THE CHE GUEVARA COLLECTION

This issue of the Che Guevara Collection is the second in a series of political and analytical documents from Latin American revolutionary organizations. With the objective of broadening awareness of these organizations' histories of struggle, contributing to the coordination of forces in Latin America and strengthening revolutionary solidarity with their struggles, Resistance Publications follows issue #1 (Argentine: Bourgeois Power and Revolutionary Power by the PRT's Marlo Roberto Sántucho) with this document by Nicaragua's Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN).

Today the mass movements of Central America and their vanguards are gaining force and launching offensive actions against US imperialism and the local dependent bourgeoisies. It is the need for an ever-growing movement in solidarity with their struggles that leads us to publish this document, which we hope will increase our understanding and support of the Nicaraguan Popular Sandinista Revolution.

"The sovereignty and freedom of a people are not to be discussed but rather to be defended with arms in hand." - A. C. Sandino

"La soberanía y la libertad de un pueblo no se discuten sino que se defienden con las armas en la mano." - A. C. Sandino
Preface

For more than forty years the "Dynastic Dictatorship" of the Somoza family has oppressed the people of Nicaragua. They have deprived them of their most elemental human rights and guarantees to such an extent that the Somoza regime is now being repudiated throughout the entire world of freedom and justice loving peoples. In spite of the system that forces and oppresses them, the Nicaraguan people have responded with courage and patriotism, with the intense desire to recuperate their usurped rights. After countless experiences in which the people have found it impossible to confront the dictatorship through peaceful means, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) surges, uniting the best of our youth and elders to confront, arms in hand, the Somoza dictatorship, and constitute the Vanguard of our people.

The insurrectional option formulated by the FSLN is rooted not only in the historical precedents and traditions of struggle of the Nicaraguan people, but in the objective conditions of exploitation, oppression and resulting miseries from the mode of domination exerted through the Somoza dictatorship and by U.S. Imperialism, in its economic, political and cultural expression. The military dictatorship is the instrument of force which sustains the state apparatus, unleashing its violence and terror against the different sectors of the population, especially the peasant and working classes. This military terror and violence is manifested in mass murders, rape of peasant women, savage tortures and concentration camps in which prisoners are kept nude and hungry under merciless rains and the hard adversity of prison conditions. In Nicaragua, revolutionary violence is the only alternative left for obtaining a real change.

Important elements of the Catholic Church, as well as other religious sects, are physically harrassed and persecuted by the repressive police force. Priests who have identified with the people have been tortured in the offices of the security forces. Intellectuals, journalists, university professors are similarly accosted and persecuted.

It is for them and with them that the FSLN prepares the conditions that will inevitably lead to revolutionary civil war against the Somoza tyranny. For this reason the Sandinista Front, historical column forged by the popular masses, is becoming the principal target for the reactionary terror which is spreading to all sectors of the nation.

During the last 16 years the Sandinista Front for National Liberation has clearly demonstrated, not only with words but with action, its continuance of the patriotic struggle initiated by Augusto C. Sandino. It seeks the destruction of the tyranny in order to build a democracy at the service of the majority's interests.

We dedicate this document to all the Nicaraguan combatants who, in struggle, have surrendered their lives in defense of the sacred privileges of the Homeland, and whose blood has lit the torch which illuminates the road that we, as authentic children of Nicaragua, must follow.

-FSLN
A Brief Introduction

The present struggle of the Nicaraguan people, united and led by their historic vanguard, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN), is the highest and most revolutionary expression of their history of vigorous struggle. This struggle comes out of the tradition of the patriotic liberation struggles against 19th century Yankee expansionism and 20th century imperialist domination.

After its independence from Spanish colonialism in 1821, our country immediately became a favorite target for various political and strategic designs of emerging United States capitalism. As the Sandinista leader Carlos Fonseca pointed out: "Nicaragua is a country that has suffered foreign aggression and exploitation for over four centuries. Together with the other countries in Latin America, Nicaragua was a victim of Spanish domination. It also suffered British rule of the Atlantic coastal territories, which lasted 150 years, until 1893. At the same time, Nicaragua was one of the first victims of U.S. political aggression."

The banners of liberation were passed on from generation to generation at the cost of our people's sweat

Footnotes begin on page 31.

I. A SHORT HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE SANDINISTA POPULAR REVOLUTION

The United States intervened militarily in Nicaragua in 1909, putting a violent end to the Liberal bourgeoisie's reformist process (began by Zelaya in 1893) because of the objective threat it posed to absolute U.S. control over the Central American isthmus. The Conservative oligarchy regained political hegemony in the country, at the cost of its own subordination to U.S. imperialist domination.

From 1909 to 1926 the Conservative oligarchy continued its absolute control of the state. The agrarian bourgeoisie demanded this power for itself, since it was the dominant and most progressive sector from an economic standpoint. It was not until after 1926 that it succeeded, having first turned itself into the most beneficial social base for the maneuverings of Yankee imperialism in Nicaragua.

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and Bosco. From that war emerged the first revolutionary political-military detachment, already possessing a firm anti-imperialist and class orientation and led by Sandino.

The constitutionalist war ended on May 4, 1927. The main political and military forces in the ensuing period were, on the one hand, the local Liberal-Conservative reactionary forces who had completely surrendered to Yankee imperialism and, on the other hand, the armed popular revolutionary forces willing to undertake an anti-imperialist and class war of National Liberation against the Yankees and their Nicaraguan allies.

This latter force was the beginning of a revolutionary political-military organization, created during the war of 1926 and strengthened formidable in the 1927-1934 anti-imperialist war. Its legacy has been the fundamenteally anti-imperialist and revolutionary basis for today's struggle for our final and total liberation from exploitation and oppression.

The heroic struggle from 1926 to 1934 was maintained by the sacrifices and incredible efforts of our working and patriotic people, under Sandino's leadership. It synthesized our people's abundant moral and revolutionary values, in the struggle for their final liberation.

The first major stage in our Sandinista revolution was our people's successful struggle from 1928-34. Our liberation struggle, in that vital and historic period, possessed, on the one hand, a deep and clear anti-imperialist and class consciousness and, on the other, a just and correct armed revolutionary strategy, both for the struggle against Yankee military intervention and for the struggle against the local reactionary forces. After the constitutionalist war, the first detachments of the revolutionary vanguard led by Sandino were faced with two enemies: a) to confront the Liberal-Conservative reactionar-
the Sandinista movement has outlined several guidelines for the successful accomplishment of the tasks presented by the period of struggle to overthrow the dictatorship.

The following are some of the main strategic and tactical considerations for carrying out our present revolutionary tasks:

a) Develop our Program of Popular Demands (minimum program) and adapt it to the present needs of the anti-Somoza struggle. The program must encompass the demands which will be the basis for instituting the People’s Revolutionary Democratic Government. It must be the basis for all the functions of agitation, mobilization and organization against the Somoza tyranny.

b) Promote our revolutionary work among the masses, particularly in those sectors that comprise the worker, peasant and petit bourgeois sectors which are the most combative and strategic for the process of insurrection against the tyranny.

c) Strengthen our Intermediate Mass Organizations by creating more underground mechanisms, thus assuring a systematic and correct articulation between the vanguard and the masses. It is through these intermediate mass organizations that the vanguard must build the daily directed struggles relating to the problems of the various sectors of workers, peasants, slums, communities, students, service workers, etc. Thus we can maintain an ongoing popular agitation which, through the struggles for the immediate demands of each sector, will give the masses experience and prepare them for the qualitative leap to violent political struggles against the tyranny.

d) The FSLN must use all means to organize the masses into fronts of struggle against the dictatorship. It must be the leader and guide for these sectors as they develop their struggles in mass fronts. While directly promoting and aiding their struggles around the demands of the Program of Popular Demands, the FSLN—carrying out its vanguard mission—must support them militarily and with its propaganda and agitation organizations. Organizational emphasis would be given to the worker and peasant sectors, since their alliance constitutes the most revolutionary class.

e) The FSLN must, in its practice, also promote the creation of a broad Anti-Somoza Front which, in one form or another, can group together all the country’s anti-Somoza sectors, parties and organizations, including the bourgeois opposition. The FSLN would give political and military support to the mass actions promoted by its intermediate organs and to the actions promoted by these organs through the broad Anti-Somoza Front.

The FSLN will win and maintain political hegemony within this Front to the extent that the Front’s demands and agitation correspond to the Program of Popular Demands and the insurrectional military slogans which the FSLN constantly promotes through its mass organizations represented in the Front. Thus the bourgeois opposition will be prevented from becoming the political head rest, especially among the middle and poor peasants, who were violently thrown off their lands by the big growers in the western part of the country. This important sector of the peasantry, which was turned into salaried workers and immersed in poverty overnight, was the first component of a proletarian army, with its irreversible germ of class consciousness.

