
NICARAGUA

Counterrevolution by September?

by Gretchen Small

The second anniversary of the Sandinista seizure of power in Nicaragua on July 19, 1979 came this year in the midst of growing chaos. Rumors are everywhere of an imminent and "massive" purge of government and Sandinista ranks, while top political leaders—including Sandinistas—have fled the country, reportedly to organize the opposition for a new armed battle for power within the country.

For their part, the Sandinista leadership used the occasion of the anniversary celebrations to announce economic measures that significantly curtail the government's "mixed economy" strategy, by further nationalizing major firms and moving to expropriate idle landholdings of absentee landlords.

These two developments, combined with the economic pressure being applied from outside by the Haig State Department, will lead in short order to the outbreak of a new round of "Iranization" of the country.

The Sandinista government is now at the point of irrevocable rupture, and counterrevolution is on the agenda.

A September timetable for an outbreak of open hostilities within the country seems likely. But as things stand now, the collapse of the Jesuit-controlled radicals who have turned Nicaragua into a new Iran since 1979 will *not* lead to the establishment of strong national leadership which could begin a process of development in this country, still unrecovered from the devastation of the civil war two years ago. Rather a renewed, prolonged civil war looks increasingly likely, with *both* sides controlled by the same Jesuit and Socialist International apparatus.

Counterrevolution possible

Any civil war in Nicaragua this time around could also lead to international crisis, as both Sandinista and opposition forces call on their foreign friends for aid. With talk of possible Guatemalan military action against Belize if Great Britain grants the colony unilateral independence on Sept. 21, as has been announced, the Central American region as a whole is now set for a blowup in September.

The first major break in Sandinista ranks occurred just 10 days before the anniversary celebration. Deputy

Defense Minister Eden Pastora resigned his various government posts and left Nicaragua with Deputy Interior Minister José Valdivia and eight other Sandinistas. A Jesuit-trained Social Democrat, Pastora left a note saying he had gone to join the "liberation wars" elsewhere on the continent. The group reportedly went first to Panama—to the home of Panamanian Social Democrat and international mercenary Hugo Spadafora, who has been organizing a "Simón Bolívar Brigade" made up of Latin American guerrillas of all types to fight anywhere "requested" for the "liberation struggle."

Nicaraguan sources in Mexico, however, report that for the past year, Pastora has functioned as an "inside man" for the Nicaraguan forces around Alfonso Robelo, a social democratic business leader who quit his post in the junta after a meeting with the State Department approximately a year ago. Robelo has collaborated closely with the State Department since that time.

Rumors now abound that Pastora, who retains enormous popularity in Nicaragua and had been in charge of creating the new national militia, may be the figure who could head up an eventual counterrevolution. One opposition leader, Fernando Chamorro from the Nicaraguan Democratic Union, told reporters as he was arriving in Miami in late July that Pastora is a "nationalist, not a communist," and was "purged" by the Sandinistas. "When Pastora says that he is seeking the smell of gunpowder, we think he is referring to Nicaragua," Chamorro stated. "We hope to count on him in the ranks of the soldiers we are forming for the true liberation struggle in our country."

Chamorro is an ex-Sandinista who fought with Pastora, Valdivia, and Spadafora in the Socialist International-controlled "Southern Front" against Somoza, who sought political asylum in Costa Rica shortly after Pastora's dramatic resignation.

The Nicaraguan government was caught off guard by Pastora's resignation, at first forbidding any mention of his whereabouts or his activities after his departure. Even Sandinista radio stations were officially sanctioned for breaking the ban—the first known time in the past two years that censorship has been imposed on a Sandinista news source. After nearly a week, Pastora was officially "discharged" from the Sandinista army, and no mention of him was made during the anniversary celebrations—despite the fact that he would rightly have been a major speaker at the event.

Clearly nervous, the Sandinistas have announced a "war on bureaucracy" and reliance on "mass organizations" instead of bureaucrats to make policy in the country. "The same ones who called Sandino a bandit now call us mobs," Nicaraguan junta coordinator Daniel Ortega told the crowds at the celebration, "and here are the divine mobs of the revolution!"