

SPECIAL REPORT

Nicaragua

Exclusive interview tells of

The night before my Interview with Dr. Carlos Gutierrez, I had heard the doctor speak before an audience of Uruguayan political exiles in Mexico. The audience and I were particularly impressed by the moral qualities shown by Dr. Gutierrez and by the force and conviction with which he expressed his ideas. These are not qualities that he alone represents among the Nicaraguan revolutionaries, but qualities which are part of a political process that he shares with the majority of the leadership of the Government of National Reconstruction (GNR) and the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (the Sandinista Front for National Liberation).

The next morning, July 7, I had prepared my questions for the interview in such a way that we could get for our readers some of the concrete proposals, especially in the economic field, of the GNR. However, Dr. Gutierrez referred me to the published program of the Government of National Reconstruction and instead chose to talk at length on what I would call the moral imperatives involved in the Nicaraguan revolution and on the question of U.S. Nicaraguan relations.

As the reader will be able to see for himself, here is a man who is profoundly as expressed in his humanist conceptions, but here is also a man who until very recently (two years ago) had taken no part in any organized political activity. Gutierrez, moreover, considers himself a scientist, with many post-graduate degrees and is renowned throughout Mexico as a professional. Dr. Gutierrez, some would say, lacks political sophistication: Where, they ask, are the political and economic plans? Where is the knowledge required to reconstruct Nicaragua? Where is the required sophistication in international relations, international economics?

I, however, will say to them that with the moral qualities that Dr. Gutierrez demonstrated in the few hours I had the opportunity to be with him, he is by far more qualified in every area needed for the construction of a humanist republic than most. For years, I had had the opportunity, as a journalist, to see close up generals, colonels, presidents, ministers, ambassadors, politicians, economists, political scientists, advisers, etc., and almost all of them did not then or now have the "expertise" required and shown by Dr. Gutierrez. His speech on the night of July 6 reveals the most advanced economic conceptions and the most advanced political conceptions as to what a republic is.

Finally, having seen the program of the GNR and having met one of its most noted representatives, there is not question but that the GNR and the Sandinista front are real political scientists—undoubtedly they will make mistakes, political and economic, in the future—but they will be mistakes within parameters firmly established by reason.

That is not the crucial question: what is crucial is: what is crucial is the required mobilization and effort by the international community to assure that Nicaragua has the independence, the resources, the technical know-how, and the technologies to permit it to be an advanced industrialized humanist republic. Be it democratic, a republic of social justice à la Mexico, or socialist like Cuba.

—Fernando Quijano

after Somoza

plans of Reconstruction Government

Q: Doctor Gutierrez, one of the facts we have been able to verify is that Zionism is in many ways supporting Somoza's dictatorship. It's well known that Israel supplies arms to Somoza. But that's not all. United Brands—formerly the famous United Fruit—is directed by a Zionist leader and it is known that Zionist networks involved in drug trafficking are intimately associated with Somoza and the National Guard. What can you tell us about that?

A: Well, the United Fruit problem has been reduced somewhat in Nicaragua. Many years ago we were a “banana country”; Nicaragua lived through a sorry experience. It was a country which produced bananas in fearful quantities. It produced tuberculosis in the same proportion.

A member of the Group of Twelve made a documentary in the United States which includes 400 photographs showing the history of Nicaragua ... with the whole process in which the United States has intervened since William Walker, a southerner from New Orleans who made himself president of Nicaragua (in 1853—ed.), was recognized in less than 48 hours by the United States, and wanted to annex our territory to the slave states. In some of those photos, we see the homes—if you can call them homes—made of straw, of palm leaves, in the midst of water and mud, belonging to the banana workers. Truly lamentable conditions of life. ... And, on the other side, we see the mansions—because they truly were mansions—lived in by the United Fruit executives.

The production of bananas in Nicaragua fell as a result of the political ambitions of Somoza and the use of methods of exploiting current production without bothering to replant the banana trees. Naturally we still have plantations. Many, in fact, belong to Somoza and many of the fruit growing and fruit processing activities in Nicaragua are represented by U.S. companies or U.S.-owned companies associated with Somoza.