Using their tyrannical rule, the Somoza clique and its imperialist protectors spread their commercial, financial, political and strategic domain throughout Nicaragua. The people’s anger with this situation ignited and began to link the Sandinista struggle with the causes of the crisis of the dictatorship and the crisis of the system of exploitation and oppression.

Rigoberto Lopez Perez’ revolutionary action, backed by a small group of heroic patriots—Cornello Silva, Aurberto Navarez and Edwin Castro—through which Somoza Garcia was executed, epitomized the strength of the people’s struggle in the 1950s.

Rigoberto Lopez’ action marked a renewal of the Sandinista movement and demonstrated to the people the armed revolutionary strategy laid out by Sandino. That just action closed the historic period of revolutionary decline and forged a firm base for the great stage of our people’s revolutionary growth, led by the Sandinista Front.

The Somoza clique’s political crisis, which began during the adjustments in the dictatorship in 1956 and the ensuing popular struggles—both armed and unarmed—which continued intermittently until 1960, was heightened by the economic crisis caused by the fall in coffee and cotton prices during those same years.

Railroad, shoe, plantation and hospital workers, pipe fitters, teachers, miners, students and peasants organized and spontaneously mobilized against the dictatorship. The construction, electrical longshore and other workers raised the number of unions representing them to 18. The people organized large street demonstrations against the high cost of living, health conditions, housing conditions and for social security and other social demands.

The student movement, after July 23, 1956 and at the cost of blood and prison, unfolded its anti-imperialist struggle, openly raising Sandino’s banner against the dictatorship. The 1959 massacre in Leon by the National Guard, where the people were engaged in a peaceful street protest against crimes committed against Sandinista patriots that same year, is an outstanding example of the repression.

A small group based on Marxist principles was formed in the university in 1956. Most of its members made up the Sandinista Front in the 1960s. Among them were the heroes
Carlos Fonseca Amador

The foremost expression of the people's struggles between 1956-60 was found in the more than 20 armed movements against the dictatorship. The most important were the one led by Sandinista veterans Roman Raudales and Heriberto Reyes, and the movement in which Carlos Fonseca Amador, the strongest leader of the Sandinista Front, was critically injured. The Independent Liberal Party (PLI), created in the 1940s, was weakened as many of its members became Somoza supporters after 1947. The party continued to exist as a small petit bourgeois group which was apparently anti-Somoza.

The Nicarguan Socialist Party rallied the popular struggles—due to its leadership's political line and to the fact that it had only begun to organize among certain popular sectors—during the years of the Sandinista movement's re-emergence. The bourgeois opposition used various means to gain hegemony over the mass movement, but was unable to contain it. They organized sham armed struggles to pressure the U.S. embassy, as if this would bring down the Somoza regime and allow the bourgeois opposition to take power. In response to the failure of these attempts—in Olama and Mollejones and in the barracks uprisings of Jinotepe and Diriamba during the sixties—Somoza's maneuver was to hold elections in 1963 and 1967. In spite of its weakness during the sixties, the Somoza clique was the sector best able to defend the interests of Yankee imperialism, which sent its Seventh Fleet to the Nicaraguan coasts at the height of the popular struggle against the dictatorship.

This situation, briefly outlined here, sums up the people's struggle between 1956 and 1960. This reactivation, marking the beginning of the great stage of revolutionary ascendency, took place in the mobilizations of workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and other sectors, both at the level of political demands and militarily.

Some of the characteristics of the initial phase of the rise of the Popular Sandinista Revolution from 1956-60 were:

- The generalized desire among the people to organize themselves in the struggle against the tyranny,
- The lack of a political-military organization which could take a vanguard role in the struggle,
- Reaffirmation of the people's willingness to end the tyranny with arms,
- An uneven array of armed movements preparing some form of invasion from neighboring countries,
- Revolutionary leadership in a process of coming into being and building a revolutionary detachment.

Although the revolutionary movement raised Sandino's banner and spread certain Marxist ideas, it did not achieve the semi-proletarian level of class and anti-imperialist consciousness as Sandino had, nor the scientific doctrine of the proletariat.

The second half of the fifties forced the conditions for creating a revolutionary vanguard able to lead the struggle. After the founding in 1960-61 of its political-military vanguard detachment, the Popular Sandinista Revolution reached a higher stage of development, allowing it to deepen and consolidate the stage of revolutionary ascendency begun in 1956. Leaders in this vital historic period, among others, were Sandinista Colonel Santos Lopez, Jorge Navarro, Carlos Fonseca, Silvio Mayorga and other leaders of our organization who are now in the mountains or in the urban underground. The creation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front was the most significant historical event in those first years of reactivating the revolutionary movement.

More than fifteen hard and bloody years marked the road up to the present situation. The huge counter-revolutionary campaign carried out by U.S. imperialism and the reactionary classes headed by Somoza; the demagogic developmentalist plans of the Alliance for Progress; the Liberal Conservative reaction's civilistionist maneuvers; the constant brutal repression carried out by the National Guard and other repressive agencies of the state; intervention by the reactionary CONDECA forces, the arrogant advisory role of the Yankee army in counter-insurgency; the regime's massive and daily anti-Sandinista propaganda—all of these have been able to contain the irreversible advances of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, led by its political-military vanguard, the Sandinista Front. The Sandinista struggle has hastened the decay of both the Somoza clique and its oppressive system.

The Sandinista Popular Revolution's strong advance would not have been possible without a correct linking of the vanguard with the masses. It has been the strong and revolutionary participation of workers, peasants, students, professionals, service workers, ex-military patriots and other social sectors that has created favorable conditions for confronting the enemy's attacks and for moving the wheels of history forward.

We will now present a brief summary of the vanguard's activity from its birth until today, in order to evaluate the achievements of the Sandinista Popular Revolution's rise and to outline the obstacles we have yet to overcome to achieve our revolutionary goals.

IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1987, on the basis of the historic path of Pancasina, our organization took a large step forward in understanding our historical process, prote-
tarian ideology and the lessons of the struggles throughout Latin America. In spite of the system's traditional imposition of ignorance, our people were slowly beginning to assimilate the revolutionary ideology being spread by the vanguard among the urban and rural working class and among the students.

Between 1960 and 1967 the masses did not turn either to the revolutionary or to the reactionary forces, due to the lack of any ideological formation which might have provided the people with a systematic and consistent guidance. This was one reason why the vanguard concentrated on the tasks of strengthening the underground political-military structures which would better allow them to build mass organization and mobilization. The clearly electoral nature of the bourgeois opposition kept it from becoming an alternative for the people. Even if the bourgeois opposition had had an ideologically structured party, it could not have offered the masses a revolutionary alternative.

From 1967 to 1980 the FSLN developed vital documents which have maintained their importance over the years. Among other things, these documents included the program of popular demands; the statutes, political line and strategy of our organization; and some analysis of the national situation. Among the Sandinistas contributing to these efforts were Casimiro Sotelo, Julio Bultraga, Roberto Amaya, Oscar Turcios, Silvio Mayorga, Carlos Fonseca, and Fernando Gordillo.

Over the past six years, despite great difficulties in the struggle, revolutionary theory has become our organization's dominant ideology. Meanwhile, the organization has deepened its analysis of our process of historical development and its understanding of the country's socio-economic and political situations. Ricardo Morales, Leonel Rugama, Patricio Arguello, Oscar Turcios, Edgardo Munjula and Mauricio Duarte are some of the Sandinista militants who helped our vanguard realize these achievements.

Rojo y Negro (Red and Black), Trinchera (The Trench), and El Sandinista have been the vanguard's organs in its political and military work and in its general strategy. The organization of study groups, even in the most harsh repressive conditions—prison, in the high and low moments of the guerrilla activities—has been a continuous effort, along with the printing and distribution of leaflets, newsletters and periodic reviews of revolutionary activities; in short, everything that could contribute to the spreading of revolutionary ideology. All these tasks have been main activities of our vanguard. Today we must evaluate these organizing efforts and synthesize our political and ideological work.

Revolutionary ideology has rooted itself deeply among our oppressed and exploited people, primarily through the vanguard's contacts in the people's organizations and through the various political-military activities in the mountains and the cities. It is of the utmost importance that we systematize and develop these activities among the people for the betterment of the struggle.

A major ideological achievement in the period of increasing revolutionary activity has been the breaking of the cultural and ideological barriers of isolation imposed since 1934 by imperialism and the Somoza dictatorship, thereby making Sandino's political thought more and more accessible to our people. This—in dialectic combination with the scientific doctrine of the proletariat and the formation of the Sandinista Front as a political organization with a clear revolutionary ideology able to assimilate Sandino's programmatic ideas—will give a real class content to the people's struggles.

**POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT**

The most important historical advance to date in the growth of the revolution is the political and military strength it has gained, under the leadership of its vanguard, the FSLN,

in the struggle against the traditional Liberal-Conservative forces.

The independent and organized revolutionary political option achieved by Sandino in the 1930s is again available to our people.

Since its creation in the 1960s our vanguard walked a hard road, until Pancasan in 1967, when it achieved political and moral victories. The Bo-cay and Rio Coco movements in 1963, the fies built with the proletariat from 1964-1967, the creation of urban resistance and armed propaganda in the mountains and cities are among the main tasks that led to the political achievement of Pancasan.

Speaking of Pancasan, our hero Ricardo Morales said: "Pancasan opened the horizon for the people's war and closed it for the bourgeoisie, and for the pseudorevolutionary reformists. Pancasan unleashed the people's initiative in launching a forceful attack against the oligarchy and imperialism, it encouraged revolutionary dedication and rejected fearful passivity.

Silvio Mayorga, a heroic leader of our organization, said in 1984, "I believe that in Nicaragua, the main revolutionary force will be in the unification of the workers, peasants, students and all the sectors not allied with the dictatorship. The only alternative to our people's political, moral, economic and cultural oppression is the daily and constant struggle of all our patriots. This is the only way to build the combative unity of the working class and the honest intellectuals."

These ideas were materialized in the FSLN activities in the Yaoaca and Uluse unions, in the Cadala Maria and Aceitana Corona productive centers and in the capital city's barrios. The People's Civic Committees created by the vanguard furthered these activities, through the outstanding efforts of comrades Enrique Lorente,
Carlos Reyna, Francisco Moreno and other workers, who are now part of our organization's National Leadership.

Among the vanguard's most important achievements from 1960-67 we can mention:
- the overcoming of the dispersion of revolutionary forces which characterized the 1958-60 period,
- the continuation of revolutionary work despite the vanguard's military defeat in 1963,
- the development of leadership for the movement (our National Leadership) which, although small, began the immediate revolutionary tasks and planned the future ones,
- the overcoming of a short-term mentality, seen in the vanguard's programmatic documents, put forth during that phase, and
- the maintenance of the continuity of the process of revolutionary war, which had seemed defeated with the failures of the late 1950s.

The Panaman guerrilla movement emerged as the result of the ties built with the masses, through work led for several years by the hero Rigoberto Cruz. Thus struggle finally overcame the "invasionist" character (preparation in border positions) of the guerrilla movement in the preceding years.

These achievements have been confirmed in the national and international political arena by our organization's vigorous presence in both the mountains and the cities. The Zinacua guerrilla in 1969-70; the popular mobilizations of 1970; the mass struggles in 1971 which rescued 13 Sandinistas from Somoza's jails; the street struggles in 1975 protesting the Sauce massacre, are some of the mass mobilizations that have shaped the development of our struggle.

The present guerrilla movement in the mountains—the backbone of the revolution—was developed without interruption through a broad propaganda campaign among the masses and patient para-military work during the 1970s. In the rest of the country, through a difficult phase of gathering political, ideological, logistic and military forces, the bases have been laid for political and military victory over the Somoza clique. In this way we will build the strength we need for our total and final national liberation.

Alongside these achievements inside Nicaragua, a strong international campaign has grown with the direct support of our Sandinista comrades. It has ended our struggle's international isolation and today our vanguard's struggles are widely known and respected, while the dictatorship is growing more and more isolated.

The revolutionary action on December 27, 1974, led by our vanguard's hero and leader Eduardo Contreras Escobar, crystallized our organization's past efforts. It signaled the beginning of a higher phase of political and military struggle. If Rigoberto Lopez Perez' revolutionary action meant "the beginning of the end for the tyranny," then the December 27 action can only mean a deepening of its agony, since it reflects the Sandinista Front's existence as an organization capable of carrying out the revolution.

Today, with the national and international situation more favorable than it was for Sandino in the 1930s, the Sandinista Popular Revolution has entered a higher phase, in which the people are organized and supported by the alliance of workers and peasants, and are ready to mobilize under the Sandinista Front's leadership, towards the defeat of the Somoza clique. In this way a new revolutionary and democratic government will achieve socialism and the society of free men envisioned by Sandino.

II. THE GENERAL CAUSES OF THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION

We are fighting for the cause of national liberation, democracy and socialism.

The revolutionary development of human society leads to the transformation from capitalism to communism. Capitalism, which develops the productive forces through production for profit and appropriation of surplus value, has become the main obstacle today monopoly imperialism is the precursor of the proletariat's social revolution.

With the creation of the first socialist state after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, world capitalism was shaken, and its final downfall began. Today the majority of humanity is fighting for democracy and socialism. The proletarian cause has been victorious in parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and in America with the Cuban Revolution.

The first stage of the Sandinista Popular Revolution (1920-34) was able to resolve the contradiction nation/U.S. military intervention in our favor. This historic achievement strengthened Nicaragua's struggle against imperialist domination.

The expulsion of the Yankee invaders was a setback for the total domination which imperialism had exercised over our country since the beginning of the century. Imperialism was obliged to change its tactics in order to maintain control over our country. It managed to balance its military defeat through indirect political, economic, diplomatic and military pressures, and has exercised its rule through the local reactionary classes since 1934.

These 40 years under the Somoza dictatorship have resulted both in U.S. imperialist domination and in
the oppression and exploitation of our people by Nicaragua's dependent capitalist agro-export system.  
Breaking the chains of Imperialist rule determines our national liberation process. Breaking the yoke of oppression and exploitation by the reactionary Nicaraguan classes determines our social liberation process. The two historic undertakings will be inseparably linked with the existence of a solid vanguard and a Marxist Leninist cause to guide the process. The present struggle against the tyranny should lead us to a true people's democracy (not a bourgeois one), as part of the struggle for socialism. Our process must not be stopped halfway, although the bourgeoisie and reactionary forces will try. The popular democratic phase must be a means for the Sandinista cause to consolidate revolutionary positions and the mass organizations for the final process towards socialism. The necessary democratic-popular-revolutionary phase, once the tyranny is defeated, must not lead us into reformist, nationalist or any other kind of capitalist development.

Ricardo Morales, one of our heroes, said in the 1970s that "What is being developed here is both class struggle and anti-imperialist struggle: on one side the bourgeoisie, especially the faction allied with imperialism to maintain its power, and on the other side the workers, peasants, students and revolutionary intellectuals, along with the world revolutionary forces. We are advancing towards socialism as a concrete, historic mode of production, not as a utopian society where "man reigns" or "the angels reign."

Sandinista leader Silvio Mayorga said in 1984, "I hope that my successors will understand the precious meaning of fighting for our people's future, for their final emancipation, to achieve the goals of our heroes and martyrs." The underlining of "final emancipation" reflects the deep revolutionary cause which even in those early years inspired our militancy in their struggle to conquer the future. Our cause lives and grows among our working and patriotic people. It is the sacred cause of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Sandino.

III. SOME FUNDAMENTAL PLANS OF THE SANDINISTA POPULAR REVOLUTION

1. The Revolutionary Popular and Democratic Government

The vanguard organization, the Sandinista Front, guided by proletarian ideology and Sandino's political thought, must rely on the working class and the peasants in order to assure the revolutionary overthrow of Somoza's clique and to deepen the overall historical process of the struggle.

The imperialist foreign enemy and the local reactionary classes—led by the financial bourgeoisie and the Somoza Dictatorship—will struggle in every way to destroy our revolutionary cause of national and social liberation. The bourgeoisie in general—including the faction presently opposed to the Somoza regime—in league with the country's liberal and conservative landlords will also be part of the forces seeking to defeat our general cause for socialism.

The motor forces of the Sandinista Revolution, namely the worker-peasant alliance and the petit bourgeoisie (especially students and intellectuals) must, during this stage of the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, struggle first for the establishment of a Revolutionary, Popular and Democratic Government, which would assure complete national independence and a broad democracy capable of carrying the anti-imperialist, anticlerical and democratic revolution through to the end.

The guarantee of the democratic process leading sooner or later to socialism will be the political, moral and military strength of the Sandinista Popular Revolution when it overthrows the tyranny and begins the revolutionary democratic process. This position of strength will depend on the depth of participation of the working class and other non-proletarian progressive sectors, in order to achieve the revolutionary strength which can lead to the real seizure of political power by the Sandinista forces.

Our country's backwardness and its dependent capitalist system determine the objective need to complete the revolutionary democratic state, in order to assure the structural and superstructural bases for the revolutionary process towards socialism.

