NICARAGUA: THE TENTH YEAR

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Editorial

As Nicaraguans mark ten years since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, we, as North Americans in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua in their efforts to build a more just society, also have much to celebrate. Our achievements as a national movement have been great: hundreds of Nicaragua solidarity groups have sprung up all over the United States giving voice to the opposition to U.S. policy; millions of dollars in material aid has been sent down by private citizens to counteract the destruction of our own government’s policies; and more than 80,000 U.S. citizens have actually gone to Nicaragua to demonstrate support with the ongoing struggle.

Since the triumph, CUSLAR has been a part of this national solidarity movement. Efforts have included material aid drives, beginning with raising money for the purchase of blue jean material for Nicaraguan youths who were mobilized shortly after the triumph to teach reading and writing skills to the campesino population; sponsoring brigades (including the first official United States solidarity brigade); educational and letter writing campaigns; and too-many-to-count anti contra aid protests.

Unfortunately, in this decennial anniversary, we cannot simply celebrate our successes but must also reflect on the battles ahead, acknowledging that we are up against one of the wealthiest, most powerful governments in the world. The U.S. government, shrewd and determined in its mission to make Nicaragua “cry uncle”, has responded to the public outcry by changing its tactics, allowing for the effective continuation of the policy which maintains as its goal the deposition of the Sandinista government. Take for example, the shift from general support of the contra forces to the provision of funds marked for non-lethal aid only. In the end this amounts to a semantic sleight of hand, leaving Congress able to claim that the U.S. is not funding the atrocities, but rather ensuring that the contras have humane resources—food, boots, toilet paper... conveniently failing to note the fact that such assistance allows for the reallocation of other sources of funding for the purchase of extremely lethal paraphernalia. If any Nicaraguan suffering the effects of driving over a land mine were asked who provided the contras with this weapon, the answer would most likely be the United States. While Congress may be successfully convincing some people in this country that our hands are clean in Nicaragua, their efforts to sanitize the policy doesn’t fool Nicaragua-
guans, the ultimate recipients of this “aid”. Contras and innocent civilians alike know who signs the checks.

Support of the contra war has proven to be a messy business, and the U.S. has felt pressure both at home and abroad to change the policy. Thus, rather than maintain overt support for the decidedly unpopular contra war, the Administration is putting more emphasis on political manipulation. With the upcoming Presidential elections in February (see article on elections, p. 10) much Congressional discussion has revolved around the issue of whether to influence the elections overtly or covertly (See Legislative Update, p. 18). Coupled with an intensification of the domestic disinformation campaign, the U.S. is forging a new strategy, equally antagonistic toward the Sandinistas. Whether or not any of the U.S.-backed opposition parties will pose a real threat to the Sandinistas come election time remains to be seen; what is clear however is that the U.S. is fully engaged in a policy which completely distorts the political scenario in Nicaragua. In so doing, the right of people to choose their own form of government is completely denied.

Thus, the change we are witnessing in U.S. policy does not allow solidarity groups to move on to other battles, but rather, challenges us to develop new ways to combat the same old policy. In this tenth year of struggle, solidarity and friendship, Nicaragua needs our support more than ever. We must rise to the occasion, deploy our creativity and our organizing skills and continue to assert that the people of Nicaragua have the right to build their own society with the government of their choosing.

-Kathy Simmonds

The Committee on US-Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) is a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy (CRESP), based at Cornell University. We work in Ithaca and the surrounding area to promote greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. We are particularly concerned with the role of the United States in influencing the social, political and economic conditions of the region.

The CUSLAR Newsletter is published bi-monthly and provides members and other concerned individuals with the opportunity to present information and analysis on topics relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean. The positions of the authors do not necessarily reflect the positions of CUSLAR as an organization. The CUSLAR Newsletter committee cooperates with authors to reach mutually acceptable editorial decisions. If you are interested in writing for the Newsletter or working on the committee, please call the CUSLAR office at (607) 255-7293. We welcome your suggestions and letters to the editors.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN NICARAGUA

Jose Lobo

There are two striking characteristics of the opposition in Nicaragua. One is the large number of parties, factions, and ever-changing alliances which compose it. The other is its inability to mount a credible challenge to the ruling FSLN.

At last count there were 17 political organizations in Nicaragua, including the FSLN. The activity of the opposition parties has been expressed primarily through two main blocks. One opposition bloc is composed of the six parties that participated in the 1984 elections: the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), the Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC), the Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCdeN), the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) and the Marxist Leninist Popular Action Movement (MAP-ML). These parties constituted the “civic opposition” which remained a relatively cohesive group until 1987. Two factors brought these programmatically different parties into a coalition. One: having won seats in the National Assembly they were in a position to confront the Sandinistas in a parliamentary manner, frequently as a voting bloc (although by no means always unanimously). Two: their juxtaposition to those parties which were led by the Coordinadora Democratica and which boycotted the 1984 elections gave these “civic opposition” parties an appearance of unity that overshadowed their political differences.

The other opposition bloc is the Coordinadora, a right-wing coalition with close ties both to the U.S. Embassy and the counter-revolution. Led by the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (Cosep), but also containing three different political parties — the Social Christian Party (PSC), the Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC), and the Social Democratic Party (PSD) — as well as two trade unions — the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN) and the Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CUS) — the Coordinadora has been unwilling to make use of the political opportunities in Nicaragua. As described by Tony Jenkins (Managua corres-

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both the cause and the coherence of the opposition. Mauricio Diaz, leader of the PPSC, recently described the problem: “We (the opposition parties) cannot find a common platform. Our party has good relations with the Liberals, but it's almost impossible to arrive at programmatic agreements with factions and tendencies in which there is extraordinary competetiveness and personalism” (2)

The opposition’s weakness also stems from its failure to build the necessary party structures and programs to challenge the FSLN either electorally or ideologically. As the 1980 elections rapidly approach, almost all the opposition parties are scrambling to obtain international financial and political support, again ignoring the fact that it is internal organization and not simply foreign dollars that bring a party to power. Erick Ramirez, Secretary-General of the PSC, recently declared that most opposition parties cannot field enough members to serve as polling station observers as called for by the Electoral Law. The Nicaraguan journalist Edwin Saballos has pointed out in Pensamiento Proprio, “the groups (of opposition) have given priority to confronting Sandinismo, losing the tactical perspective that organizing a base of support is necessary in order to aspire to take power.” (3)