As far as Israel is concerned, we have simply this to

say: it is unimaginable for a nation for which the word “genocide” was invented to be an accomplice in committing genocide. This is a tremendous incongruity and, believe me, I’m not saying that out of hatred, but out of anger. I, personally, and the Nicaraguans in general, cannot applaud the Nazi crimes against the Jewish people in any way. Like all humanity, we condemn them. For civilized man, it is impossible to accept things like that. But, at the same time that we condemn Hitler for his crimes against the Jews, we Nicaraguans have the painful obligation of condemning Israel for complicity in the genocide, in the massacre, of the people of Nicaragua.

You know that there have been several proven cases of Israeli support for Somoza—not for Nicaragua, but for Somoza. It ranges from supplies of arms, munitions, rockets, mustard bombs to unconfirmed reports that the Israelis are testing certain arms in Nicaraguan territory.

We ask: “Why the Israeli government? Why also the Israeli people?” And we do indeed implicate both people and government—the government for providing all kinds of instruments of death against a people who have done nothing to harm it, against a people whose only crime has been 50 years of Somoza’s dictatorship and being stuck in a geopolitical position linking two oceans. We also protest to the people of Israel, as we now do to the people of the United States, although not in the same way as to the government. We protest their silence in the face of the acts of their government, which continues to aid Somoza up to the very end.

Despite Israeli government denials, you don’t have to be a very astute investigator, to show that this is true. I don’t know if you know that when Commander Eden Pastora showed to Mexican Channel 13 TV Israeli arms, the Israelis issued a declaration—I think here in Mexico—that Israel did not supply arms to the government of Nicaragua. Pastora showed Galil rifles, showed Israeli helmets, showed Israeli bombs. Then, the Israeli

chargé d'affaires, I believe, said something he shouldn't have. I personally have great respect for the intellectual capacity of the Israelis, but that diplomat destroyed the image I had of Israeli intelligence. He said that Israel officially only sells arms to governments and won't sell to private parties. The newscaster asked if there were Israeli arms in the black market and he replied: "No." Then, if Israeli arms aren't run through the black market, where do Somoza's Israeli arms come from? They have to be sent by the government of Israel to the government of Somoza.

Several Latin American governments are very worried by the appearance throughout Latin America of those famous little Uzi Israeli machine guns. Police departments and armies are equipped with them and more crop up every day. The Israeli chargé says his government doesn't sell arms to Somoza and arms appear. And three days later, the State Department or the Pentagon, whichever it was, because all those agencies are alike, turned around two Israeli ships loaded with arms for Somoza, making the Israeli government and its chargé d'affaires look ridiculous, and demonstrating that he is merely a vulgar liar. He was sent here to lie, but he can't even earn his pay as a liar.

Our concern with the Israeli case is genuine. Like many peoples of Latin America, we are ashamed of Israel. Poor Israel—when it must forget its past in order to live in the present, it is committing those acts it has complained of for so long. For two or three thousand years, the Jewish people have complained of persecu-

tion, of massacres, of injustices, of genocide, and have asked the whole world to help them, to raise a cry of protest against the Arab countries which, they say, are attacking them. I don't want to get into that problem; but truly, after what the Israelis are doing in my country, I frankly have strong doubts over who is the aggressor and who is the attacked. Examples are lived out in flesh and blood, and we are living through Israeli aggression. Truly, it's shameful that the Jewish people, who have made great contributions to humanity, who have produced scientists of great quality, now are becoming distinguished for supplying arms of great quality to kill a part of humanity which has done them no harm. Really, I think they are becoming the modern Hitlers, becoming that which they hate so much and have suffered from so much. Maybe there's a psychological reason, but that's for scholars to answer.