Nicaraguan capitalism is not like the capitalism of Europe and other highly developed and industrialized countries, which can formulate the immediate planning for the construction of socialism. In addition, strate-

Jose Paredes, Augusto C. Sandino and Augustín Farabundo Martí (Salvadorean)
gle and tactical factors—both national and international—do not allow for the formulation of socialism in an open way in this stage.

The fact that we do not speak of socialism in this immediate stage does not mean that we are proposing a bourgeois democratic revolution. Our revolutionary process means solving contradictions that are part of our country's backward capitalism, and not the anti-feudal contradictions that characterized the bourgeois democratic revolution. On the other hand, our country's bourgeois—liquidated and castrated itself as a progressive political force when it totally surrendered to the interests of Yankee Imperialism and allied itself with the most reactionary Nicaraguan forces on May 4, 1927—will not be a vanguard in the struggle against tyranny nor in the revolutionary process.

The nature of the Sandista Popular Revolution at this moment implies a revolutionary democratic process, led by a true people's government. It is a people's government because it will represent all sectors of the people and the nation—not exclusively the proletariat—who are struggling against tyranny and Yankee Imperialism. It will be a revolutionary democratic government (not bourgeois democratic) because, although bourgeois forces will still be present, the conquest of democracy—achieved and experienced by humanity since 1789 but unknown by our people, who have only lived under reactionary rule—will be materialized, not to develop or reform the present system of capitalist exploitation, but to guarantee a basis that, through revolution, will free our people from foreign domination and from the bourgeois and oligarchical forces which will continue to exist after the tyranny is overthrown. It is a revolutionary democratic government because it will lead us to socialism, toward our final and total liberation from the yoke of imperialism and repression.

To destroy Somoza's tyranny and to establish a revolutionary democratic people's government is the Sandista Popular Revolution's immediate objective. That revolutionary government must act immediately on the large financial monopolies and on the wealth of Somoza and his clique in general, and it must act on monopoly finance capital and the traditional agricultural production controlled by the landlords of the latifundio system. It will struggle for national sovereignty, opposing economic and political domination. It will develop national industry and, at the same time, bring a radical transformation in the agrarian sector, with the peasants participating to defend their own interests. It will create a radical social and cultural revolution—both urban and rural—mainly favoring the large majority of the impoverished. It will maintain an independent international political position and lend support to the world's progressive and revolutionary causes. It will assure the organization and mobilization of the masses, especially the working class and the peasantry, in order to train them in the democratic process. It will build the Sandista workers' and peasants' army, to replace the National Guard, and to defend the interests of the revolution. Intervention and control of the banks, the fight against unemployment in the city and rural areas and the high cost of living, and increase in workers' wages and salaries, the nationalization of foreign monopolistic corporations, land for those who work it—these are also some of the many tasks of the revolutionary democratic stage.

2. Revolutionary Civil War to overthrow the dictatorship and establish the people's democratic revolutionary government.

The Sandista Popular Revolution, in its third great stage of revolutionary upsurge, has demonstrated and matured the entire process of accumulation of political, human, moral and material forces which the Sandista movement left us as our central task after 1933, and can now move towards the revolutionary civil war which will allow us to seize power and achieve economic, political and social independence from both foreign and local oppression and exploitation.

Through a prolonged process of struggle against imperialism and the local reactionary classes, a process which has already been going on for fifty years, the Sandista Popular Revolution is preparing to complete its military victory against Yankee intervention in the 1930s with its economic, political and social victory over the Somoza dictatorship and the other reactionary classes who directly represent Yankee rule in Nicaragua.

We speak of a civil war because its protagonists are basically the local reactionary and revolutionary classes. It is a revolutionary war because, relying on the worker-peasant alliance and with the guide of Marxism-Leninism, it proposes not only to overthrow the Somoza clique, but also to prepare the conditions for the...
Sandinista movement to advance, through the democratic process, towards socialism.

Revolutionary Civil War does not mean forgetting the war against imperialism. On the contrary, the struggle against imperialism, during this period of revolutionary upsurge, demands that we resolve the contradiction people/Somoza in order to deprive Yankee imperialism of its present means of domination—Somoza and the National Guard which defends him.

Sandino was able to resolve successfully for our process of struggle the contradiction people/Yankee armed intervention. The present revolutionary movement, headed by the FSLN, must resolve the contradiction people/dictatorship and at the same time do everything to avoid a new foreign intervention, which would make our liberation process longer and bloodier.

A new armed Yankee intervention will undoubtedly mean an indefinite prolongation of our process. In that case, all of our present line and strategy—generated by objective and subjective conditions, both foreign and local, will vary. The conditions would be so different that to achieve total victory, over the invader, we would most certainly move to resolve the revolution’s democratic problems from an openly socialist position, with the direct support of the socialist camp and the rest of the world’s revolutionary and progressive forces.

3. The Nicaraguan Working Masses: Builders of the Sandinista Revolution

Since entering the stage of Revolutionary Ascendancy in 1956, the working people of our farms and cities have been creating the political, military and organizational conditions necessary for the development of complete revolutionary struggle, in spite of the numerous problems imposed by the dictatorship’s terror.

Through struggle, the various popular sectors, grouped around their Sandinista vanguard, have been able to create the political and military conditions for a real democratic alternative, outside the scope of traditional Liberal-Conservative domination.

It would be a mistake to think that our people should have organized during the 1960s, as did those countries where conditions permitted organization along orthodox Marxist-Leninist lines. Our movement acted according to the concrete historical conditions of the period, first creating its vanguard, the FSLN, and then its moral and political position, both nationally and internationally, which today allows us to take a political and organizational lead toward a maximum development of the dialectical interaction between the vanguard and the masses.

That our process now allows such a historic leap is not to say that our vanguard has not known how to carry out in practice its necessary relationship with the working masses. Proof to the contrary is the vigorous presence of the guerrilla movement in the mountains, which has only been possible because of the broad base of popular support which the guerrilla detachments have maintained for six years without interruption.

As a result of the mass line which our vanguard has been developing since the 1960s, today we can find the minimum basic conditions that enable the masses to organize in a more solid and militant manner. Our vanguard has gained a diverse experience by living among the people, particularly in the last five years. This experience in organizing farmers, workers, students, slum-dwellers, Indians, Christians, intellectuals, etc., has prepared us to progress to higher forms of organization.

Our mass line has an inherently class-oriented character. Thus we feel that our mass work should be concentrated on the organization and mobilization of the most combative sectors of the proletariat, the peasantry and the petit bourgeois. In view of the proletariat’s historical role as the most revolutionary class, of fundamental importance for the maximum development of our liberation process, we feel that our mass organizational work must be centered on the proletariat, both urban and rural. The ideology and interests of this most revolutionary class—the Nicaraguan proletariat—will be the basis by which, in varying ways and times, the other exploited and oppressed sectors of our society will be drawn into its struggle.

The factory workers of the cities and the agricultural workers of the rural areas make up the fundamental class which will determine the course of profound revolutionary changes in the present system of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Their strength, development and organization assure the creation of the future socialist society.

Because of its direct involvement in capitalist production, the working class has acquired collective habits, working discipline, mental and manual ability and skill, and other traits which put them in the vanguard of organizing and directing the masses. And most important, their direct dai-
ly contact with bourgeois exploitation has given the working class great consciousness and a driving interest. In overthrowing all forms of exploitation and all capitalist, pre-capitalist, or any other form of oppression. For these reasons, the working class is not content merely to long for freedom, but takes the lead in the fight to liberate all other exploited and oppressed sectors in our society.

Although the working class is the fundamental force in the revolutionary process of the present and the future, it would be unable to reach its revolutionary goals without the close support of the other popular sectors, particularly the peasantry and the student and intellectual petit-bourgeoisie.

The Sandinista vanguard must guarantee, creatively and according to the circumstances, the firm consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance, both to overthrow the dictatorship and to build the new society. This alliance will be the central factor in the popular struggle, and the vital foundation of the revolution. Without this historic alliance, it is impossible to achieve the objectives of the proletariat, or the liberation of the other, non-proletarian sectors of the working people.

Summing up, we know that we must always base our foremost support in the working class, which is the fundamental force of the revolutionary process. The peasantry represents the principal force of the revolution, both because of its numerical importance and because of its combative tradition and its anti-Somoza and anti-Yankee feeling. For many years the peasantry has kept up an active struggle against the landowners and owners and the money-lenders, in direct conflict with the regime's repressive agencies (rural, judges, National Guard, etc.) which serve the large landowners, especially in the areas of Sandinista guerrilla activity.

This qualifies the peasantry as a vital force to accomplish many revolutionary tasks, particularly the fight against the tyranny.

