p. 382; Jonas, pp. 30-31; Chinchila, p. 13.
[9] Bendana, p. 15; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 65-66, 115-118, 137-140; Weber, pp. 39, 42-48; Jonas, pp. 29-31.
[10] Núñez, p. 15; Jonas, p. 31; Black, *Triumph*, p. 72.
[11] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 40-41.
[12] Daniel Ortega, "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives*, Winter 1979, pp. 117-118.
[13] Henry Ruíz, "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives*, Winter 1979, p. 119.
[14] Wheelock, "Interview," pp. 124, 125.
[15] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 13, 14; Black, *Triumph*, p. 145; Booth, p. 146; Oleg Ignatiev and Genrykh Borovik, *The Agony of a Dictatorship, Nicaraguan Chronicle* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 46.

4. The Struggle for the Nicaraguan Revolution

[1] Chinchilla, pp. 9-10.
[2] Núñez, pp. 18-19.
[3] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 35, 36, 39-40.
[4] Ibid., p. 57; Bendana, p. 20; Petras, "Nicaragua: Transition," p. 99.
[5] Núñez, p. 11.
[6] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 58, 71; Wheelock, "Interview," p. 122.
[7] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 74, 80-82; Weber, pp. 21-22; Chinchilla, pp. 53-58; Black, *Triumph*, pp. 91-97, 142-145; Bendana, pp. 21-23, 27; Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981), p. 52.

[8] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 82.
[9] Chinchilla, pp. 19, 20; Núñez, p. 10; Randall, *Sandino's Daughters*, p. 53.
[10] Weber, p. 55; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 74, 61, 62-63, 70.
[11] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 73; Núñez, pp. 11-12.
[12] Núñez, pp. 13, 14.
[13] Black, *Triumph*, pp. 120-123, 137-140; Weber, p. 48; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 13-22; "Program of MPU," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, November-December 1978, pp. 36-37; Leon Trotsky et al, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), pp. 76, 75; Julio López, Orlando Núñez, C.F. Chamorro and P. Serres, *La Caida del Somocismo y la Lucha Sandinista en Nicaragua* (San Jose: EDUCA, 1980), pp. 226, 227.
[14] Amador and Santiago, pp. 582-583; Núñez, pp. 14-15; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 78-79. Also see Weber, pp. 55-57.
[15] Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp. 176, 168, 175-176.
[16] Udry, pp. 948-949; Núñez, p. 15; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 67, 58.
[17] Núñez, p. 15.
[18] Ibid., p. 9.

5. Dynamics of Permanent Revolution

[1] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 36.
[2] Ibid., pp. 36, 67.
[3] Leon Trotsky, *1905* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 4-7.
[4] Ibid., pp. 45, 46.
[5] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 41.
[6] Ibid., p. 50.
[7] Trotsky, *1905*, pp. 19, 20.
[8] Ibid., pp. 21, 28; R. Sh. Gamelin, "Russia in the Epoch of Imperialism, History of the U.S.S.R.," Part 1, Moscow. Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 285.
[9] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 53; Trotsky, *1905*, pp. 39-40.
[10] Trotsky, *1905*, p. 40.
[11] Ibid., p. 41.
[12] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 72; Trotsky, *1905*, pp. 49, 53.
[13] Trotsky, *1905*, pp. 47-48.
[14] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, pp. 93-94.
[15] Trotsky, *1905*, p. 44.
[16] Ibid., p. 49; Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 217.
[17] This table is based on data in the following: I. Pisarev, *Population of the USSR* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962), pp. 74, 79, 45; *Soviet Union, 50 Years, Statistical References* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 23; James D. Rudolph, ed., *Nicaragua: A Country Study* (Washington: The American University, 1982), p. 233.
[18] *Soviet Union, Fifty Years*, p. 221.
[19] Based on Weber, p. 28.
[20] Trotsky, *1905*, p. 49.
[21] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, pp. 66-67.
[22] Ibid., pp. 73-74, 71.
[23] Ibid., pp. 69, 70, 72.
[24] Ibid., pp. 75, 208.
[25] Ibid., pp. 76, 101-102.
[26] Ibid., p. 208; Trotsky, *1905*, p. 317.
[27] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, pp. 80, 278, 279.
[28] Trotsky, *1905*, pp. 317-318.
[29] Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, pp. 131, 132, 133.

