

# Nicaragua—A Revolution Betrayed?

**“In Nicaragua real democracy is flourishing for the first time in the country’s history.”**

—U.S. church worker in Nicaragua

Based on numerous sources, international, personal, and most importantly the people of Nicaragua, life has greatly improved since the 1979 Sandinista revolution.

In the first two years after the overthrow of Somoza, the government carried out a national literacy campaign that lowered the illiteracy rate from 82% to less than 12%. This accomplishment earned Nicaragua UNESCO’s award for outstanding achievement. Over 1400 new schools have been built, mainly in the rural areas.

An emphasis on raising nutritional standards and providing low-cost health care has reduced infant mortality by over one-third, one of the most rapid declines on record in the world. This prompted the World Health Organization to choose Nicaragua as a model country for primary health care in 1982.

The land reform program, which has given land to nearly 60,000 previously landless families, is the only such workable program in Central America.

Broad popular support exists for the Nicaraguan government. Running against seven different parties in the November 1984 elections, Sandinista candidates won a substantial victory. The opposition parties received seats in the National Assembly in proportion with their share of the popular vote. Numerous international organizations concluded that the elections were conducted fairly, especially for a country at war.

## A Country at War

Because of the Contra war against the Nicaraguan people, many of the positive programs to help the poor have been stalled. The Contras continue to destroy health clinics, schools, day-care centers, and farms, and to terrorize the Nicaraguan people. The Contras, based in Honduras (because they have virtually no support in Nicaragua, not even among the opposition parties), regularly carry out indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including rape, kidnapping, mutilation and murder. Contra atrocities have been well documented by numerous international human rights groups.

Reagan and his supporters say the U.S. must fund the Contras because the Sandinistas have betrayed the revolution. Clearly, the only people betraying the revolution are the Contras themselves. The Republicans show the utmost hypocrisy by claiming to be supportive of the “original” goals of the 1979 Revolution: **the 1980 Republican Party platform listed a “rollback” of the Nicaraguan Revolution as one of its primary goals!**

## **The Contra War is a War Against Civilians Say No to Contras on Campus**



# You're paying for this war.

The overwhelming majority of people in America are opposed to the financing of an illegal war against the people of Nicaragua. This opposition has been particularly strong here in Massachusetts, where the entire Congressional delegation has opposed this "dirty little war." Nonetheless, the University of Massachusetts Republican Club has opted to bring a representative of the *contras* to speak on our campus this evening. Among students, faculty, staff and members of the community, opposition to this action has been overwhelming. We are outraged that a representative of a group responsible for thousands of cases of rape, torture, kidnapping, mutilation and murder will be allowed to use the facilities of our campus to attempt to whitewash these atrocities.

The campus right, which has claimed to be against the use of student funds for events that the majority of students do not support, has now done exactly that. Whether we like it or not, we are all being forced to pay for the visit of an international terrorist. We are all paying for this unprecedented event in a number of ways:

- The Undergraduate Student Senate Finance Committee, despite vociferous student opposition, agreed to grant the Republican Club \$295 of our money to help pay the transportation costs of the *contra* representative. Apparently the Student Senate feels that if the U.S. Congress can ignore the will of the American people and fund international terrorism in Nicaragua, then they can also ignore the will of the students of this campus and fund the visit of these terrorists.
- We are also paying for this horrible event through the use of the Student Union Ballroom, which is being made available for *contra* use, *free of charge!* Yet, it is all of us again who are paying for this through our tuition, our fees, and our state taxes.
- Finally, our own Chancellor Duffey has seen fit to support this visit by offering to provide security for the event, despite the *unanimous* condemnation of this action by the Graduate Student Senate. Chancellor Duffey has reportedly offered to provide five plainclothed police officers, and as many uniformed police as the Republicans request. Any idea what the overtime bill for that many police comes to? You might want to find out, because it's not coming out of Chancellor Duffey's pocket, it's coming out of ours!

Throughout this entire fiasco the Republicans have claimed that this is an issue of "free speech." But has the Right in this country really allowed for a climate which promotes the free exchange of ideas? The State Department refused to grant a visa to the wife of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega so that she could speak at Smith College this week. Is that free speech? And what about the issue of the *contras* themselves? Have they allowed the thousands of innocent Nicaraguans who they have brutally murdered the right of "free speech"?

If you oppose the inhumane actions of the *contra* terrorists operating out of Honduras, and the human and physical toll that they have inflicted on the peace-loving people of Nicaragua, please join us in a protest of the presence of Jorge Rosales on our campus this evening. Join the vigil to be held all day today outside of the Student Union, and listen to the speakers at the rally at 1 pm. Also join the entire community for a candlelight vigil by the Student Union from 5-7 pm. Please use this opportunity to express your outrage at the actions of the *contras* and the U.S. support of their brutal actions. Help us to bring a message of hope and peace to the people of Nicaragua.

**Teach-in on Nicaragua: The Price of the Contra War**  
**Tuesday, April 1, 7:00 pm, Commonwealth Room/Earthfoods**