Brief Profiles of the Opposition Parties

Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC)

The PPSC was formed in 1976 when it split off from the PSC. Its members went to the National Assembly Elections in 1984 presenting themselves as “the Christian Democrats of the Left” and won six seats. They are members of the “civic opposition” and the “group of 14”. Central to their political analysis is their belief that “Sandinismo” does not really provide a revolutionary or a modernizing government, it is just (what has been) a traditional form in the political history of Nicaragua.” (4) The PPSC is claiming to offer “a modern alternative of the Nicaraguan state; democratization and separation of the interests among the army, the government, and the Party.” (5)

Independent Liberal Party (PLI)

The PLI was formed in 1944 as a breakaway from Somoza’s National Liberal Party, some members of which were opposed to the reelection of Somoza. After the Sandinistas came to power the PLI participated in the Popular Revolutionary Front, a group of parties in basic agreement with the Revolution’s principles and its leader, Virgilio Godoy, served as Minister of Labor until February 1984. According to a report published by the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), “when Godoy resigned from the government (still on good terms with the FSLN leadership by his own report), the PLI withdrew from the “Revolutionary Front” alliance and adopted a more conservative position vis-a-vis the Sandinista’s revolutionary projects.” (6) As a result of this increasingly confrontational stand, a faction of the PLI broke away at the beginning of 1988 and formed the PLIUN (the Independent Liberal Party of National Unity). The essential difference between the two is that the PLIUN accepts the legitimacy of the Sandinista Government while the PLI does not. Although it withdrew its presidential candidate at the last minute, the PLI went to the 1984 elections and won nine seats in the National Assembly. The PLI has participated in both the the “civic opposition” and the “group of 14”. Currently, the PLI presents itself as the middle path between the two extremes: while they see the Contras as an arm of U.S. policy, they also maintain that “neither is the militarist project of the Frente Sandinista a viable option.” (7)
The Democratic Conservative Party

The PCD was formed in 1979 as a derivative of the historic Conservative Party. They went to the elections in 1984 and won 14 seats in the National Assembly and have since participated in both the “civic opposition” and the “group of 14”. Since 1984 the PCD has suffered from two major splits leading to the formation of several parties all claiming to be the rightful inheritors of the Democratic Conservative tradition. On May 16, 1989 the Consejo Nacional de Partidos — a body created by the Electoral Law to regulate the formation of political parties and settle disputes between parties) recognized the PCD as a legal party, but ruled that the party must hold internal elections to decide which of the factions will control the party. In addition, the CNPP also gave legal status to two other conservative parties, the Social Conservative Party and the Popular Conservative Alliance. The PCD’s leadership accepts the legitimacy of the Government although it opposes most of the Sandinista policies, especially on economic matters.

Social Christian Party (PSC)

The PSC was formed in 1956 as a breakaway from the Conservative Party. A part of the Coordinadora since its formation, it boycotted the 1984 elections. The PSC represents the “Christian Democratic” position in Nicaragua and maintains that as presently structured, the Governmental and Electoral system does not permit opposition parties to compete with the FSLN on an equal footing. The PSC’s platform includes a proposal for “participatory democracy...in which there would be truly free elections, with opportunity for all.” (8). As to the similarity among many of the PSC’s positions and those of the Contra leadership, Filiberto Sarría, one of the party’s leaders, declared that the “struggle of the RN (National Resistance), like that of the civilian parties, is confronting a common opponent, the FSLN...there could be some convergence among the proposals of the RN and those of the civilian parties for the democratization of this country.” (9)

Social Democratic Party (PSD)

The PSD was formed in August 1979 in opposition to the new revolutionary government. The PSD is closely linked with La Prensa and has been active in the Coordinadora since its inception. The PSD is the stereotypical party of the “old mentality” with close ties to both the U.S. embassy and the counter-revolution.

Central American Unity Party (PUCA)

The PUCA, founded in 1987, is a liberal-left party that advocates the reunification of the Central American nations. The PUCA belongs in the camp of the “loyal opposition,” those political forces which disagree with particular Sandinista positions. One of its leaders, Giovanni D’Cefalo, works as Chief Economist at the Ministry of Labor.

Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN)

The PSN was formed in 1944 as a traditional Moscow-line communist party. As such, their actual (continued on page 21)
Procedures and Timetable Set for Nicaraguan Elections

Elections for President, Vice-President, the National Assembly (Nicaragua’s legislative branch of Government), and city councils, previously scheduled for November 1990, will be held February 25, 1990, in accordance with the Peace Plan adopted by the five Central American presidents in February of this year. The Peace Plan calls for the immediate demobilization of the contra forces and a four-month electoral preparation period followed by six months of campaigning.

In April, Nicaragua’s National Assembly passed electoral and communications media laws in preparation for the general elections in agreement with the February peace accord.

The Electoral Timetable

The initial stage of the electoral process, that of preparation, organization, and mobilization of political parties, is taking place April 25 through August 24. During this time, political parties without legal status need to incorporate and register if they plan to participate in the elections.

Electoral Authorities

During the initial stage of the political process, the political parties were invited to submit their nominees for the Supreme Electoral Council (SEC). The function of the SEC is to organize and conduct the elections and serve as an arbiter of the claims and disputes presented by the political parties and the subordinate electoral bodies. The SEC supervises the electoral branch of government, common in Latin America. The electoral branch is independent of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

The SEC is composed of five members: two members from the same party as the nation’s president, two members selected from lists submitted by the opposition parties, and one eminent independent member.

The National Assembly recently confirmed Mariano Fiallos and Lionel Arguello of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Guillermo Selva of the Liberal Independent Party, Amin Sandino of the Conservative Democratic Party, and Rudolfo Sandino Arguello, a prominent attorney not affiliated with any political party, as members of the Supreme Electoral Council.

In addition to the Supreme Electoral Council, there will be nine Regional Electoral Councils (REC) comprised of a president and two members appointed by the SEC from lists presented by the political parties who have registered to participate in the elections. The Regional Electoral Councils (REC) will appoint the President and one member to serve on a voting board for each voting station in their region. A third member of the board will be proposed by the political parties.

Registration and Poll Watching

Each political party, or coalition of parties or popular associations, has a right to appoint poll watchers to SEC, REC, and each voting station during the registration process. Registration of voters will take place in the voting station closest to the residence of the voter. Members of the army will register in the boards closest to their assignments. Nicaraguans living temporarily abroad may register.