As far as drugs are concerned, I must tell you this. A journalist told me what he saw recently in Managua. This man is not a leftist reporter, not even a centrist, but an ultra-conservative. He came back shocked to see such scenes, because all over Managua, it's public and notorious that the Guards (Somoza's troops—ed.) from the Basic Training School directed by Somoza's son drug themselves up before going out on patrol. He told of scenes in León where he was barracked, in a manner of speaking, alongside the National Guard. He told me that the Guards who weren't on duty took turns sniffing cement, like U.S. Indians passing around a peace pipe. They sniffed cement, construction cement, which is

The Reconstruction Government assumes power

The complete rout of the remnants of the military and political machine of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua is in its final stages as *Executive Intelligence Review* goes to press. General Anastasio Somoza, whose family ruled Nicaragua for 40 years, has fled to Miami, leaving behind, as his legacy, a country destroyed by war. The puppet government appointed by Somoza to replace him and headed by Francisco Urcuyo, a "former" employee of the drug-linked United Fruit Company, lasted one day. The disintegration of the National Guard has forced him to flee as well, as garrisons surrendered and turned in their arms across the country.

There is jubilation in Nicaragua,

where the Sandinista-backed Government of National Reconstruction is now in power. Headed by a five-person junta, with an 18-member cabinet already appointed, the Reconstruction Government has drafted a program which outlines their goals of providing for the development of the country: housing, health, jobs, industry and education.

The overthrow of the continent's longest lived dictatorship by popular insurrection marks a turning point in the Western Hemisphere, much as the humanist Mexican revolution of 1917 irrevocably shaped 20th century history of Latin America. The reverberations of Nicaragua, 1979 are already being felt in every one of the dominant military regimes currently

policing the inhuman levels of austerity and destruction demanded by international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

What's ahead

But, despite the scare-mongering cries of "Castroite Communism is now in power in Nicaragua" that are appearing in the U.S. press, the Reconstruction Government represents no threat to vital U.S. interests. In fact, as the interview of *Executive Intelligence Review* Editor-in-Chief Fernando Quijano with Dr. Carlos Gutiérrez, the representative of the Reconstruction Government in Mexico, demonstrates, the United States now has a potential new ally

intoxicating, because reinforcements weren't reaching them, liquor wasn't reaching them, drugs weren't reaching them, and they were resorting to devising drugs accessible to them in the barracks.

That shows the drug picture clearly.

Reaping the whirlwind

Q: *What is the political-military situation in Nicaragua and what kind of maneuvers are Somoza and the U.S. carrying out?*

A: I think that success is at hand for the Nicaraguan revolution, that it is a triumphant revolution. The north of the country is totally controlled; the center of the country, in total ferment; the south is cut in two and, where there are pockets of the National Guard, the military maneuvers of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation prevents them from receiving supplies at this time. Somoza, we might say, has only his Managua bunker. National Guard morale is constantly falling. The morale of the people of Nicaragua and its armed vanguard is constantly rising.

International opinion turns more positive toward the Nicaraguan people every day. There's no doubt that few revolutions have had the unanimous opinion of all peoples of the earth in their favor. I dare to say that I believe that the American people have their hearts with us. But you know what happens with the American people? For years they have been poisoned by fears of communism and ignorance about Latin America. In the best of cases, the U.S. mass media systematically

has distorted us or hasn't cared enough about Latin America, hasn't given us the importance which we deserve as a continent and as countries. And today this grave error is being shown.

The United States simplistically believed that Latin Americans are Indians with big sombreros taking a siesta under a tree. They never thought of us as people with the potential for intelligence, for education, people capable of discerning, capable of feeling, capable of planning, and capable of comparing our cultural capacity with U.S. culture. There is no doubt we are superior to many North Americans in this, because we have the two basic elements of a culture: the culture in itself and its humanistic complement. The United States has lost that sensibility, it has become more and more dehumanized. Many years ago, a Nicaraguan, Ruben Dario, wrote a poem to (Theodore) Roosevelt saying, "You have got everything, but you are missing one thing, God." This has made American society a little forgetful of first principles. The U.S. has viewed us, the inhabitants of Latin America, as wild animals. It's a problem of humanistic thinking.