6. After the Sandinista Insurrection

[1] Weber, pp. 47-48, 72.
[2] Petras, "Whither the Nicaraguan Revolution?" pp. 13-16. Also see Booth, pp. 184-188.
[3] Booth, p. 185; Roger Burbach, "Nicaragua: The Course of the Revolution," *Monthly Review*, February 1980, p. 33; Tomás Borge, "Large-Scale Aggression is Being Prepared," *Intercontinental Press*, February 23, 1983, p. 119.
[4] Black, *Triumph*, pp. 244-249; Burback, p. 33; FSLN National Secretariat of Propaganda and Political Education, "Nicaragua — Balance Sheet of the Sandinista Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, February 4, 1980, pp. 99-100; Aníbal Yáñez, "Cabinet Changes Ratify FSLN Course Since July Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, January 14, 1980, pp. 8-9; Weber, pp. 76-78; Fred Murphy, "FSLN Announces Worker-Peasant Majority in Council of State," *Intercontinental Press*, May 5, 1980, pp. 454-456; Pedro Camejo and Fred Murphy, "Council of State Opens in Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press*, May 19, 1980, pp, 502-503.
[5] Weber, p. 67; Trotsky et al, *Transitional Program*, p. 93.
[6] Borge, "Large-Scale," p. 118; Black, *Triumph*, p. 267.
[7] Tomás Borge, "The New Education in the New Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press*, March 14, 1983, p. 148.
[8] This last phrase, of course, is from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 127.
[9] Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 116; Black, *Triumph*, p. 200-201; Weber, p. 67; Richard Sholk, "The National Bourgeoisie in Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua" (unpublished paper, Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1982), p. 6.
[10] Booth, p. 181.
[11] Petras, "Nicaragua: Transition," pp. 103-104; Black, *Triumph*, p. 186-187, 219, 201-205, 287; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 120, 119, 135; Booth, p. 197.
[12] Harold Sims, "Nicaragua's Revolutionary Economy" (unpublished paper, University of Pittsburgh, 1981), pp. 7-8, 14; Booth, pp. 203-209; Black, *Triumph*, p. 306; Michael Baumann and Jane Harris, "May Day Marks Deepening Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, May 17, 1982, pp. 412-413; Michael Baumann, "Nicaragua Battles Escalation of U.S.-Organized Aggression," *Militant*, April 1, 1983, p. 4.
[13] Udry, "Nicaragua," p. 951; Mats Tinnerwall and Ulf Jungmar, "Nicaragua: How the Defense Against the Counterrevolutionary Attacks is Being Organized," *International Viewpoint*, April 18, 1983; Deere and Marchetti, p. 51; Luis Serra, "The Sandinist Mass Organizations," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution*, pp. 95-113; Weber, pp. 50, 67, 76-78; Black, *Triumph*, p. 230-233, 239-253; Fred Murphy, "New Land, Factory Takeovers Meet Capitalist Resistance," *Intercontinental Press*, March 31, 1980, pp. 308-309; Tomás Borge, "Role of Workers in Nicaraguan Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, May 31, 1982, p. 471.
[14] Black, *Triumph*, p. 201-207; Charles-André Udry, "Class Polarization Deepens in Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press*, May 26, 1980, pp. 549-550.
[15] Fred Murphy, "The FSLN, the Working Class, and the Economic Emergency," *Intercontinental Press*, November 30, 1981, p. 1172.
[16] Tomás Borge, "An Aggression of Constant Lies, Half-Truths, and Accusations," *Washington Post*, July 31, 1983; Marc Cooper, "Revolution As a Frame of Mind, Inside Nicaragua," *Los Angeles Weekly*, August 19-25, 1983, p. 17.

7. Problems of Transition

[1] For a liberal analysis which makes much of a "pragmatist/ ideologue" dichotomy, see Shirley Christian, "Freedom and Unfreedom in Nicaragua," *The New Republic*, July 18, 1981.
[2] Victor Tirado, "FSLN Leader Discusses Road to Socialism," *Intercontinental Press*, April 18, 1983, p. 208.
[3] Rolf Bergkvist and Maris Sundvall, "War Threat Overshadows Holiday Season in Nicaragua," *International Viewpoint*, January 10, 1983, pp. 3-4; Richard Fagen, "The Nicaraguan Crisis," *Monthly Review*, November 1982, pp. 2-8; Michael Baumann, "U.S. War Carried Into Heart of Country," *Intercontinental Press*, March 28, 1983, pp. 156-157; Borge, "Large-Scale"; Sholk, pp. 28-29; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, p. 136.
[4] Booth, pp. 200-201; Black, *Triumph*, p. 211, 238, 247-248, 306-307; Fagen, pp. 13-14; Phillipe Bourgeois, "The Problematic of Nicaragua's Indigenous Minorities," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution*, pp. 303-318; Roxanne Dunbar Ortíz, "Miskitus in Nicaragua: Who is Violating Human Rights?" in SCAAN, ed., *Revolution in Central America*, pp. 466-470.
[5] Borge, "Large-Scale," p. 118; Tomás Borge, "Reagan Wants to Destroy Us, But Doesn't Know How," *Intercontinental Press*, January 31, 1983, p. 57.
[6] Black, *Triumph*, p. 316-323; Michael Dodson and T. S. Montgomery, "The Churches in the Nicaraguan Revolution," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution*, pp. 161-180; Booth, pp. 134-137, 201-203; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 105-111; Arnold Weissburg, "Church Hierarchy Attacks Government," *Intercontinental Press*,