Who May Form a Political Party?

Citizens may form a political party with legal status by presenting a notarized document of incorporation to the Supreme Electoral Council that provides the name and emblem of the party, its principal officers, legal representatives, statutes and program, national boards, and at least nine provincial boards. All legally registered parties can field candidates.

The basic membership requirement for a party to qualify to register is 980 members. This will permit new parties to form and field candidates. By contrast, in other Central American countries, such as Costa Rica, parties are required to have a minimum membership of 3,000 and to have received five percent of the previous electoral vote.
Campaigning

Campaigning will take place from August 25 to February 21. During that time political parties will not need permits to organize public rallies for their candidates. Parties and citizens’ groups will be able to carry out their activities throughout the country. The use of government property or public offices by political parties for campaigning is prohibited.

Access to Media

From August 24 to February 21, The SEC will guarantee the political parties, or coalitions of parties that run candidates, the right to purchase a minimum of 45 minutes a day on both public television channels, and 45 minutes daily on each radio station owned by the government.

The time will be equally distributed among the candidates. Parties or coalitions may use the time allotted in daily increments or they can accrue time and use it on a weekly basis at their discretion. Political parties may contract with private broadcasters for additional time; however, these must guarantee a minimum of five minutes for each party or coalition candidate. Each party must pay for the costs of its television and radio programming. Broadcasters will present cost estimates of their rates to The SEC. The SEC will schedule the program times. All programs must be prepared in Nicaragua by Nicaraguans, unless special exceptions are granted by the SEC. Similar access to the press will be made available locally to candidates in the municipal elections.

Who Can Vote?

All Nicaraguan citizens 16 years of age or older have the right to vote. Nicaraguans who rose in arms against the Nicaraguan government and demobilized according to the terms of the February 14 peace accords are guaranteed the right to register, vote, and be elected to office. Nicaraguans temporarily abroad must return to Nicaragua to vote.

Campaign Financing

As in the 1984 elections, the Nicaraguan government will provide financing for the political campaigns. Fifty percent of these government-provided funds will be equally divided among all participating political candidates. The remaining fifty percent will be proportionately distributed in accordance with the percentage of votes obtained by each party in the 1984 elections. The law places no restrictions on fundraising within the country. Foreign donations for the electoral campaigns of all parties will be permitted.

Funds received from abroad will be administered by the Supreme Electoral Council. Fifty percent of the donations will go directly to the party candidate for whom they are sent and the remaining fifty percent will be used to finance non-partisan expenditures necessary for the administration of the elections, such as the printing of ballots. The elections will cost an estimated 30 million dollars.

Election Day Observers

On election day each political party, or coalition of parties that have registered candidates to run in the elections, may appoint official monitors to every polling station, to the Regional and Supreme Electoral Councils, and to all the voting computation stations.

The poll watchers have the right to observe all stages of the electoral process and the computation of votes. They have the right to record and file challenges to the voting and counting procedures. The Government of Nicaragua has formally requested that the United Nations and the Organization of American States continue to send international observers to the country during the entire electoral period, which began April 25, to guarantee accurate and objective coverage of the process and the final election results.

-From the Nicaraguan Update Volume 11, No.3
WOMEN IN THE NEW NICARAGUA: TEN YEARS OF TRIUMPHS AND FRUSTRATIONS

The situation of women in Nicaragua today reflects the dilemma of revolutions everywhere—it is easier to legislate reform than it is to effect social change. With the Sandinista Revolution under constant attack, one step backward often follows two steps forward.

Women in the FSLN

Commitment to women’s liberation in the countryside and in the city has always been a major commitment of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Two women FSLN comandantes currently hold major government posts: Dora María Téllez is Minister for Health, and Doris Tijerino is chief of the Sandinista Police.

MOMLAE (Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women’s Movement, formerly AMNLAE) is the biggest and best known of various governmental and non-governmental agencies working throughout the country on women’s concerns. MOMLAE has organized a legal office for women and runs women’s centers throughout the country. Local needs and interests determine programs and activities, which can range from training in traditional occupations such as sewing and cooking to practical training in fields not traditionally open to women. Sex education and psychological counseling are also offered.

Feminist issues have reached into the hinterlands. A three-day workshop, called by members of a women’s cooperative in a remote spot in central Nicaragua, was recently held to discuss “what it means to be a woman”. These women, who are learning carpentry and cabinetmaking, are not alone. Many of their sisters are running agricultural cooperatives by themselves. Others are defending their right to work alongside men in occupations never open to them before.

Breaking an Image

Most important of all, and least quantifiable, the Revolution has begun to break the stereotype of the subservient woman whose only mission is to serve menfolk. A woman domestic employee recently interviewed spoke for many women when she described the difference in her life since the Revolution. She has been able to obtain a divorce; before, she had no right to unilaterally seek divorce, even though her husband beat her and deprived her of

International Women’s Day, Managua 1988
any sense of human worth. She still works very hard—the economic pinch may be even worse than before—but now lives with a man she can truly call "compañero", holds her head high, and speaks with new confidence.

Change at a Snail’s Pace

Nonetheless, a dedicated trade unionist of the directorate of a mostly female union commented privately that he saw no need for a feminist movement, and that feminism only promoted divisiveness. And a professional woman married to an ardent Sandinista also speaks for many when she says that her husband is "is a revolutionary only from the front door out". Relations between the sexes demonstrate the snail’s pace of social and cultural change. Machismo dies hard.

There seems to be some swing back from an initial rash of separation, divorce, and reluctance of women to marry. Many couples could not stand the inevitable and unaccustomed pressures of having both husband and wife work full time outside the home. Many relationships broke up because the man could not tolerate "his woman’s" commitment to job, study, or political activity. Many women said they would never marry.

Now some of those women are getting married, perhaps revealing the same kind of relaxation that has permitted a return to the unconstitutional commercialization of the female body. Beauty contests have been restored and bathing beauties in provocative poses now frequently adorn the front pages of Nicaraguan papers.

Some protest appeared in the press following the commercially sponsored Miss Masa contest last year, but little followed the recent Miss Juventud pageant, designed to stimulate army enlistment. A few women said privately that they “took it as a personal insult”, but they were a minority. Ironically, the Miss Juventud winner happens to be the daughter of a prominent feminist promoter of sex education.