Unfortunately, I think that (Henry) Kissinger was right when he said that the United States was going to reap the whirlwind; but this whirlwind is made by themselves. Today the U.S. is reaping the whirlwind not only in Latin America, but all over the world. Latin America is the worst for them, since they had an erroneous policy, because they based their position on the worst caste, on the people least competent to rule

for America's founding goals of fostering other humanist republics across the globe. Nicaragua is no Iran, where a medievalist Khomeini is now destroying the country. The Reconstruction Government has made clear its intent to develop the country.

A tremendous task of reconstruction lies ahead in Nicaragua. The six-week war carried a heavy toll: an estimated 40,000 dead, hundreds of thousands homeless, starving in food-scarce refugee centers; towns and cities in rubble from the National Guard's indiscriminate bombings.

As the leadership of the new government frankly states, if the job of developing the country was monumental before the war because of 40 years of Somoza's leeching of the population and resources, the job following the war is arduous. International support will be crucial.

Mexican President José López Portillo has already ordered that all possible aid be extended for reconstruction, and Mexican Defense Minister General Galván has expressed the willingness of the Mexican military to participate in that aid, including sending plane-loads of food, medicines, and supplies.

The Carter administration, however, has already made clear its intention to suffocate the Nicaraguan reconstruction effort in a blind effort to maintain the previous status quo of the backward, drug-producing-and-shipping Nicaragua of Somoza. State Department spokesman Hodding Carter announced the news of Somoza's flight two days ago with the warning that "today's events do not mark the end of suffering in Nicaragua"—if President Carter can help it. The *New York Times* and other press have already advocated

the use of economic aid to the war-torn country as the United States' greatest "bargaining chip" with the new government. It is threatening to withhold aid if U.S. demands are not met, just as, up until the last minute, the administration deliberately prolonged Somoza's bloodbath against the country as a "bargaining chip."

There still remains the possibility of renegade National Guard units running guerrilla warfare against the government. There are also reports of troops of the Central American Defense Council (Condeca), the Pentagon-run regional military body, massing on Nicaragua's borders.

If the U.S. persists in fomenting chaos in Nicaragua, it will only achieve what it protests so much to fear: an "anti-American" government forced to develop in spite of the U.S.

—Gretchen Small

in Latin America, on those with the least conscience as individuals, on corrupt soldiers. There are very honest military men in Latin America. A group of Uruguayan soldiers recently refused to bombard their own people and today they are political exiles. Look at the consciousness of these soldiers. They have their military training, but they also have their human consciences, respect for the lives of others.

It's very complicated, I think, to speak of relations between the United States and the countries of Latin America, because we Latin Americans become constant complainers and we constantly tell the United States of its deficiencies, its errors, and it seems like we are preaching in the desert. We, the peoples of Latin America, have tried to get along well with the United States, with the American people, but we haven't been understood. It's said that we're "going to go communist," but where do they want us to go? To continue with illiteracy, to continue with malnutrition, to continue with poverty? Which American earns \$1.50 a week? Not for an individual, but for a whole family. Many Nicaraguan rural workers earn the equivalent of that.

What do the Americans want from us? Why do they try to put the brakes on our process of liberation, since it is their rulers whose mistaken policies have brought us to this? There's an American senator who told us that Somoza is an unconscious Marxist. I say he's completely right, but I also say: the State Department, the Pentagon, the U.S. Government are full of unconscious Marxists. They say: "Let's fight Marxism," and the only thing they do is help make Marxists. I don't know what they think of Marxists in the United States, but in Latin America, we've already learned that Marxists—I hope this clears something up—don't eat grandmothers. We've been told that Marxism is something horrible. Well, it's a scientific method which perhaps is in accord with Nicaragua's aspirations. But we can't say: "Since we have socio-economic problems, let's be Marxists." That's what I'm saying.