March 29, 1982, pp. 259-260; Michael Baumann, "Church Hierarchy Provokes Confrontation," *Intercontinental Press,* September 6, 1982, pp. 688-689; (Sister) Patricia Butler, "Pope John Paul II in Nicaragua," *Nicaragua*, May 1983; Peter Marchetti, "Church and Revolution in Nicaragua," *Monthly Review,* July-August 1982, p. 45.

[7] Booth, p. 201; Black, *Triumph,* p. 323-328; "Women in Nicaragua," *Nicaragua,* May-June 1982, p. 3; Susan E. Ramírez-Horton, "The Role of Women in the Nicaraguan Revolution," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution,* pp. 147-160; Patricia Flynn, "Women Challenge the Myth," and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, "Women in Revolutionary Movements: The Case of Nicaragua," in SCAAN, ed., *Revolution in Central America*, pp. 414-422, 422-434; Glenda Monterrey, "The FSLN Opened the Door for Us," *Intercontinental Press,* October 26, 1981, pp. 1046-1049; Margaret Randall, "Women and Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* May 24, 1982, pp. 448-450; Leonora Arguello de Hüper, "How Nicaraguan Women Organized to Topple Dictatorship of Somoza," *Militant,* May 26, 1983. Also see Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters,* a sensitive and informative account of a wide crosssection of women in Nicaragua's revolutionary movement.

[8] Black, *Triumph,* p. 197, 291-293; Tirado, p. 207; Murphy, "The FSLN, the Working Class, and the Economic Emergency," pp. 1170-1172; George Black and Judy Butler, "Let Us Breathe," in SCAAN, ed., *Revolution in Central America,* pp. 477-478; Bergkvist and Sundvall, pp. 3-4; Jaime Wheelock, "Economy Gains Amid World Crisis," *Intercontinental Press,* April 18, 1983, p. 204; Fagen, p. 7.

[9] Bergkvist and Sundvall, p. 4.

[10] Petras, "Nicaragua: Transition," pp. 99-103; Sims, pp. 15-17; Black, *Triumph,* pp. 281-298, 236, 241-242; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak,* pp. 130, 137, 138, 139; Fagen, p. 8; Bergkvist and Sundvall, p. 4.

[11] Fagen, pp. 9-10; Black, *Triumph,* pp. 264-272, 234; Deere and Marchetti, pp. 51-68; Weber, pp. 87-89; Petras, "Transition: Nicaragua," pp. 96-99.

[12] Deere and Marchetti, pp. 70-71.

[13] Black and Butler, "Let Us Breathe," in SCAAN, ed., *Revolution in Central America,* p. 475; Petras, "Transition: Nicaragua," p. 104; Susanne Jonas, "The Nicaragua Revolution and the Reemerging Cold War," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution,* pp. 375-389.

[14] Borge, "Role of Workers in Nicaragua Revolution," p. 472.

8. Moving Toward Socialism

[1] Tirado, p. 208; Black, *Triumph,* p. 305.

[2] V.I. Lenin, "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (New York: International Publishers, 1951), p. 67.

[3] V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* vol. 2 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 343-344.

[4] Randall, *Sandino's Daughters*, p. 52.

[5] V.I. Lenin, "Letter From Afar. Third Letter," in C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists* (New York: Dell, 1962), pp. 255, 256-257.

[6] Black, *Triumph,* pp. 255-256.

[7] Weber, p. 112.

[8] Ibid., p, 110.

[9] Fagen, pp. 6-7.

[10] Orlando Núñez, "FSLN Paper Discusses Polish Strikes," *Intercontinental Press,* October 6, 1980, p. 1025. We've been unable to locate the precise quotation from Engels which Núñez cites, though Engels makes the same point in "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works,* vol. 3, pp. 144-145. Lenin makes the point cited by Núñez in "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes," in V.I. Lenin, *On Trade Unions* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), pp. 380-381.