Unresolved Issues

There is general recognition that a socially-oriented revolution does not automatically guarantee the dignity of women. Single mothers are legion, and women flock to local Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) with complaints of mistreatment. Ten years after the triumph they did so much to bring about, and despite the advances mentioned, women in Nicaragua continue to be victims of abuse at home and at work.

In an interview in Pensamiento Propio (March 1989), Minister of Health Dora María Téllez spoke of the “500 years of vertical relations” which cannot be resolved in a decade. “But,” she went on, “you can get to the point where women and society stop thinking of [abuse of women] as normal”. She suggested that advances could be made more quickly once the war ends and “we can dedicate ourselves to seeing to finer things”.

Comandante Carlos Núñez, head of the National Assembly, admitted in a published interview that “abortion, discriminatory workplace practices, and abuse and rape” still need to be resolved legislatively. “We have gotten to the point of convincing ourselves that it is easier to fight, to pull a trigger, than to change ideas”. He likened the fight against machismo to the fight against the dictatorship, a task of years, but added that the big advantage is that the state, which formerly oppresses men and women, “is today in our hands; it is now our weapon”.

Despite their demonstrable commitment to many women’s issues, the [all male] directorate of the FSLN has an uneasy relationship with feminism. This was reflected in this year’s International Women’s Day celebration. At one point, President Daniel Ortega publicly chided MOMLAE activists for promoting a slogan derived from one referring to the peace accord reforms: “Compromise Without Surrender: in the Country and in the Home”. The president questioned the implication that men are women’s enemies.

A Thorny Problem

The question of reproductive rights reflects both the advances and the retreats of feminism in Nicaragua. Understandably and predictably, the abortion issue is extremely sensitive, with most organized groups backing off from taking a stand. This is compounded by the fact that revolutionary Christians form an important component of the FSLN and often oppose abortion on religious grounds. In 1985 a debate on abortion initiated by feminists was shelved, apparently because of the explosive potential of the contradictory tendencies within the FSLN. In addition, some of the opposition to abortion may reflect unwillingness to add another bone of contention to the government’s relationship with the Catholic hierarchy.

(continued on page 20)
Hasta que seamos libres

Ríos me atraviesan,
montañas horadan mi cuerpo
y la geografía de este país
va tomando forma in mí,
haciéndome lagos, brechas y quebradas,
que me está abriendo como un surco,
llenándome de ganas de vivir
para verlo libre, hermoso,
pleno de sonrisas.

Quiero explotar de amor
y que mis charneles acaben con los opresores
cantar con voces que revienten mis poros
y que mi canto se contagie;
que todos nos enfermemos de amor,
de deseos de justicia,
que todos nos enfermemos de amor,
de deseos de justicia, que todos empuñemos el
corazón
sin miedo de que no resista
porque un corazón tan grande como el nuestro
resiste las más crueles torturas
y nada aplaca su amor devastador
y de latido en latido
va creciendo,
más fuerte,
más fuerte,
más fuerte,
ensordeciendo al enemigo
que lo oye brotar de todas las paredes,
lo ve brillar en todas las miradas
lo va viendo acercarse
con el empuje de una marca gigante
en cada mañana en que el pueblo se levanta
trabajar en tierras que no le pertenecen,
en cada alarido de los padres que perrieron a sus
hijos,
en cada mano que se una a otra mano que sufre.

II.
Entonces,
iremos a despertar a nuestros muertos
con la vida que ellos nos legaron
y todos juntos cantaremos
mientras conciertos de pájaros
repitan nuestro mensaje
en todos
los confines
de América.

-Giaconda Belli
Until We're Free

Rivers run through me
mountains bore into my body
and the geography of this country
begins forming in me
turning me into lakes, chasms, ravines
earth for sowing love
opening like a furrow
filling me with longing to live
to see it free, beautiful,
full of smiles.

I want to explode with love
and finish off my oppressors with my guts
to sing with voices that burst through my pores
and let my song be contagious;
let's all get sick with love,
with longings for justice,
let's all brandish our heart
never fearing that it will burst
for a heart the size of ours
resists the cruelest tortures
and nothing can placate its devastating love
which grows
beat by beat
stronger,
stronger,
stronger,
deafening the enemy
who hears it break through all the walls
sees it shine in every eye
sees it coming closer
with the force of a great tide
in every morning when the people arise
to work on lands that don't belong to them,
in every wail of parents who have lost their sons,
in every hand that unites with another hand that suffers.

II.
And then,
we'll go wake our dead with the life they bequeathed us
and one and all we'll sing
while concerts of birds
repeat our message
throughout
the length and breath
of America.

-Giaconda Belli

Giaconda Belli is one of Nicaragua's most beloved writers. She is often referred to as "la Poeta" because of her poetry which speaks of the experience of the revolution.
THE PEASANTRY AND AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT IN NICARAGUA

During the ten years that have passed since the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution, the Sandinista strategy for agricultural development has undergone a series of shifts in direction, reflecting the changing importance of certain sectors of Nicaragua’s rural population within that strategy. In addition, these ten years have witnessed an ongoing debate among Nicaraguan planners over the role of the peasantry in agricultural development, the relative importance of food and exports, the most appropriate forms of productive organization, and over agrarian policy in general, discussions which are just as lively today as they were in 1979.

Initial Agrarian Policies: Land Distribution, Marketing, and Credit

In 1979, the new revolutionary government inherited an inegalitarian agrarian structure which had resulted from an extreme focus on agroexport production, a development process which had marginalized the majority of small farmers and even the medium-sized landed bourgeoisie. Thus, to consolidate the support of the rural population after the triumph in 1979, the new government’s initial plan of action included the development of an agrarian reform to meet the needs of the peasantry, within the framework of a mixed economy in which the medium-sized bourgeois landowners would maintain a significant amount of the country’s land and productive capacity.

During an initial period after the triumph (1979-1981), the government dedicated its efforts to organize the state agricultural holdings which originated from the lands confiscated from Somoza and his associates immediately following the takeover. Fearing a disruption of essential agroexport production, the government was reluctant to divide up the confiscated lands and give them to individual farmers. Thus, rather than distribute land, the Sandinistas initially attempted to improve the conditions of the peasantry through
generous credit policies and ceilings on land rents, security against displacement, improved literacy and health care, and organizational support for the newly-formed cooperatives. Concerned with the preservation of a sufficient harvest labor force, the government also focused its efforts on improving working conditions for the rural laborers and helped strengthen the ATC (the Rural Workers’ Association). Thus, while initial agrarian policy strongly defended the interests of rural labor, it unfortunately left the majority of the peasantry and semi-proletariat untouched.