Now, since the U.S. administrations have been so dominant, have made so many mistakes, have been the cause of so many misfortunes in Latin America, have been the traditional oppressors of Latin America, and the American people have not protested against this, we, the inhabitants of Latin America, are anti-American. They have made us anti-American, and not because we feel an obligation and a sacred duty to be anti-American. We are profoundly saddened that the United States, such a rich people, doesn't treat our continent justly, that they put up barbed wire fences to separate one human being from his neighbor instead of generating the consciousness of mutual collaboration. We, the Latin Americans, protest that Americans only see us as a source of production of raw materials and as a market for their finished products. We, the Latin Americans, protest that our nonrenewable resources are

exploited indiscriminately by U.S. firms, without adequate, just, and equitable compensation.

The U.S.-run mining companies pay off the Labor Ministry officials and the doctors so that they prescribe aspirin instead of antibiotics, because it is cheaper for them. I think that a company earning enormous quantities of dollars can set up a little hospital.

All that the Nicaraguan worker asks is to be able to live like the poorest worker in the United States. This is no big crime. What's criminal is to say, for the sake of preventing communist penetration, that we have to go on living in ignorance, in poverty, with all the results of this, like ill-health. I would like a group of American families to come and live for three or four weeks in the conditions under which our peasants live. Perhaps then they would understand our countries' need of profound social and economic transformation, because perhaps only by living in need could this be understood. Because the American tourists come to the Acapulcos, the Puerto Vallartas, to the night clubs, they go to Nicaragua to fish for sharks, but they don't pay attention to what's around them....

... (I) guarantee that in Latin America we know more about United States history than you do in the United States. Take any student here (in Latin America), he knows more U.S. history than his U.S. counterpart. This is what the U.S. ought to worry about instead of meddling in the affairs of other countries. They should concern themselves with racial integration; they should worry about the sharpshooters walking around in Houston or in New York, hiding in towers and killing people. They should analyze what's going on in that society. The U.S. should concern itself with why its children are attacking their teachers to such an extent that there are even statistics on this. I read in the San Francisco Chronicle about how many teachers will be attacked by their primary school students this year. They have problems with their youth. They have problems like drug addiction. And, if that weren't enough, they have very serious problems now as a result of the Vietnam war, of masses of Vietnamese citizens living in the U.S. with another culture.

Now I ask you, doesn't the United States have enough problems of its own without looking for them with the people of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Uruguay, Argentina, trying to dominate them, subjugate them, and tell us who ought to govern us, or if it's advisable or not for us to go communist! Let the United States first decide what's most advisable for the United States.

The Reconstruction Program

Q: Doctor, could you describe for us the principal changes anticipated in the program of the Government of National Reconstruction?

A: There are changes on the political level, changes on the social level, on the administrative level, in other

The program of Nicaragua's new government

The following is a summary of the program of the government of Nicaragua's Government of National Reconstruction. Its main planks are agrarian reform, housing (urban and rural), education and health. It calls for all properties and land of the Somoza family to be expropriated.

1. The new Nicaraguan government will be one of democracy and social justice, which will guarantee the full rights of all Nicaraguan citizens to political participation and universal suffrage.

2. Executive power will reside with the junta, which will designate a Council of State, to be made up of 33 members, representatives of the political and socio-economic sectors of the country.

3. The new army
dinista National Liberation Forces (FSLN), soldiers and officers who have demonstrated honest and patriotic conduct in the face of the Somoza dictatorship, and those who have joined the fight for the overthrow of that regime.

4. Foreign policy will be independent and non-aligned.

5. A mixed economy will be established, with the coexistence of a state sector and social property with clearly defined scope and features; a private sector; and a third area involving joint investment by both public and private sectors.

6. A popular agrarian reform will be established, and export of agricultural products will be brought under state control.

7. Foreign debt will be restructured and renegotiated.

8. Foreign investment will play a strictly complementary role to domestic efforts. Foreign investment will be treated in the same manner as the acquisition of technology, industrial property, and the system of trademarks and patents.