[11] On Nicaraguan press coverage, see Weber, p. 101. Cuban coverage of the Polish workers' movement is typified, unfortunately, by Alcibíades Hidalgo, "Voices at the Solidarity Conference," *Granma,* October 18, 1981, p. 714.

[12] Tomás Borge, "We Will Not Take a Single Step Backward," *Intercontinental Press,* July 6, 1981, p. 714.

[13] "Selections From the World Press of the Workers' and Liberation Movements: Reactions to the Repression in Poland," *International Viewpoint,* January 28, 1982, pp. 27-28; "Selections from the Left," *Intercontinental Press,* January 18, 1982, p. 11; "Selections from the Left," *Intercontinental Press,* February 22, 1982, p. 137.

[14] "Important Agreements: USSR-Nicaragua," *Barricada Internacional,* May 10, 1982, p. 1; Michael Baumann, "Soviet Union Pledges New Aid," *Intercontinental Press,* May 24, 1982, p. 440.

[15] Borge, "Role of Workers in Nicaraguan Revolution," pp. 472, 475, 476.

[16] Petras, "Transition: Nicaragua," pp. 100-103; Weber, pp. 121-125; Borge, "We Will Not Take a Single Step Backward," p. 713. On working-class political pluralism, see Fred Murphy, "An Example of Political Pluralism," *Intercontinental Press,* July 27, 1981, and Daniel Jebrac, "Nicaraguan Revolution Under Attack," *International Viewpoint,* May 2, 1983, p. 6 — both articles indicating ongoing FSLN concern to preserve such pluralism. Also see Richard Harris, "A Commentary on the Contemporary Conjuncture in Nicaragua," and James Petras, "Workers' Democracy: The Key to Defending the Revolution and Developing the Productive Forces," both articles in *Latin American Perspectives*, Winter 1983.

[17] Weber, p. 111; Black, *Triumph,* pp. 231, 233.

[18] A brief overview is offered by Victor Serge, *From Lenin to Stalin* (New York: Monad Press, 1974). A detailed account of the Bolshevik insurrection, documenting its revolutionary-democratic character, can be found in Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978). A massive examination of the early Bolshevik regime is E.H. Carr's *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966) — see esp. vol. 2, pp. 160-237 regarding the withering of soviet democracy. On the Stalinist degeneration, see Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965).

[19] George Black, "Central America: Crisis in the Backyard," *New Left Review* #135, September-October 1982, pp. 33-34.

[20] Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp. 45-4 .

[21] Sims, pp. 7, 23; Petras, "Transition: Nicaragua," pp. 103-104; Jebrac, pp. 3-4; Weber, pp. 98, 99, 141-142; Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed,* pp. 186-204.

[22] Leonid I. Brezhnev, *We Are Optimists* (New York: International Publishers, 1981), pp. 21, 24, 28, 16.

[23] Ari Dos Santos, Raul Valbuena, Felix Dixon, Cervo Romero, Jaime Barrios, "Latin America: Decade With a Hard Beginning," *World Marxist Review,* March 1982, p. 23.

[24] Jesus Montane and Manuel Pineiro, "Merging Into One Stream," *World Marxist Review*, May 1982, p. 17.

[25] Accounts of the moderate suggestions by Cuban officials can be found in Leslie Gelb, "Cuban Calls for Talks With U.S. And Accepts Part Blame for Strains," *New York Times*, April 6, 1982; Sewryn Bailer and Alfred Stepan, "Cuba, the U.S., and the Central American Mess," *New York Review of Books,* May 5, 1982; and Carla Anne Robbins, *The Cuban Threat* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983), pp. 247-250, 258-265, 294-298.

[26] Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, "An Interview on Cuba's Foreign Policy," *Intercontinental Press,* February 18, 1983, pp. 97-100.

[27] George Lavan, ed., *Che Guevara Speaks* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967), p. 149; Jane Harris, "Armed Demonstration Answers Reagan," *Intercontinental Press,* May 16, 1983, p. 244; Marcus, ed., *Sandinistas Speak,* p. 132.

9. Post Script: Summer 1983

[1] John Vinocur, "Nicaragua: A Correspondent's Portrait, *New York Times,* August 16, 1983, p. 4; Marlisle Simons, "Inside and Out. Pressures On Nicaragua Are Rising," *New York Times,* Week in Review, July 17, 1983.

[2] Vinocur, p. 1; Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua: The Beleaguered Revolution," *New York Times Magazine,* August 28, 1983, p. 67.

[3] Claude Devilliers, "Four Years After the Fall of Somoza," *International Viewpoint,* August 1, 1983, p. 5.