However, in 1981, a series of land invasions and the formation of a new producers’ organization, UNAG, provoked a debate among Sandinista planners over the role of the peasantry, which until then, had been viewed as a rural proletariat in formation. This discussion also brought out disagreements over the role of the private sector and private property, over the “path” toward socialism in the mixed economy, and about the type of production units that should be created through an agrarian reform — individual small farms or cooperatives.

As a consequence of this discussion, in 1981, an agrarian reform law was announced, which attempted to eliminate the exploitative relationships with the peasantry (such as debt peonage and tenant labor) and to take advantage of idle land by turning it over to those who would work it. However, the agrarian reform during this period again failed to assist many peasant families due primarily to the type of agricultural development strategy promoted by MIDINRA, the Ministry of Agriculture during this period. Despite opposition from the “campesinista” (peasant-oriented) faction within the ministry, the predominant “desarrollista” (modernizationist) faction encouraged prioritizing investments in the state sector and placed an emphasis on capital intensive technology, large production units, and projects that generated a return in the medium- or long-term. Furthermore, the agrarian ministry continued to go to great lengths to meet the demands of the agrarian bourgeoisie, given their political and economic importance, again despite debates over the wisdom of doing so. For example, the 1981 reform law provided strict lower limits on the size of landholdings that might be subject to expropriation for distribution, allowing private landowners of up to 800 acres (1600 acres in the interior regions) to exploit as much or as little of the land as they saw fit, despite the presence of thousands of landless peasants who might utilize the land more effectively. To a lesser degree, the state looked after the needs of cooperative productive sector, giving preferential treatment to the Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives (CAS), those owned and operated collectively, in the distribution of land and credit. Meanwhile, the individual peasant found himself last in line in the distribution of most resources.

Alongside the agrarian reform and credit policies, the government set up a system of guaranteed producer prices and established ENABAS, a national foodstuffs enterprise, to control the marketing of basic grains in an effort both to distribute food more equitably throughout the country, through “secure channels,” and to break the traditional exploitation of peasants by merchant middlemen. Under this system, peasant basic grains producers were obliged to sell their produce to the state in return for guaranteed access to low-cost credit and cheap production inputs. However, many producers began to resent being forced to sell their crops to the government, particularly when inflation and speculation generated an illegal black market that offered them much more attractive prices. Furthermore, many peasants were left without access to certain essential supplies and services due to the fact that state intervention into rural marketing had displaced many merchants without replacing the important services that these had traditionally provided, such as access to timely credit and production inputs and accessible buyers for their produce. As inflation took off in 1985, the cost of peasants’ consumer goods and production inputs skyrocketed; yet the prices they received for the the corn and beans they produced failed to increase correspondingly. Thus, rural/urban terms of trade were putting an ever-tightening stranglerhold on peasant incomes.
1984-85: Policy Adjustments Respond to Peasant Demands

During 1984 and 1985, as problems and contradictions emerged with some of the original agrarian policies, growing peasant discontent began to surface in various forms. The November 1984 election results demonstrated significant drops in support for the Sandinistas in many rural areas that had traditionally been important FSLN strongholds, indicating a need for a policy adjustment. Even more worrisome was the fact that peasants in more isolated areas of the country, who were feeling the effects of the economic crisis and the military draft, but had little access to the Revolution’s services, were becoming increasingly susceptible to contra propaganda, and between 1982 and 1984, the contra’s base of support among the peasants tripled. The dissatisfaction became even more apparent when in May 1985 UNAG organized demonstrations and land invasions in Masaya.

Simultaneously, UNAG was consolidating and expanding its constituency and improving its collective bargaining strength, firmly establishing its role as representative of the rural producers. These factors combined to maximize UNAG’s influence, and in 1985 and 1986, the organization succeeded in pressuring the government into making a series of policy adjustments, most importantly, an acceleration of agrarian reform distribution to individual peasants rather than solely to cooperatives, an effort to decrease the size of and over-emphasis on the state sector, and the liberalization of the marketing of basic grains. Each of these policy adjustments were indicative of an important “shift” in the focus of the agricultural policy away from the state and other large-scale enterprises toward the small and medium landholding sector, representing the government’s effort to rebuild the alliance with the peasantry.

Although a stimulus to production, the liberalization of the market brought the speculative middleman back into the picture, creating the possibilities that prices, both of food in the cities and of peasant goods, would dramatically increase. In this context, the tiendas campesinas, or peasant stores, assumed increasing importance during 1987 and 1988 and appeared to represent one of the best examples of direct participation of the peasantry in in procurement of basic grains, distribution of production inputs, marketing, and overall economic decision-making. Although the project initially lacked support from state institutions such as PROAGRO, MIDINRA, and ENABAS, during 1987 the tiendas began gaining increasing recognition from state institutions as the principal rural supply channel, another reflection of the overall “shift” toward the peasantry. Moreover, they represented yet another expression of the growing capacity for management and participation on the part of the peasantry in an area which was previously reserved for either the state or private merchants.

The growing importance of the small and medium agricultural sector in Nicaraguan agriculture has become even more evident in the 1988 adjustments in the leadership of the Agrarian Reform Division, particularly the formation of an Office of Peasant Promotion, as well as in the overall reorganization of the state, which has provided a greater opening for peasant participation in government decisions and a larger allocation of resources to that sector. The shift can also be seen in the reappearance of the National Crop Commissions in which the particular problems of each product are analyzed by representatives of the peasantry (UNAG), the agrarian bourgeoisie, and the various state agencies (MIDINRA, the Central Bank, the Ministry of the Economy, etc).

The 1988-89 Economic Crisis: Renewed Dilemmas and Contradictions

Nevertheless, this apparent “shift” in agricultural focus has not been free from contradictions and continued tensions between the peasantry and revolutionary agrarian strategy, particularly in the area of state control over marketing, inputs, and technical assistance. In addition, the recent stabilization efforts to combat the severe economic crisis
(36,000% inflation in 1988), which includes a “rationalization” of prices, credit, and resource allocation, and prioritization of exports to generate foreign exchange, have generated new tensions and contradictions with the peasant sector, particularly poorer basic grains producers.