9. Property and activities of the private sector not directly affected by measures established or foreseen by this program will be fully respected and guaranteed.

words, changes which will affect the entire structure of Nicaragua. For 50 years we have lived with a system that has proved itself of no benefit to the majority of Nicaraguan people.

In broad outline it could be said that there must be a complete reorganization of the ownership of the wealth. We need full agrarian reform. The majority of our arable land is in the hands of Somoza and his associates, while the peasant has nowhere to grow his crops. This makes full agrarian reform imperative. Otherwise, respect for private property in Nicaragua will be assured. We will achieve this through a mixed economy: private property, state property, and a combination of private and state capital in some sectors. This will exist in all areas of the Nicaraguan economy.

But we basically need a complete clean-up in the representation of the interests of the people of Nicaragua, i.e., the dissolution of the present congress and its replacement with individuals who faithfully adhere to the interests of the classes they represent. We must eliminate the judicial power that has been at the service of repression, at the service of a single family. It must be dissolved and replaced by a system of justice worthy of the name, administering justice with a strict sense of purity. Our Supreme Court magistrates have traditionally been venal judges. They must be replaced. The executive branch must be completely purged and the

era of boss-ism and unilateral decision-making must end. Therefore, the new government is making decisions as a collective body, so as not to fall into the trap whereby General Somoza or General So-and-so dictates what must be done. It is a highly principled body which analyzes problems that have previously been studied by various committees and makes its decisions as a collective body.

It's simple logic that five heads think better than one, and believe me, the Provisional Government has five extremely intelligent and well prepared heads. Sergio Ramirez is an intellectual, a cultured man; an absolute guarantee of correct thinking, as also is Moises Jasan. Alfonso Robelo's background is in private enterprise, a businessman who knows how business works. He has a well ordered mind, trained in U.S. universities—you see, we also will absorb U.S. technology. ...He's a good administrator and has demonstrated this in his businesses. Commander Daniel Ortega has an unimpeachable revolutionary record. He is an idealist who will not permit capitulation no matter how much blood is shed by his own comrades in the process of the Nicaraguan revolution. And Violeta Chamorro is the representative of the Nicaraguan woman (in the government—ed.), despite Latin American machismo, which the North American society always throws in our faces. The North Americans don't realize that they too

are machos. The North American society is actually much more macho than Latin society; look at it and you will see.

But the U.S. government, the Pentagon, the State Department, the CIA, and all the negotiators that have been sent have said that we don't have just representation in this government, that the interests of all Nicaraguans are not represented. What moral authority do they have to judge our interests? What moral authority does Carter have—who has been a betrayer of human rights—to judge if we have authentic representation? What moral authority would we have to judge the American people for having elected Carter? These are the United States's internal problems. Certainly the image of the United States during Carter's presidency has declined enormously in the world, which considers him an inept president, a president who doesn't know why he's there, and as we say in Latin America, one who's not worth a peanut. But these are the United States's problems. In any case, the United States should realize that the person they elect as president affects the entire world by his influence; that they should elect people worthy of respect, not mediocre people; knowledgeable people, not ignorant ones; capable and decent people. You, Mr. Quijano, who live there, should ask yourself if this has not been the case for recent U.S. leaders.

Our governing program includes everything relevant to the people of Nicaragua: education reform, graduated levels of social assistance, to be handled by medium level specialists. We must solve this problem using medium levels (of specialization—ed.) because our limited resources must be carefully administered. (We cannot afford) to reject a young man who has had 18 or 21 years of education because he didn't get a degree. We are going to make use of the acquired knowledge of this individual and put it to use for the society. We are such poor countries that we must take advantage of and channel all our resources into our program.