[4] "Nicaragua's Position Regarding Elections" (mimeographed publication distributed by the Nicaraguan Embassy to the U.S., 1983) pp. 4-5; Devilliers, p. 5. Independent corroboration of the continued existence of Nicaraguan democracy can be found in Stephen Kinzer, "Foes of Sandinistas Rally in Managua," *New York Times,* September 6, 1983.

[5] Kinzer, "Nicaragua," p. 24.

[6] Vinocur, p. 4; Kinzer, "Nicaragua," p. 27.

[7] Simons; Kinzer, "Nicaragua," pp. 27-28.

[8] Marc Cooper, "Revolution as a Frame of Mind, Inside Nicaragua," *Los*

Angeles Weekly, August 19-25, 1983, p. 17; Kenneth N. Gilpin, "Nicaragua Outlook Worries Executives," *New York Times,* Business Section, August 15, 1983, pp. 1, 23; Devilliers, pp. 3-4; Kinzer, "Nicaragua," p. 28, 65.

[9] Simons; Kinzer, "Nicaragua," p. 73; Tom Wicker, "Reagan's Big Stick," *New York Times,* July 26, 1983, p. 21.

[10] Daniel Ortega, "We Must Prepare to Fight and Win," *Intercontinental Press,* August 8, 1983, p. 440.

[11] Ibid; Sergio Ramírez, "What Nicaragua Wants," *New York Times,* July 26, 1983.

[12] Ortega, "We Must Prepare to Fight and Win," p. 439.

[13] Wicker; the U.S. official quoted in Steve Wattenmaker, "Reagan on the March Toward Wider War," *Intercontinental Press,* July 11, 1983, p. 373; Borge, "An Aggression of Constant Lies, Half-Truths and Accusations," *Washington Post,* July 31, 1983. Additional material on the U.S. escalation can be found in: Philip Taubman, "Despite Nicaragua Vote, Foes Seem Divided and Conquered," *New York Times,* Week in Review, July 31, 1983; Steve Wattenmaker, "U.S. Troops and Ships Deploy for War in Central America," *Intercontinental Press,* September 5, 1983; Fred Murphy, "U.S. Aids Ouster of Ríos Montt," *Intercontinental Press,* September 5, 1983.

[14] Cooper, p. 17.

Conclusion

[1] See Löwy, pp. 68-85, 189-198. The views of Joseph Stalin on this question can be found in Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976). For a classic example of the Stalinist attack on Trotsky and the theory of permanent revolution, and of the reversion to the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" formula, see the 1935 work by the U.S. Communist Party writer M.J. Olgin, *Trotskyism: Counter-Revolution in Disguise* (San Francisco: Proletarian Publishers, n.d.), exp. pp. 37-49. A more recent — and seemingly less Stalinist, less mechanistic, more ambiguous — variant can be found in Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, *Cuba en el transito al socialismo (1959-1963) — Lenin y la cuestion coloniale* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1978). In the book's second essay, "Lenin and the Colonial Question," esp. pp. 196-233, Lenin's 1905 perspective is given an extremely flexible interpretation (one which could seemingly justify both a reformist popular front and an uncompromising socialist revolution) while Trotsky's perspective is presented in caricature and denounced. This essay has been translated into English and can be found in *New International*, Fall 1983, which also contains an even more recent variant of this argument by a former Trotskyist — Jack Barnes, "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today."

[2] Lenin, *Selected Works,* vol. 1, pp. 484, 486.

[3] Ibid., pp. 488-489.

[4] Lenin, *Selected Works,* vol. 3, p. 104.

[5] Ibid., pp. 638, 639, 641.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CONSULTED

Alexander, Robert J. *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957).

Anderson, Thomas P. *Mantanza, El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971).

Armstrong, Robert and Janet Shenk. *El Salvador, The Face of Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

Black, George. *Triumph of the People, The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua* (London: Zed Press, 1981).

Booth, John A. *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

Brezhnev, Leonid I. *We Are Optimists* (New York: International Publishers, 1981).

Carr, E.H. *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923,* 3 vols. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966).

Ignatiev, Oleg and Genrykh Borovik. *The Agony of a Dictatorship: Nicaraguan Chronicle* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).

Lavan, George, ed. *Che Guevara Speaks* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967).

Lenin, V.I. *Marx-Engels-Marxism* (Moscow, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1953).

_____. *On Trade Unions* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970).

_____. *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (New York: International Publishers, 1951).

_____. *Selected Works,* 3 vols. (New York, International Publishers, 1967).

López, J., O. Núñez, C.F. Chamorro, P. Serres. *La Caid del Somocismo y la lucha Sandinista en Nicaragua* [The Fall of Somozaism and the Sandinist Struggle in Nicaragua] (San José: EDUCA, 1980).