For example, in 1987 MIDINRA launched a project known as the “territorial organization of production.” This effort was designed to convert the state enterprises into providers of services to the peasantry within a particular territory, a laudable goal; however, it did not achieve the desired results due to the fact that, in many cases, these state enterprises continue prioritizing their own profitability rather than attending to the needs of the producers. Recognizing the inadequacies of this strategy, in 1989 the state began promoting what is know as Peasant Development Centers (CDCs), local and zonal centers which are designed decentralized control over the distribution of credit, inputs, and technical assistance as well as procurement and marketing of basic grains. Whereas the initial experiment in Quilali, out of which the CDC project was derived, was a locally-inspired development initiative managed by the campesinos themselves, there is some concern among UNAG officials, and even some “campesinistas” in MIDINRA, that the CDC project may be becoming a state-controlled, top-down effort within which the role for peasant participation, through UNAG or otherwise, is not clearly established. Moreover, there are many who believe that the CDCs replicate the previous, autonomous efforts by UNAG at resolving marketing and distribution problems through the tiendas campesinas.

Finally, since February 1988, in an effort to get inflation under control and win the “war against the economy,” the government began a series of stabilization, “shock” measures which have had a serious impact on the peasantry. It must be emphasized that the economic crisis of 1988 was the culmination and combination of a variety of economic problems that had been accumulating for years, the first and foremost being the war, which inflicted a terrible cost in terms of production and productivity losses and loss of life, and resulted in big government spending on defense, which fueled inflation. Other factors which added to the economic crisis were the U.S. economic embargo, unfavorable world prices for Nicaragua’s exports, and contradictory economic policymaking on the part of the Sandinistas. Thus, in February 1988, June 1988, and February 1989, the government implemented a series of economic policy packages which included sharp reductions in government expenditures, including subsidies on imported production inputs and credit for producers and food and transportation for urban dwellers. In addition, the state completely liberalized the market in an effort to rationalize prices and resource distribution.

While the economic rationale behind such policies is clear, the impact on the small farmers during the 1988/89 harvest cycle was severe, particularly in the area of credit, whose interest rates, now indexed to inflation, made it almost inaccessible to many smallholding peasants. Furthermore, the removal of guaranteed prices proved to have an unanticipated negative effect when an overabundance of production of corn and beans, in combination with decreasing demand in the cities, drove the price of basic grains down, gravely affecting the incomes of the small grain producers. Interestingly, the agricultural sectors that seemed to benefit the most from the new policies were the large, private agroexporters, and many in the government defended the new prioritization of exports in the name of increasing foreign exchange earnings.

Nonetheless, ten years into the Revolution, the Sandinista government continues to demonstrate its flexibility and pragmatism in moderating and adjusting its agrarian policies to meet the demands of the peasantry, as seen in last April’s “softening” of the stabilization measures, when an upper limit was placed on interest rates and guaranteed producer prices were reestablished, both of which are to be renegotiated periodically with the National Producer Associations. In addition, some government subsidies were reinitiated, although primarily for the agroexporters, relieving some of the producers’ uncertainties. Apparently, the current debate over agrarian policy in Nicaragua is as lively as ever, difficult decisions lie ahead, and the future remains uncertain.

In summary, a review of Nicaragua’s agrarian policy record at ten years illustrates that, despite the tensions, there is an ongoing commitment to a mixed economy in which the needs of the peasantry are recognized and addressed and their participation in economic decisionmaking encouraged, contributions for which Nicaragua can be singled out among its neighbors in the region, if not in the hemisphere.

-María Verónica Frenkel
Nicaragua: The Year Ahead

Contra Aid

As we reported in the last issue of the CUSLAR Newsletter (April 1989), on April 13, Congress passed yet another aid package for the contras. At a total of $66.6 million, the package virtually sailed through both houses, amidst plenty of mutual back-patting between members of Congress for their display of bipartisan cooperation. Local representative Matt McHugh went on the record in support of the bill because “for the first time in eight years, it enjoys the bipartisan support of both the administration and a large majority in Congress of both Republicans and Democrats.”

It is important to note that this bipartisan package was passed with a promise from the Administration that the contras would not engage in offensive military actions or human rights abuses. Since the April 13 vote however, contra activity has reportedly been on the rise, thus violating the conditions of the agreement. (See box below, Summary of Contra attacks). Their will be an opportunity to cut off the aid in November, when four congressional committees (House and Senate Appropriations, House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations) must approve the continuation of aid. Write letters to your representatives pointing out these contra atrocities and demanding a cut off aid.

End the Embargo

On April 21, President Bush renewed the trade embargo that the U.S. has held against Nicaragua since May of 1985. Upholding the embargo requires renewing a “state of emergency” with respect to Nicaragua. As Bush asserted in the official renewal letter which is sent to Congress, “If the Nicaraguan emergency were allowed to lapse, the present Nicaraguan trade controls would also lapse, impairing our government’s ability to apply economic pressure on the Sandinista government and reducing the effectiveness of our support for the forces of the democratic resistance in Nicaragua.”

Efforts to push for a lifting of the trade embargo continue. Write letters to Congress urging them to support HR 418, which calls for an end to the trade embargo. Also, material aid efforts directly counter the trade embargo (See Resources page 23 to find out where you can contribute).

Covert Operations

During July, the House Intelligence Committee will be debating the issue of covert funding to influence the Nicaraguan elections. $2 million in overt funding has already been received by opposition political parties through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and another $5 million may be sent. Also, an unspecified amount has already been approved by Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to be disbursed by the CIA. A vote of the floor of the House of Representatives may come as early as August 4th, or it may be postponed until after the summer recess. In any event, it is important to contact representatives to urge them to support a ban on the sending of covert funds to Nicaragua in this period before the February elections.

Important numbers and addresses to voice your opposition to U.S. Policy in Latin America:

Congressional Switchboard:
(202) 224-3121

The Honorable
US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable
US Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515
El Salvador

As the annual Foreign Authorizations bill* got worked out in Congress over the past month, Representative Matt McHugh offered an amendment regarding El Salvador which surprised many in Washington and here in his local district. Calling for a full Congressional review and reprogramming procedure (i.e. new process for release of aid), the amendment sought to restore some of Congress' power in the oversight of disbursement of military aid to the Salvadoran army. Bush threatened to veto the entire Authorizations bill if it passed. Unfortunately, the amendment got only 185 votes; a good showing, but not enough to pass. It is recommended that McHugh get letters of appreciation for his efforts and for raising the issue of El Salvador in the Congress. Now the actual dollars and cents of foreign aid will be hashed out in the Senate and House Foreign Aid Appropriations subcommittees and then to the floor for full votes. This gives the grassroots another opportunity to input on the actual amount of aid to be given. Write letters to your representatives asking them to push for a cut in aid to El Salvador.