Students and intellectuals represent the most important petit bourgeois sector for the revolutionary process. They form an indispensable addition to a struggle directed by a vanguard of workers and peasants.

This triple bloc made up of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the petit bourgeoisie is the moving force of the revolution.

Out of a total population of more than two million (according to official sources), Nicaragua has an economically active workforce of approximately 650,000 people, involved in agriculture, hunting, fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing industries, construction, electricity, water and sanitation services, commerce, transportation, storage, communication, corporate, social and personal services and businesses and other unspecified activities.

This economically active population includes: more than 300,000 agricultural and fishery workers; 4,000 mine and quarry workers; more than 60,000 workers in the manufacturing industries; around 50,000 construction workers; 4,000 in electricity, water and sanitation services; more than 60,000 people in commerce; 23,000 in transportation, storage and communication; 100,000 in finance, insurance, real estate, services, etc.

The manufacturing, construction and mining industries, along with the capitalist production of crops and livestock, are operated largely by 150,000 permanent and seasonal workers. That number of workers constitutes the urban and rural proletariat of our country. Chemicals, petrochemical products, oils, textiles, dairy products, carbonated beverages, fishing, sugar, metals, footwear, road-building and construction in general, ship-towing and pilotage, transportation, electric power, banana production, mining, tobacco, livestock, meat, poultry and hog raising, cotton, sugar cane, peanuts, coffee, etc.—are the industries which bring the Nicaraguan proletariat together.

The factory and construction proletariat is concentrated primarily in the cities of Managua, Granada, Chinandega and to a lesser extent in Esteli and Rivas.

The seasonal agricultural proletariat is the most numerous group and works primarily on export crops in Chinandega and Leon (cotton, sugar cane, etc.) and on the coffee harvest in Jinotepe and Matagalpa in the north-central zone, and in Managua and Carazo on the Pacific coast. The permanent agricultural workers engage in the modern production of bananas, tobacco, beef, poultry and hogs, located principally in Chinandega, Esteli, Leon, Rivas, Boaco and Managua.

Our mass work must be directed toward those 650,000 workers who make up the economically active population. Our fundamental work must be directed to the urban and rural proletariat made up of 150,000 salaried workers, especially in the industrial and agro-business areas of Managua, Leon and Chinandega. Our principal mass work must concentrate on the nearly 300,000 peasants in the north, center, and Pacific coast of the country, and above all on the poor peasantry, the semi-proletarian peasants and the small producers. Another focus of special attention in our mass work is the petit bourgeoisie which has grown to more than 150,000 artisans, professionals, shop-keepers and others involved in service activities and general bureaucracy.

Revolutionary students and intellectuals, although not belonging to an economically active force, constitute a sector of the petit bourgeoisie which is fundamentally compatible with the revolution.

Guided by the proletarian Sandinista vanguard (the FSLN), these great working masses, and all those who have personally suffered the results of capitalist exploitation and oppression, even if they are not directly connected with economic production, are the central nucleus for the struggle of all our people. They constitute the social base of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, which will inexorably crush the reactionary forces of the agricultural, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, along with their vanguard, the financial sector of the huge monopolies and the powerful landowners with their traditional latifundio exploitation. With this revolutionary social base, we will eliminate the political-economic and indirect military domination of Yankee imperialism, which has been largely responsible for sustaining exploitation in general and the Somoza oligarchy in particular.

4. The Sandinista Front: Vanguard of the Revolution

Our role as revolutionary vanguard has developed during sever-
te years of struggle, since the creation of the FSLN in the 1960s. Long, just and inevitably bloody revolutionary practice molded this organization into the vanguard of our exploited, oppressed people, and in general, the working class and its indispensable historical ally, the peasantry.

Gradually overcoming errors and the difficult limitaions imposed on our society by Yankee imperialism and the local reactionary classes; immersed in proletarian revolutionary theory and our historic Sandinista legacy; increasing our understanding of the laws of social development, class struggle, and political science; our organization has been fulfilling the historic role of vanguard combatant of the most revolutionary class and of all the exploited people.

Our revolutionary vanguard force is an outpost, less numerous than the majority of our people who, while not fighting directly with arms, express in their vanguard, as Che said, their will to win.

Our present-day revolutionary vanguard detachment, the FSLN, forms the center of all the remaining popular and revolutionary forces which, in one way or another, confront the Somoza dictatorship and Yankee imperialism. Our Sandinista vanguard has solidarity cast the best representatives of the Nicaraguan people into a single armored fist.

With the development of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, the victory over the dictatorship and the installation of the revolutionary popular-democratic government, our present-day Marxist-Leninist vanguard will be able to fully develop its organic structure and become a strong Leninist party, wrought and tempered in the revolutionary process and capable of carrying out to the utmost the organization and mobilization of the masses.

In assuming its historic role, the Sandinista vanguard must correctly define its work among the masses and the intermediate or peripheral sectors. The task at hand is to make the Sandinista struggle massive without massifying the FSLN. We must not "fatten" the organization, nor reduce it to a nucleus that is isolated from the masses. The vanguard, the FSLN, must be the political and military High Command of the fighting people. The FSLN should include the best and most conscious members of the most combative sectors of our working people. The organic and political structures which make up the vanguard should be the firm link with the intermediary organizations and with the masses in general.

Because of our vanguard's enormous prestige, all the people who are connected to it in some way consider themselves militants of the FSLN. This is exceedingly important, and must not be discounted. However, we must be aware that those who are not incorporated into the vanguard structure, although they may feel part of it, do not take on the responsibilities, duties, rights, etc. of actual vanguard militants. In time, the people will begin to understand the difference between the vanguard and the masses, the vanguard and cooperators, the vanguard and activists, the vanguard and support networks, etc.

The fundamental structure of the Sandinista vanguard must maintain the full rigors of a revolutionary, partisan, disciplined life, centered around proletarian ideology and the Sandinista political legacy. In the leadership, propaganda-ideology and the organizational structures, as well as in the intermediary, regional, zonal and mass base structures, there must be constant vigilance to uphold the Sandinista and Marxist-Leninist discipline.

Our organization is fighting a revolutionary war, and in the heat of that battle of liberation, we must creatively develop our own revolutionary life-style, without following pre-set models. We are not building a Russian Bolshevik Party in Nicaragua; we are developing fully the conditions which place us ever more securely as the vanguard of the Sandinista Popular Revolution.

The points which we must consider most carefully regarding the life and development of the vanguard are:
- Selective recruitment and growth, maintaining the best of the exploited and oppressed people in our ranks.
- Constant political and ideological formation, according to the Marxist-Leninist guide and the Sandinista political legacy.
- Constant tactical and technical preparation in covert action and military science.
- Delegation of responsibilities according to firm political-party lines, placing the most value on: Sandinista combative militance, honor and firmness; revolutionary authority won through constant and prolonged practical struggle; political-military aptitude and revolutionary experience. Any who fulfill these requirements may be assigned responsibilities according to their ability and their real likelihood of accomplishing the assigned mission. For example, a person having an extensive academic command of Marxist theory, without prolonged militance and proven revolutionary firmness, cannot necessarily qualify for a position of responsibility. Nor can any guarantee be found in prolonged militancy which is contaminated with habitual, self-serving or other vices which should have been overcome.
- Strengthening of conscious political discipline, application of democratic centralism, rational delegation of responsibilities, even-handed and fraternal application of revolutionary criticism and self-criticism. Full development of objective, scientific analyses of the social and political situation and careful planning of all tasks, with careful evaluations of them after their accomplishment.
- The building of collective leadership, to guard against personal prejudice, subjectivity, and arbitrary decisions in the conduct of the struggle.
- The constant upholding of the traditional unity of the Sandinista ranks, consolidating the vanguard on matters of principle, keeping an internal unity based on respect and obedience to the vanguard, in spite of the normal disagreements that arise from the struggle, and emphatically rejecting any factional or divisive manifestations in our movement.

The FSLN, historic vanguard of the Nicaraguan revolution, is well prepared to fulfill its revolutionary mission of leading and organizing the masses, educating them in politics and ideology and engaging their initiative to fulfill their historic tasks in the mobilization for the Sandinista Popular Revolution.
IV. SOME ASPECTS OF OUR GENERAL STRATEGY

1. The stages and phases of the Sandinista Popular Revolution

In the first part of this document, we examined the various stages and phases which our Sandinista Popular Revolution has passed through. Briefly, our movement can be divided into three historical stages:

a) The stage of the revolutionary movement's historic integration (1928-34),

b) The declining stage of the revolutionary movement (1934-56),

c) The ascending stage of the revolutionary movement (1956 on).