Löwy, Michael. *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* (London: New Left Books, 1981).

Marcus, Bruce, ed. *Sandinistas Speak* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982).

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *Selected Works,* 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973).

Mills, C. Wright. *The Marxists* (New York: Dell, 1962).

Novack, George. *Understanding History, Marxist Essays* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1979).

Olgin, M.J. *Trotskyism: Counter-Revolution in Disguise* (San Francisco, Proletarian Publishers, n.d.).

Pisarev, I. *The Population of the USSR* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962).

Rabinowitch, Alexander. *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978).

Randall, Margaret. *Sandino's Daughters* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).

Robbins, Carla Anne. *The Cuban Threat* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983).

Rodriguez, Carlos Rafael. *Cuba en el transito al socialism (1959-1963) — Lenin y la cuestion coloniale* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1978).

Rudolph, James D., ed. *Nicaragua: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: The American University, 1982).

Serge, Victor. *From Lenin to Stalin* (New York: Monad Press, 1974).

Soviet Union, 50 Years, Statistical References (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969).

Stalin, Joseph. *Problems of Leninism* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976).

Stanford Central America Action Network (SCAAN), ed. *Revolution in Central America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983).

Tijerino, Doris. *Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).

Trotsky, Leon. *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 1977).

_____. *1905* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).

_____. *On China* (New York: Monad Press, 1976).

_____. *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969).

_____. *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965).

_____. *The Third International After Lenin* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).

_____ et al. *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974).

Walker, Thomas W., ed. *Nicaragua in Revolution* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982).

Weber, Henri. *Nicaragua, The Sandinist Revolution* (London: New Left Books, 1981).

ARTICLES

Amador, Fausto. "The Deepening Crisis of the Somoza Regime, *Intercontinental Press,* October 16, 1978.

_____ and Sara Santiago. "Where is Nicaragua Going?" *Intercontinental Press,* June 11, 1979.

Argüello de Hüper, Leonora (actual name: Leonor Argüello de Hüper). "How Nicaraguan Women Organized to Topple Dictatorship of Somoza," *Militant,* May 26, 1983.

Barnes, Jack. "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today," *New International,* Fall 1983.

Baumann, Michael. "Church Hierarchy Provokes Confrontation," *Intercontinental Press,* September 6, 1982.

_____. "Nicaragua Battles Escalation of U.S.-Organized Aggression," *Militant,* April 1, 1983.

_____. "Soviet Union Pledges New Aid," *Intercontinental Press,* May 24, 1982.

_____. "U.S. War Carried Into Heart of Country." *Intercontinental Press,* March 28, 1983.

_____ and Jane Harris. "May Day Marks Deepening Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* May 17, 1982.

Beauvais, Jean-Pierre. "The Death of Commandante Marcial," *International Viewpoint,* May 16, 1983.

Bendana, Alejandro. "Crisis in Nicaragua," *NACLA Report on the Americas,* November-December 1978.

Bergkrist, Rolf and Maris Sundvall. "War Threat Overshadows Holiday Season in Nicaragua," *International Viewpoint,* January 10, 1983.

Bialer, Seweryn and Alfred Stepan. "Cuba, the U.S., and the Central America Mess," *New York Review of Books,* May 5, 1982.

Biderman, Jaime. "The Development of Capitalism in Nicaragua: A Political Economic History," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1983.

Black, George. "Central America: Crisis in the Backyard," *New Left Review,* #135, September-October 1982.

Borge, Tomás. "An Aggression of Constant Lies, Half-Truths and Accusations," *Washington Post,* July 31, 1983.

_____. "Carlos Fonseca Amador and Nicaragua's Fight for Freedom," *International Socialist Review,* July 1980.

_____. "Large-Scale Aggression is Being Prepared," *Intercontinental Press,* February 23, 1983.

_____. "The New Education in the New Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press,* March 14, 1983.

_____. "Reagan Wants to Destroy Us, But Doesn't Know How," *Intercontinental Press,* January 31, 1983.

_____. "Role of Workers in Nicaraguan Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* May 31, 1982.

_____. "We Will Not Take a Single Step Backward," *Intercontinental Press,* July 6, 1981.

Burback, Roger. "Central America: The Course of the Revolution," *Monthly Review,* January 1982.

_____. "Nicaragua: The Course of the Revolution, " *Monthly Review,* February 1980.

Butler, (Sister) Patricia. "Pope John Paul II in Nicaragua," *Nicaragua,* May 1983.

Camejo, Pedro and Fred Murphy. "Council of State Opens in Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press,* May 19, 1980.