* basically how the general conditions are placed on aid (for example, no police aid, yes monies for judicial reform, etc.) and where the process for disbursing aid is determined

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**Summary of Contra Attacks After April 13, 1989**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>Southern Zelaya</td>
<td>30 contra attacked town, injuring one person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>Boaco, Boaco</td>
<td>A 28 year old man was kidnapped by the contra but escaped later in the same day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Rama, Southern Zelaya</td>
<td>Contras kidnapped a farmer and raped his 17 year old sister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Cacao, Jinotega</td>
<td>Contras attacked Nicaragua's largest hydroelectric plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Cuatro Esquinas, Jinotega</td>
<td>A contra mine destroyed a government truck and killed two government employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Waslala, Matagalpa</td>
<td>120 contras attacked this town of 5,000 inhabitants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>Matayagual, Chontales</td>
<td>Contras kidnapped a Swedish and a Nicaraguan geologist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Kilile, Chontales</td>
<td>Nine contras kidnapped seven men from a party and later killed one of them. Two others survived being bayoneted in the throat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Via Nazaret, Matagalpa</td>
<td>Five contras interrupted a Mother's day celebration and kidnapped four men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>El Colorado, Southern Atlantico</td>
<td>20 contras surrounded a baseball field and attacked a game in progress, wounding three civilians and kidnapping 15 others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Rio Blanco, Matagalpa</td>
<td>Six contras kidnapped a Ministry of the Interior employee from his home and later tortured and assassinated him. His wife witnessed the abduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Mulukuku, Matagalpa</td>
<td>Contras kidnapped two unarmed deserters from the Nicaraguan army and killed one for attempting to escape. The second successfully escaped.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 10 Amerisque, Chontales...Four contras abducted two brothers from their home and assassinated them. The father witnessed the abduction.

May 7 Matiguas, Matagalpa...20 contras attacked the La Brasilia farming cooperative, killing one man and wounding three others.

April 21 Boaco, Boaco...Eight contras assassinated a 25 year old farmer. His mother witnessed the attack.

April 13 Muluku, Matagalpa...Contras kidnapped two brothers from their home at night and later assassinated one of them. The father witnessed the abductions.

Information from the Witness for Peace Hotline. To get the most recent reports on contra activity in Nicaragua call the hotline at (202) 797-1531.

(continued from page 11)

The issue has not died, however. The last year has seen frequent commentary in the press, and the subject continues to provoke passionate polemics on both sides. A round table on abortion at the 1987 National Conference on Health Sciences ended with a long and tempestuous question and answer session. At the following conference, in November 1988, a new and exhaustive study was presented documenting the high death rate and exorbitant cost of hospital treatment for women who have resorted to illegal abortion. Unsafe abortions kill six times more women than do traffic accidents. This study received considerable publicity in the national media.

Dora María Téllez, when asked her position of abortion, said the first objective must be to avoid unwanted pregnancy. She continued: "I'm not a defender of abortion, but I don't consider it a crime, nor a method of birth control."

Sex education is being requested at all levels. A recent article in the magazine Envió referred to what it called a dramatic shift, claiming that many women do not want to have large families. A representative of the Nicaraguan Institute of Women was quoted as saying: "...reducing family size and sharing domestic work, ...we women can fully exercise our rights, train ourselves, work, and develop ourselves integrally, as is the aim of our revolution." Unfortunately, contraceptives—though cheap when available—frequently run out in government clinics.

Still, many revolutionaries, including President Daniel Ortega, are outspoken in defense of large families, arguing that the country has fewer than 3.5 million people. There is a complex tension between the issues of reproductive freedom and population control. After decades of forced sterilization and other schemes imposed by the rich industrialized countries, Third World nationalists are deeply suspicious of Malthusian ideologies from abroad.

Not Paradise, but...

Despite disappointments and setbacks, the Revolution has brought remarkable changes to the lives of Nicaraguan women. The improvement in women's lives is seen in every area, from job opportunities to legal status and political clout. The struggle continues, of course, with inevitable backsliding; but there is reason to face the future with hope.

-Janet Hastings

From THROUGH OUR EYES, May 1989 bulletin of CUSCLIN (Committee of U. S. Citizens Living in Nicaragua)
positions have been on both the left and the right of the political spectrum in Nicaragua at different times in their history. They won two seats in the National Assembly in the 1984 elections and have been active in both the “civic opposition” and the “group of 14”. Since the 1984 elections, the PSN has been moving steadily to the right. While the PSN still has some militant working-class cadre, the Party has recently removed Domingo Sanchez, its long-time trade union leader and 1984 presidential candidate, from his leadership position in the Party. The unstated reason for this change is his criticism of the increasingly rightward movement of the Party.

Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCdeN)
The PCdeN was formed in 1971 as a left-wing split from the PSN. They participated in the 1984 elections and won two seats in the National Assembly from which they have been active in both the civic opposition” and the “group of 14”. Like the PSN, the PCdeN has been moving to the right since the 1984 elections. While they criticized the FSLN as “petty-bourgeois reformers” during the 1984 electoral campaign, they recently participated in a meeting in Guatemala with those Contra leaders most closely associated with Somocismo.

Marxist-Leninist Movement for Popular Action (MAP-ML)
The MAP-ML was formed in 1972. Unlike the PSN and the PCdeN, the MAP-ML has remained consistent in its leftist opposition program. They participated in the 1984 elections and won two seats. Their support stems from their active agitation at the factory level through their affiliation union, the Workers’ Front (FD). This activity gives the party a more important role in the national debate than its numerically small membership would indicate. The MAP-ML opposes the mixed economy as a concession to the bourgeoisie and has called for “an absolute hegemony of the working class at the political level.” The Party has also consistently called on its members to join in the defense effort.

Revolutionary Unity Movement (MUR)
The MUR is a very small party made up of dissidents from the MAP-ML, the PRT, and the FSLN. The party (formed last May) aims to bring together all those “revolutionary Marxists” dissatisfied with the Revolution’s course and the programs of other leftist parties.

Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT)
The PRT is a very small Trotskyite party which was formed in 1987.

Notes
(2) Interview with Mauricio Diaz by Edwin Saballos. Region News from Managua, April 15, 1989. p.11.
(5) Ibid. p.41.
(7) Saballos y Herrera, p.38.
(8) Ibid. p.39.
(9) Ibid. p.39.

Volunteer with
peace brigades international
in Guatemala or El Salvador
(or here in the United States)
PBI volunteers come from many different countries, backgrounds and philosophies and religious perspectives. What they share is a strong commitment to nonviolence and a belief in the power of the Central American people to create a more peaceful and just society.

Potential Central America volunteers must speak Spanish, be at least 25 years old, and be willing to make at least a six month commitment to either the Guatemalan or El Salvador project. (The Guatemalan team is currently accepting some shorter-term volunteers). Volunteer training is held twice a year. Volunteers are also needed here in the U.S. to do organizing, outreach, and support work for the teams. The last part of the volunteer training is a week-long immersion to the work of the teams in Guatemala and El Salvador, and the organizing work in the U.S.

Volunteer Trainings - Summer 1989
Fri., August 4 - Weds., August 9th
in Philadelphia, PA
Fri., August 18 - Weds., August 23rd
in Seattle/Vashon, WA

PBI, 33 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210 (518) 434-4037.
To Learn More About Nicaragua...

There is an enormous amount of information available to learn about the history and to stay up to date on developments in Nicaragua. What follows is but a small sampling of some of the books, periodicals and videos. All resources are available at CUSLAR.

Nicaragua for Beginners, by Rius

This is an easily accessible book for people who have little previous knowledge of Nicaraguan history.

The Nicaragua Reader, edited by Peter Rosset and John Vandemeer

This collection of readings draws from such diverse sources as Ronald Reagan and Daniel Ortega, leaving readers to draw their own conclusion about U.S. policy toward Nicaragua and the true direction of the Sandinista revolution.

Sandino’s Daughter’s, by Margaret Randall

Pulling together interviews with a number of women who were involved in the efforts to overthrow Somoza and to build the new Nicaragua, this book paints a picture of the day to day life as well as the heroic involvement of women in revolutionary Nicaraguan society.

The Voz de Nicaragua

Weekly reports from the Nicaraguan radio station offering current information on topics ranging from the contra war to the economic crisis to diplomatic encounters.

Nicaraguan Perspectives

Quarterly magazine which features articles on developments in Nicaragua. Recent issues cover agrarian reform, impact of Hurricane Joan, popular education, etc..

Envío

Monthly journal which provides in-depth analyses of current issues facing Nicaraguan society, such as economic reform, atlantic coast autonomy.

The War in El Cedro

This video follows ten North American citizens in a trip to Nicaragua where they come to grips with their own conflicts about patriotism, American foreign policy, and memories of their own participation in war.

Environment Under Fire

This video looks at the effects of militarization on the ecosystems of Central America, with special attention paid to positive preservation efforts carried out in Nicaragua.

Ways to get there...

Join the Harvest! (or plant trees or build houses...) The Nicaragua Network organizes national brigades which travel to Nicaragua to help with the coffee harvest, reforestation efforts or in constructing housing. Brigades operate nearly year-round; focus depends on season. Approximate cost is $1100, including airfare, housing, food, etc. Call CUSLAR or the Nicaragua Network directly at (202) 223-2328.

Architects and Planners in support of Nicaragua (APSINCA) and TECNICA both run short and long term placements of people with technical skills. Volunteers cover own costs; organization helps with placement, visas, etc.

Contact APSINCA at: P.O. Box 11512, Topanga CA 90290 and TECNICA at 3254 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703.

Many organizations offer educational trips and delegations to Nicaragua, including the Central America Health Rights Network, the Center for Global Education, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Witness for Peace. Contact CUSLAR for more information to find out about trips that are currently being offered.

Committee on US–Latin American Relations
Ways to help...

Material aid is a significant part of solidarity with the Nicaraguan people. There are many different groups—local, regional and national—with as many different focuses which channel aid to Nicaragua.

MADRE- This organization sends aid specifically to benefit women and children. For more information contact MADRE at: 121 W. 27th Street, Room 301, NY, NY 10001.

Bikes Not Bombs- This group has done an incredible job at bringing bikes to Nicaragua especially for use by health care workers. They have also set up two repair shops in the country. To arrange for the donation of a bicycle or to give a monetary donation, contact: Bikes Not Bombs, c/o Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, P.O. Box 56538, Washington, D.C. 20011.

Oxfam- This international organization has been involved in successful development work and now runs a campaign called “Tools for Peace and Justice” which targets Central American countries including Nicaragua. They have also been involved in emergency relief assistance following Hurricane Joan. To make a donation contact: Oxfam, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116.

Quest for Peace- This group has overseen the shipping of hundreds of thousands of tons of material aid to Nicaragua. Money is always needed to help defray shipping costs. Send contributions to: Quest for Peace, c/o Quixote Center, P.O. Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Other things you can do to support Nicaragua...

Write letters to your local newspaper, Congressperson, the President... denouncing U.S. policy which continues to fund the contras and to meddle in the internal affairs of the Nicaraguan political scene. (See addresses and phone numbers of congress in the Legislative Action section of this newsletter).

Join a local committee...

CUSLAR continues to organize activities which educate people about U.S. policies toward Nicaragua and to collect material aid. We need your help. Weekly meetings are 5pm in the Commons Coffeehouse, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell. Or call the office (255-7293) if you are interested in doing tasks or in being on our phone tree which alerts people about rallies and legislative emergencies.

A local Friendship Project with the goal of becoming a Sister City with a town in Nicaragua is currently forming. If you would like to get involved, call CUSLAR for more info.

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Write to us and we'll send the CUSLAR Newsletter to your home or office. The Newsletter can keep you up to date on events and issues confronting Latin America, and the US role in the region. Your donation of $5 or more will provide a years subscription to the Newsletter. But producing this Newsletter costs us more, so please don't hesitate to give more.

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Note: A Cornell Campus Address will save us postage

JULY 1989
CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

**CUSLAR is now accepting contributions**
for our
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to take place early fall!!
Call the office to arrange for pick-up of your
unwanted belongings!!
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