To summarize the development of each of these stages, we see that:

In the first historical stage, armed struggle against Yankee intervention and their Liberal-Conservative puppets produced a profound awakening of opposition to imperialism, and for the social emancipation from the yoke of exploitation and oppression, both foreign and local. At the same time, the movement acquired a correct military and political strategy for the conquest of the various objectives of the struggle.

The Sandinista movement successfully developed the armed strategy of prolonged resistance in order to confront an enemy which was a thousand times stronger in resources and material strength. This strategy of prolonged resistance was sustained by the military technique of constantly wearing down the enemy by means of a predominantly irregular military force engaged in guerrilla warfare. The Sandinista guerrillas, in the face of the interventionist force, employed the tactics of offense and active defense of the Sandinista guerrilla zones. By means of the offensive tactic, the Sandinista movement, in a relatively short time, was able to develop regular troops, so that the guerrilla strategy could be creatively combined with the strategy of movement warfare. Through the use of movement warfare, Sandino was able to defeat and expel the Yankee invader from our country. Movement warfare was achieved when the Sandinistas had assembled powerful brigades which were never drawn into frontal engagements with the Yankees, but fought according to the rules of irregular guerrilla warfare, never presenting a fixed or definite line to the enemy. The offensive and active defense tactics were based on the concept of continuous attack and harassment, resulting in the partial or complete annihilation of the enemy's fighting forces.

As much as possible, the Sandinista movement channeled its successes on the battlefield toward propaganda and political work, to morally and materially reinforce the patriotic anti-imperialist struggle, both locally and internationally.

By means of the successful Sandinista war, the contradiction of Nicaraguan people/armed Yankee intervention was resolved in favor of our liberation struggle. Once this was settled, the Sandinista movement dedicated itself, in 1933, to the complex revolutionary task of creating the necessary conditions to resolve the contradiction of exploited people/reactionary Liberal-Conservative forces.

Once the Yankees were expelled in 1933, the Sandinista movement drew up a political-military strategy of prolonged accumulation of political, human and material, national and international-solidarity forces. Their aim was to prepare the conditions which would permit an overthrow of the local reactionary government and the seizure of power for the total achievement of our people's national and social liberation. This strategy was interrupted and weakened by the blows received by the Sandinista movement in February 1934, and by the adverse local and international situation which prevented the completion of the revolutionary tasks that the process of those years demanded.

With the resolution of the contradiction of people/local reactionary forces, the Sandinista movement tried to smash the bonds which still tied our country to the imperialist yoke, even though the Yankees had been defeated in the recently concluded anti-imperialist war of 1927-33.

The strategy of accumulation of forces, and the road to liberation shown to us by Augusto Cesar Sandino, passed through a difficult time between the years of 1934-56, an apparent period of revolutionary decline. Nevertheless, despite the adversities of that period, our people slowly and gradually began to create the conditions for the reintegration of the revolutionary movement.

The present stage of revolutionary ascendency, beginning with Righter's heroic action in 1956, has gone through several phases: the initial phase of revolutionary reintegration from 1956-60 when our people laid the necessary basis for the formation of the revolutionary vanguard detachment; the second phase with the creation of the vanguard, the FSLN, in 1960-61 until 1967. During the second phase the Sandinista movement was born, grew and developed, and established itself nationally—in both political and moral terms—in the Panamanian campaign.

At the same time, the masses in general began to shake off the influence of the reactionary Conservative-Liberal forces. The third phase covers the period from 1967 to the successful action in December 1974. During this phase the vanguard was strengthened politically and ideologically. The process of accumulation of political and military forces was developed throughout the country: solidarity work was organized outside the country; our political, moral, and organizational influence among the people was deepened and the work was strengthened in the main bastion of our struggle—the mountains.

Since 1956, our Sandinista process of struggle has carried out the historic reintegration of the revolutionary movement. It has also been able to fulfill the fundamental demands of the prolonged strategy of accumulation of forces, a strategy inherited from the Sandinista movement of the 1930s. Today our liberation movement has materialized our revolutionary process in the historic vanguard, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, bringing us nearer and nearer to the favorable solution of the historic antagonistic contradiction.
people/local and foreign reactionary forces.

Our struggle's general strategy for national and social liberation, now in its fifth year, at present gives priority to building and carrying out the revolutionary civil war, in order to resolve today's principal contradiction: people/Somoza clique. Today, with a revolutionary situation both nationally and internationally more favorable than in the past, our movement is preparing to successfully resolve this principal contradiction and at the same time to create favorable conditions for confronting Yankee imperialist domination and the possibility of a new North American intervention, whether direct or disguised as Latin American forces, such as CONDECA.

In spite of the difficulties and limitations of the struggle, Somoza and his clique have been seriously weakened, while revolutionary work has been strengthened, in order, at the proper moment, to unleash the general offense both political and military—which will overthrow the Somoza clique and institute the People's Democratic Revolutionary Government.

The present phase calls for the solid preparation of the minimal basic conditions for leading the people towards insurrection, through a process of revolutionary civil war. This vital and strategic phase is the result of the general strategy which has covered the three stages experienced since the beginning of the Sandinista struggle in the 1930s. What we call the Sandinista Popular Revolution or Prolonged People's War is the strategy which encompasses the entire process of struggle, including the present phase, the revolutionary democratic phase, which will follow the overthrow of the dictatorship, and the phase in which the democratic revolution opens the way to socialism.

To summarize:

a) Our most general strategy is that of the Sandinista Popular Revolution or Prolonged People's War, which will lead us to national and social liberation: to socialism.

b) Revolutionary Civil War is an expression of the strategic aspect of the struggle which comes directly out of the contradiction people/Somoza dictatorship. This will shorten the time necessary to build the popular insurrection, based mainly on its central axis, the mountains, and on the other fronts of the struggle, in the countryside, the city and abroad. Revolutionary Civil War will allow us to advance in the struggle against imperialist domination, since the overthrow of the Somoza tyranny will mean the overthrow of the Yankee's main instrument for controlling our country today.

c) The strategic aspect of prolonged resistance for the seizure of power will be implemented in the eventuality that armed foreign intervention prolongs the process of struggle. This prolonged resistance strategy was already put into practice when the Sandinista movement confronted Yankee intervention in the 1930s.

d) Politically, militarily and morally, the mountains play a determinant and vital role in both the insurrectional and the prolonged resistance aspects of our struggle. Without the concrete and active presence of the struggle in the mountains, our movement would be unable to lead the masses in the various political, military, organizational and other tasks of the revolution.

2. Strategy and tactics for the overthrow of the Somoza clique and the institution of the People's Revolutionary Government

With the clear understanding that the main obstacle to the progress of our revolution is the Somoza clique, while the organized Sandinista movement was reduced to almost total paralysis during the revolutionary lull, the same did not occur with the spontaneous struggles which were not dependent on the organized vanguard detachments. The spontaneous struggles were an unyielding response to the exploitation and oppression of the reactionary classes led by the bourgeois military dictatorship. It was the people's pressure and response that laid the basis for the gradual resurgence of the revolutionary movement and led to the advance in the spontaneous movements in the 1950s, symbolized by the heroic action of Rigoberto Lopez Perez, who executed the tyrant in 1956.

Some examples of the people's many struggles include the demonstration pressured by the National Guard on May Day of 1935; the 1936 popular strike against fuel price rises; the armed actions by rubberworkers on the southern border in 1944 and 1948, at the La India mine and Muelle de los Bueyes; the plantation workers' strikes in Chichigalpa; the peasant revolts in Boaco against the landowners; the anti-Somoza student struggle of 1944; the armed movement of 1954, in which the Sandinista Opticaclano Morazan participated; and the conspiracy of National Guard members, in which various officers were executed.

The peasants confronted thousands of land problems during that difficult lull in the movement. Abroad, exiled Nicaraguans always maintained their denunciations of the dictatorship and volunteered to return to Nicaragua with the arms of liberation in their hands.

The most significant characteristics of the period of revolutionary lull were:

a) lack of revolutionary leadership;

b) lack of a revolutionary vanguard organization (even though in 1944 the Nicaraguan Socialist Party was formed, due to the complexity of the period and subjective factors of leadership, it could not fill the gap);

c) mass struggles and spontaneous armed actions, and amateur forms of organization;

d) very weak organization of the popular left, which was in a developmental phase;

e) heterogeneous student struggles with no organization;

f) disorganized activity abroad, which was reduced to patriotic denunciations by exiled Nicaraguans, and

h) intermittent repression against the people;

i) the activity of the conservative bourgeoisie, holding hegemony in the anti-Somoza struggle and restraining the people with populist seduction.

j) the "conservatism" of the people, due to a struggle which was fundamentally anti-Somoza, without the presence of a revolutionary vanguard organization.

k) imperialism's unconditional economic, political, diplomatic, ideological and military support for the dictatorship. The U.S. provided assorted arms to equip the National Guard.