_____. "How to Answer Ultra-Left Sectarianism in Nicaragua," *Intercontinental Press,* November 12, 1979.

Chicolte, Ronald H. "Issues of Theory in Dependency and Marxism," *Latin American Perspectives,* Summer-Fall, 1981.

Chinchilla, Norma Stoltz. "Class Struggle in Central America: Background and Overview," *Latin American Perspectives,* Spring 1980.

Christian, Shirley. "Freedom and Unfreedom in Nicaragua," *New Republic,* July 18, 1981.

Cooper, Marc. "Revolution as a Frame of Mind, Inside Nicaragua." *Los Angeles Weekly,* August 19-25, 1983.
Deere, Carmen Diana and Peter Marchetti. "The Worker-Peasant Alliance in the First Year of the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform," *Latin American Perspectives,* Spring 1981.
Devilliers, Claude. "Four Years After the Fall of Somoza," *International Viewpoint,* August 1, 1983.
Dos Santos, Ari, Raul Valbuena, Felix Dixon, Cevaro Romero, Jaime Barrios. "Latin America: Decade With a Hard Beginning," *World Marxist Review,* March 1982.
Fagen, Richard. "The Nicaraguan Crisis," *Monthly Review,* November 1982.
FSLN National Secretariat of Propaganda and Political Education. "Nicaragua — Balance Sheet of the Sandinista Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* February 4, 1980.
Gelb, Leslie. "Cuban Calls for Talks With U.S. And Accepts Part Blame for Strains," *New York Times,* April 6, 1982.
Gilpin, Kenneth N. "Nicaragua Outlook Worries Executives," *New York Times* Business Section, August 15, 1983.
Harding, Timothy F. "Dependency, Nationalism and the State in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives,* Fall 1976.
Harris, Jane. "Armed Demonstration Answers Reagan," *Intercontinental Press,* May 16, 1983.
Harris, Richard. "A Commentary on the Contemporary Conjuncture in Nicaragua," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1983.
Hidalgo, Alcibíades. "Voices at the Solidarity Congress," *Granma,* October 18, 1981.
"Important Agreements: USSR-Nicaragua," *Barricada International,* May 10, 1982.
Jebrac, Daniel. "Nicaraguan Revolution Under Attack," *International Viewpoint,* May 2, 1983.
Jonas, Susanne. "The Revolutionary Challenge," *Latin America & Empire Report,* February 1976.
Kinzer, Stephen. "Foes of Sandinistas Rally in Managua," *New York Times,* September 6, 1983.
_____. "Nicaragua: The Beleaguered Revolution," *New York Times Magazine,* August 28, 1983.
Marchetti, Peter. "Church and Revolution in Nicaragua," *Monthly Review,* July-August 1982.
Montane, Jesus and Manuel Pineiro. "Merging Into One Stream," *World Marxist Review,* May 1982.
Monterrey, Glenda. "The FSLN Opened the Door for Us," *Intercontinental Press,* October 26, 1981.
Murphy, Fred. "An Example of 'Political Pluralism,' " *Intercontinental Press,* July 27, 1981.
_____. "FSLN Announces Worker-Peasant Majority in Council of State," *Intercontinental Press,* May 5, 1980.
_____. "The FSLN, the Working Class, and the Economic Emergency," *Intercontinental Press,* November 30, 1981.
_____. "New Land, Factory Takeovers Meet Capitalist Resistance," *Intercontinental Press,* March 31, 1980.
_____. "U.S. Aids Ouster of Rios Montt," *Intercontinental Press,* September 5, 1983.
"Nicaragua's Position Regarding Elections" (mimeographed publication distributed by the Nicaraguan Embassy to the U.S., 1983).
Núñez, Orlando. "FSLN Paper Discusses Polish Strikes," *Intercontinental Press,* October 6, 1980.
_____. "The Third Social Force in National Liberation Movements," *Latin American Perspectives,* Spring 1981.
Ortega, Daniel. "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1979.
_____. "We Must Prepare to Fight and Win," *Intercontinental Press,* August 8, 1983.
Palmgren, Lars. "Nicaraguan Capitalists Fearful of FSLN's Political Course," *Intercontinental Press,* , September 8, 1980.
_____. "Nicaraguan Capitalists Walk Out of Council of State," *Intercontinental Press,* November 24, 1980.
Petras, James. "Nicaragua: The Transition to a New Society," *Contemporary Marxism,* Winter 1980.
_____. "Wither the Nicaraguan Revolution?" *Monthly Review,* October 1979.
_____. "Workers' Democracy: The Key to Defending the Revolution and Developing the Productive Forces," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1983.
_____ and Morris H. Morley. "Economic Expansion, Political Crisis and U.S. Policy in Central America," *Contemporary Marxism,* Summer 1981.
Ramírez, Sergio. "What Nicaragua Wants," *New York Times,* July 26, 1983.
Randall, Margaret. "Women and Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* May 24, 1982.
Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael. "An Interview on Cuba's Foreign Policy," *Intercontinental Press,* February 18, 1983.
_____. "Lenin and the Colonial Question," *New International,* Fall 1983.
Ruíz, Henry. "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1979.
"Selections From the Left," *Intercontinental Press,* January 18, 1982.
"Selections From the Left," *Intercontinental Press,* February 22, 1981.
"Selections From the World Press of the Workers' and Liberation Movements: Reactions to the Repression in Poland," *International Viewpoint,* January 28, 1982.
Sholk, Richard. "The National Bourgeoisie in Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua," unpublished paper, Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1982.
Simons, Marlisle. "Inside and Out, Pressures on Nicaragua Are Rising," *New York Times* Week in Review, July 17, 1983.
Sims, Harold. "Nicaragua's Revolutionary Economy," unpublished paper, University of Pittsburgh, 1981.
Taubman, Philip. "Despite Nicaragua Vote, Foes Seem Divided and Conquered," *New York Times* Week in Review, July 31, 1983.
Tinnerwall, Mats and Ulf Jungmar. "Nicaragua: How the Defense Against the Counterrevolutionary Attacks is Being Organized," *International Viewpoint,* April 18, 1983.
Tirado, Victor. "FSLN Leader Discusses Road to Socialism," *Intercontinental Press,* April 18, 1983.
Udry, Charles-André. "Class Polarization Deepens in Nicaragua, *Intercontinental Press,* May 26, 1980.
_____. "Nicaragua: A Revolution on the March," *Intercontinental Press,* October 8, 1979.
Vanden, Harry E. "The Ideology of the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Monthly Review,* June 1982.
Vinocur, John. "Nicaragua: A Correspondent's Portrait," *New York Times,* August 16, 1983.
Wattenmaker, Steve. "Reagan on the March Toward Wider War," *Intercontinental Press,* July 11, 1983.
_____. "U.S. Troops and Ships Deploy for War in Central America," *Intercontinental Press,* September 5, 1983.
Weissberg, Arnold. "Church Hierarchy Attacks Government," *Intercontinental Press,* March 29, 1982.
Wheelock, Jaime. "Economy Gains Amid World Crisis," *Intercontinental Press,* April 18, 1983.
_____. "Interview," *Latin American Perspectives,* Winter 1979.
Wicker, Tom. "Reagan's Big Stick," *New York Times,* July 26, 1983.
"Women and the Revolution," *Nicaragua,* May-June 1982. Yáñez, Aníbal. "Cabinet Changes Ratify FSLN Course Since July Revolution," *Intercontinental Press,* January 14, 1980.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE Bulletin In Defense of Marxism

12 Issues: $24 ☐ 6 Issues: $15 ☐

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to: *Bulletin IDOM*
Mail to: P.O. Box 1317
New York, N.Y. 10009

Don't Delay — Subscribe Today!

International VIEWPOINT

A twice-a-month review of news and analysis.
Published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Subscription rates:
1 year: $42 ☐ 6 months: $22 ☐

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Send to: **International Viewpoint**
Box 1824
New York, N.Y. 10009

Checks payable to: International Viewpoint.

From the vantage point of Marxist analysis and participation, *International Viewpoint* covers all the most important events in the world. .

Its contributors bring first-hand reports from Mexico to Nicaragua, from Poland to Portugal, from the Mideast to South Africa.

Every development that advances the liberation of working people is hailed in the pages of this official English-language publication of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Remember, *International Viewpoint* is published in Paris and sent directly to you twice a month via air mail. No other publication gives so much information that is vital to the working class movement.

To be informed, subscribe today.

Literature from the Fourth Internationalist Tendency

A comprehensive study of Trotsky's perspectives on the revolutionary party, its purpose, and its organizational norms.

LEON TROTSKY and the ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES of the REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

By Dianne Feeley, Paul Le Blanc, and Tom Twiss

$5.00 (includes 4th class postage)

* * * *

The Pamphlet Series "Documents From the Struggle"

Platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency — 75¢

The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current, and the Fourth International — 75¢

Why We Oppose the SWP's New Line on Castroism — 75¢

The Iranian Revolution and the Dangers That Threaten It — $1.00

Poland, the Fourth International, and the Socialist Workers Party — 75¢

Write: F.I.T.
P.O. Box 1947
New York, N.Y. 10009