During the 1950s a series of significant historical events in the development of the Sandinista Popular Revolution took place. On the one hand, the Somoza dictatorship achieved certain favorable arrangements of the Intra-bourgeois struggle, through the 1950 Liberal-Conservative pact. This, along with the rise in big business and the boom in cotton, contributed to the dynasty's economic consolidation. On the other hand, these achievements antagonized the popular masses, who increased their agitation against Somoza's economic, social, political and cultural domination of their lives.

Cotton production, which grew during the 1950s, gave the system a certain economic stability. But at the same time it intensified popular un-
of the Anti-Somoza Front, since the inception and leadership of the struggle will revolve around the FSLN’s slogans, based both on its Minimum Program and on the military guidelines which will kindle the Insurrection. It is not a matter of our mass organs joining political groupings like UDEL, but rather that they, together with UDEL and other forces, constitute the broad Anti-Somoza Front, always seeking, as we said above, to conserve our forces’ political hegemony in this tactical and temporary alliance.

1) Since the political objective of this phase is to unleash the Insurrection through armed struggle, all of our political and issue-oriented mass work must revolve around organizing and mobilizing the entire people to develop the armed struggle presently demanded by our political objective. Due to the limitations imposed by Somoza’s repression, our mass work cannot at this moment give priority to the political struggle of trade unions. The essential objective of mass struggle at this moment is to strengthen revolutionary armed struggle and to prepare the people to unleash, at the correct time, all of their political and military violence. It is precisely the destruction of Somoza’s repressive obstructions that will give us the ability to carry out the masses’ organization and mobilization in all their revolutionary magnitude. We will thereby be fulfilling the military requisites of our general political line.

2) Our work among the masses, the intermediate mass organizations and the other forms of influencing and organizing the people will be completed and backed up by the vigorous presence of the Sandinista Army in the mountains, the countryside and cities, and it will be able to rely on the firm, sure guidance of the Vanguard, the FSLN. The three basic pillars which will guarantee the triumph and consolidation of the Sandinista Popular Revolution are:

- The existence of the Revolutionary Vanguard, the FSLN;
- Mass fronts organized and based on the historic revolutionary alliance of the working class and the peasantry; and
- The strong presence of the Sandinista Army in Nicaragua’s mountains, countryside and cities.

b) To strengthen our work in organizing and mobilizing the masses, our vanguard, the FSLN, must promote actions which coincide with those of other organizations having influence among the masses, particularly the left organizations.

c) Develop to the utmost the various methods of open and underground struggle (political, trade union, issue-oriented, para-military and military), centering them on the political objective of developing armed struggle.

d) Organize a creative on-going campaign of Sandinista agitation and propaganda. Develop to the utmost the various political slogans contained in our Minimum Program and the military slogans necessary to lead the struggle to Insurrection. We must not always expect to be able to rely on modern means of propaganda. We must make the greatest possible use of word of mouth, slogans painted on walls or written on currency, and handwritten, mimeographed or printed leaflets. Place red and black flags or Sandinista emblems everywhere—In the streets, on trees, in churches, buses, etc. Each slogan must correspond to the demands for each constituency contained in our Minimum Program or the demands required by a given situation. Agitation must be taken to the broadest popular masses, raising the awareness of the need for a hard, bloody and dangerous struggle, especially during the immediate phase of the general offensive.

e) Bring our Sandinista Army to maximum strength in the mountains, the countryside and the cities. Coordinate the various Sandinista armed forces to strike simultaneously at a given moment towards a given object.

Strengthen our strategic mobile forces in the mountains as well as the rest of our forces—small units, commanders and specialized squads in the rest of the country. Accelerate the process of building units of two or three persons in the various productive centers, slums, communications media, schools, etc., to be coordinated through the corresponding Regional Military Centers. Be able to combine creatively the FSLN’s central military force with the various groups, small units, individual combatants, etc. that make up the Sandinista Army’s main para-military force.

f) Fully develop the warfare infrastructure that will make possible the mobilization, organization and preparation of the various military and para-military tasks such as creation of commando, training, transportation of arms and supplies, manufacture of bombs, necessary atrocities, operative intelligence, safe-houses, meetings, direct and indirect underground communication, etc.

m) Fully develop our practical and theoretical command of the offensive. We must bear in mind the decisive role of a profound, solid and simultaneous offensive against the enemy. The main objective of the offensive is to break and totally control the enemy’s strategic defensive positions. The offensive demands a constant and uninterrupted attack, without respite, in all the offensive. The offensive only stops to consolidate the victory, once the enemy has been basically subdued. Along with the offensive, the Sandinista movement must prepare the conditions for an organized retreat, in order to avoid any disbanding or disorderly withdrawals if a retreat does become necessary.

n) Through our propagandists and activists we must build the masses’ support for violent, active and underground struggle. Even today the people must begin neutralizing informers and enemies of the revolution. The masses should struggle with the arms they have at hand, however rudimentary, against the local henchmen and informers, astutely surprising and eliminating them. If this is done throughout the country and word of the executions is spread, the masses will gain valuable experience and deepen the process of moral decomposition of Somoza’s henchmen, as well as weakening his tactical and operative capabilities.

Lenin, addressing the “perfectionists” who opposed this kind of initiative, pointed out that “…one must start out learning from practice from the very beginning. Do not fear these test attacks. Naturally they can degenerate into extremism, but that is
tomorrow's misfortune—today the misfortune is in our routine, in our doctrinism, in intellectualism's immobility, in the senile fear of all initiative . . .

o) Work constantly at wearing down the ranks of the National Guard and other pro-Somoza sectors in the bureaucracy and the government. Win the greatest possible sympathy of the troops and lower officers and the support of some army officers. Sharpen the contradictions that exist in the National Guard and other repressive agencies related to power struggles, etc. Constantly write letters to relatives of the troops and officers, emphasizing our patriotic, democratic and anti-Somoza nature, opening the door to their demands if they cooperate in one way or another with the Sandinista movement. This kind of work reinforces the movement's military blows against the National Guard. Not that the National Guard will be won over to the revolution, but we must seek the greatest possible decomposition and demoralization in its ranks; the better to attack it as an institution until it is destroyed.

p) Strengthen the Sandinista movement's traditional unity, keeping the faith with our broad popular masses who have come together and mobilized around the FSLN's revolutionary struggle. In the same sure and solid manner in which our people have united and come together behind their focus of struggle, their party, the FSLN, all of our militants must demonstrate an iron unity and discipline around the revolutionary principles synthesized by our vanguard's leadership bodies, especially its National Leadership. Any weakening, however small, of the iron-clad Sandinista discipline demanded by the present phase of revolutionary war in fact contributes to the counter-revolution and must be implacably rejected and sanctioned by our Sandinista movement.

The regime's profound moral and political weakness, the favorable international situation which has forced Yankee imperialism to reduce somewhat its aggressive policy of intervention and support for tyrannical regimes such as Somoza's, the discrediting of the regime among all sectors inside the country, and Somoza's great international disrepute, especially in Latin America, provide us with truly favorable prospects for the audacious fulfillment of the Sandinista Popular Revolution's immediate objectives.

Our strength is both political and moral; it is an invincible force which multiplies a hundredfold the potential of the guerrilla's rifle with which we confront our enemies.

Our revolutionary movement carries high the banners raised by Augusto Cesar Sandino, Rogoberto Lopez Perez, Carlos Fonseca and so many other Nicaraguan revolutionaries who symbolize the sacrifice of thousands of Sandinista patriots who have fallen in our liberation struggle since the 1930s. Before them, and before our sacred Sandinista banners, we repeat our oath:

"With my thought and heart on the immortal patriotic example of Augusto Cesar Sandino and Ernesto Che Guevara, before the memory of all the heroes and martyrs for the cause of the liberation of Nicaragua, I place my hand on the red and black banner which means 'A Free Nation or Death.' I swear to defend the nation's honor with my arms in hand and to fight for the redemption of the oppressed and exploited of Nicaragua and the world. If I carry out this oath, the liberation of Nicaragua shall be my reward; if I betray this oath, a disgraceful death and infamy shall be my punishment."

LONG LIVE THE LATIN AMERICAN HERO AUGUSTO CESAR SANDINO

OUR REVOLUTIONARY HEROES AND MARTYRS SHALL LIVE FOREVER

THE SANDINISTA POPULAR REVOLUTION WILL WIN

A FREE NATION OR DEATH

National Leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front

Nicaragua, May 4, 1977, "Day of National Dignity"

Footnotes

1. In 1856 the North American adventurer William Walker led an expedition which "conquered" Nicaragua and received the United States' diplomatic recognition. First invited by the Liberals to aid them in their struggle against the Conservatives, Walker captured the Conservative city of Granada and then, on his own account, declared himself president of Nicaragua. He was backed by southern U.S. slave owners seeking to expand slave-holding territories.

2. Jose Santos Zelaya, as head of the Liberal regime from 1893 to 1909 was carrying out a reform which sought to modernize colonial structures through a strengthening of the institutions and laws of the bourgeois state. Economically, he strengthened the coffee-exporting bourgeoisie and opened the doors to massive foreign investment, mainly from the U.S. It was basically his dealings with the Japanese on a possible Caribbean-Pacific canal and his negotiations for sizable loans from Great Britain that led the U.S. to replace him in 1909 with the Conservative president Diaz, a more unconditional supporter of exclusive U.S. hegemony in Central America. Three years of Liberal Conservative civil war followed, with the Liberals temporarily suppressed by the landing of 2700 Marines in 1912, followed by the presence of a "Legation Guard" of 120 Marines until 1925. Yet there were ten armed uprisings and several important strikes against U.S. companies between 1913 and 1924.

3. After U.S.-supervised elections in 1924, won by the Liberals, the Marines were withdrawn, but a Conservative coup in 1930 led to a "constitutionalist" Liberal rebellion, led by General Jose Maria Moncada. The renewed civil war brought a return of the Marines to support the conservatives, but unable to defeat the Liberals, the U.S. was obliged to negotiate a peace treaty. The Treaty of Tiptapa was signed between the U.S. envoy and General Moncada on May 4, 1927. In exchange for U.S.-supervised elections in 1929, Augusto
Sandino was the only leader of the Liberal army unwilling to accept the treaty, forcing the U.S. to commit itself to an unsuccessful six-year war against Sandino's anti-imperialist guerrillas.

3. Unable to defeat Sandino's forces militarily or politically, and faced with a crescendo of international condemnation for its intervention, even from broad sectors of U.S. public opinion, the U.S. government began troop withdrawals in 1931 and organized elections in 1932. Political responsibility was transferred to the Liberal Juan B. Sacasa, "elected" president in 1932. Anastacio Somoza García, personally groomed by the U.S. ambassador, was selected to head the National Guard, also created by the U.S. After the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 1933, Sandino signed a treaty with the Liberal government and accepted a partial disarming of his troops. He then remained in the mountains of the northern province of Segovia organizing rural cooperatives. Continuing attacks by the National Guard obliged Sandino to negotiate with the government in Managua. Sandino and his top assistants were assassinated, on Somoza's orders, as they left a dinner with President Sacasa on February 21, 1934. The next day, Somoza's troops began a veritable pogrom against the Sandinista cooperatives and other peasants in the north to assure that the "pacification" would be final; more than 300 families were murdered in the massacre. In 1936, he was in command of the National Guard, Somoza overthrew Sacasa and later manipulated his own election. Thus, through the Nicaraguanization of its rule, the U.S. was able to consolidate imperial hegemony for more than four decades, and set what U.S. military strategists have called as a historical precedent for the (less successful) "Vietnamization" of its rule in Southeast Asia.

5. After Somoza's hand-picked candidate, who won the 1948 "elections," unexpectedly tried to replace Somoza as head of the National Guard, Somoza reassumed his power in a coup and was able to force his conservative opposition to sign a pact in 1950, which assured his own "election" as president in 1951.

6. At the time of his execution by Rigoberto to Lopez in September 1956, Somoza had already begun to delegate responsibilities to his two sons, Luis and Anastacio Jr. ("Tachito"). Both of them, like their father, were educated in U.S. military academies. In 1957, Luis elected himself president and Tachito took over the National Guard. In 1963, under international pressure (Alliance for Progress) to improve their democratic facade, the Somozas had Rene Schick elected president. Tachito took over formal power in 1967 (following a campaign highlighted by the murder of 60 in a street demonstration supporting the Conservative candidate and the jail- ing of several opposition leaders), and laid the groundwork for his "re-election" in 1974, on the basis of a new pact with the Conservatives, arranged by U.S. ambassador Shetlon.

7. July 23, 1961: Founding of the FSLN.

8. From the mid-1940s to the early 1960s, there were numerous unsuccessful armed uprisings and invasions against the Somoza dynasty, mostly organized by the Conservatives, or factions of the Conservative Party, with some participation of old Sandinistas and some other leftists. These armed efforts were more directed at pressuring the Somoza regime than at overthrowing it, and, being mostly organized from neighboring countries, enjoyed little mass participation inside Nicaragua.

9. The Alliance for Progress was imperialism's plan in the 1960s to assure the stability of capitalism and the bourgeois governments in Latin America through greater economic "development," a limited redistribution of income, decentralization of agricultural production, etc., in order to alleviate some of the causes of growing social unrest.

10. CONDECA (the Central American Defense Council) is the coordinating body of the armed forces of the countries of Central America. Created under Penta- gon auspices in 1954 in response to the growing guerrilla movement, especially in Guatemala, which threatened the stability of U.S. domination in the entire area. CONDECA's functions have included the sending of troops from one country to support a neighbor's counter-insurgency campaigns, coordinating among police services, control of intra-regional migration, etc.

11. U.S. Ranger troops have been present in Nicaragua for several years, as very ac- tive "advisors" in the National guard's anti-guerrilla campaigns and reportedly helping run some of Somoza's concentration camps for political prisoners. A Costa Rican journalist reported seeing a North American officer leading Nicaraguan troops in the south during the FSLN's October 1977 offensive.

12. In Panacas, the FSLN developed guerrilla warfare during 1968 and 1967. Despite its military defeat in a major confrontation with the National Guard in 1962, this experience was the first significant alternative to the inconstant bourgeoisie opposition and increased the revolutionary organic ties with the peasant, many of whom joined the ranks of the FSLN.

13. Underground newspapers published by the FSLN.

14. In Bocay and Rio Coco, the FSLN had unsuccessful military encounters with the National Guard in 1963. For two years after those defeats, the FSLN concentrated on strengthening its grass-roots mass work.

15. See note 12.

16. On December 27, 1974, an FSLN unit took over a house where a party attended by one of Somoza's closest associates was being held. After they were held hostage for three days, the government gave in: it transmitted a 12,000-word communiqué by the FSLN over the major national media and freed several political prisoners, who along with the members of the guerrilla unit, were flown to Cuba.

17. 50% of Nicaragua's 2.4 million people live and work in rural agricultural areas. Agriculture (cotton, coffee, beef, sugar) accounts for nearly 80% of the country's exports, since no strategic mineral deposits have been found in the country. Foreign investment is around $200 million (at least 80% of it from the U.S.), and is concentrated in agro-industry and food, banks, chemicals, forestry, mining, tourism and transportation. Nicaragua offers foreign capital the most generous conditions in Central America, including unlimited rights to profit and capital remittances, no restrictions on purchasing foreign currency, and absolute secrecy on all foreign investments and transactions. There is no data available on private bank loans to Nicaragua, but the foreign debt to foreign governmental institutions was over $500 million in 1974. A large percentage of the population lives at a subsistence level, outside the market economy. Unemployment is over 25% (35% underemployment in the countryside). The poorest 30% of the population earns an average of 15% (15% of the GNP), while the richest 5% have an $800 per year average income (30% of the GNP). Less than 50% of the population (30% in the countryside) is literate.

18. Cause in this section refers to the FSLN's strategic perspectives and programmatic goals.


21. 43.2% of Nicaragua's farms (under 7 hectares [17.3 acres] each) occupy 2.2% of the total tillable area, while 1.8% of the farms (over 350 hectares [895 acres] each) occupy 47.8% of tillable land.

22. UDEL (the Democratic Liberation Union)—constituted in 1974 after fraudulent elections which were boycotted by UDEL's leaders—is the contemporary, through more progressive variant of the traditional anti-Somoza electoral strategy. UDEL is a coalition of seven political parties and two trade union federations which range from liberal to anti-Somoza forest with the traditional bourgeois parties to the Communist Party (Partido Socialista Unido). In 1970, UDEL described itself as a multi-class alliance which represents collaboration between workers and capitalists. Dominant elements in UDEL are the petit bourgeoisie and an incipient national bourgeoisie—that is those bourgeois sectors less tied to the Somoza family and dependent on development oriented toward capitalist growth. Some of its leaders belong to the comprador bourgeoisie and have close ties to foreign interests. It is distinguished from the traditional local opposition of the comprador bourgeoisie, which continues participating in elections and accepts minor posts in the dictatorship, through its depoliticization and legitimizing the Somoza system. UDEL calls for honest elections, freedom of expression, economic development and reforms, trade union freedoms, social legislation (health, education, etc.) and "national self-determination" (regulation of foreign investments, an independent foreign policy, etc.)