One of the fundamental aspects of the program is reconstruction and housing. Even if there hadn't been Somoza's massive destruction of the nation of Nicaragua, programs of reconstruction and construction of adequate housing would have been necessary. Our housing problems have been aggravated by the bombings, but even so, there were neighborhoods before in the very capital of Managua that didn't have running water, but a well where residents had to go and fetch water in buckets; not to mention the countryside. The housing problems there are horrendous. The majority of houses in the countryside have dirt floors and one or two tiny rooms where they cook and where the mother, the father, and the children all live together in absolute promiscuity. And in addition to the whole family, there are two or three dogs, chickens and other animals. This promiscuity with the animals, the dirt floors, the abso-

lutely unhealthy conditions—to get drinking water or water to wash cooking utensils you have to go to the river—creates very serious public health problems. It especially produces the proliferation of gastrointestinal diseases which decimate our population, our children. Only one out of every seven Nicaraguan children reaches the age of five. Picture a Nicaraguan country child, and you see a little child with wasted limbs, yellow coloration, worm infested.... emaciated with extended bellies. These children are literally dying like flies.

So, the problem of the Provisional Government, even without the bombings, was already serious: the extremely serious problem of providing housing for a great part of the population. And providing housing doesn't mean building houses of wood (of sticks, they say over there), or of boxes. I would very much like you to see the documentary made in the U.S. for you to see our housing problems. In Managua itself, people go to the banks of Lake Managua, to the garbage dumps, to get old boxes—boxes that had been thrown in the garbage—to make the walls of their houses. This is something I have also seen in some cities in the United States: wooden houses, terribly poor, especially in the black districts of Oakland (California). But with old boards, the houses of these people in the black districts are veritable palaces compared to the cardboard houses of Managua . . . and human beings live there. This is what the U.S. leaders don't understand.

I'm going to give you the program of the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua. That's the reason I don't want to talk anymore about specific problems. I'm going to give it to you so you can see there's no communism there. And I would appreciate it—I ask you as a favor—if you would publish it in broad outline so that U.S. public opinion can be made to realize that there is no communism there, only the vital necessities of human beings.

The Question of Debt

Q: According to the press, the revolutionary government has decided to recognize, but renegotiate Nicaragua's foreign debt. What can you tell us about this?

A: We are going to take a very measured approach, of approaching our problems with a great deal of patience. We've had this patience for 50 years. But this patience cannot take further stretching. It's going to be a principled patience, well thought out and very respectful toward all of the international institutions.

In the first place, as regards the money question, the renegotiation of our public debt is a categorical imperative of honor for us. All of Nicaraguan public debt has been awarded for the benefit of one family, for the benefit of one military group, and for imperialist domination in my country. Let these gentlemen not be offended by our telling them the truth, because we're going to tell them the truth. And we're going to tell the

International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and all the other institutions, that their aid is in this or that Swiss Bank and that it never reached the Nicaraguan people. The last programs for which we acquired an enormous foreign debt were for housing and agricultural programs. The agricultural ones have consisted of sowing bombs in the countryside. This is a new method of cultivating the land discovered by Somoza: drop bombs on the peasants to see if they'll grow. . . .

We have already stated that the public debt is going to be renegotiated because we are in a postwar economy. We are going to recognize the public debt even though it has not been applied to the uses for which it was authorized, and in spite of the fact that the international agencies that have given the money have covered up this misuse. The International Monetary Fund is aware that all of the loans they have recently given Somoza have been used to buy arms; nevertheless, they have disregarded that fact and have approved these loans supposedly for agriculture, construction programs, and all the rest. Even so, we are going to recognize and renegotiate our public debt. But naturally, this has one limitation: if they grant a loan to Somoza right now, they do so at their own risk. The company or bank that gives money now is giving it personally to Somoza, not to the government.

Now, we know that the problems of reconstruction are going to be difficult and are going to be very expensive. We have faith in international solidarity. We look to the burden of conscience which the U.S. might feel, if it feels any. We hope that, given the responsibility they have had in all of this, they will not stand in our way and that they will now leave us in peace to reconstruct Nicaragua. But it is a very mistaken perception of the U.S. leaders that Nicaragua can be rebuilt only with U.S. capital. There are other nations that have helped in the reconstruction of other countries—European nations, like Sweden, that have helped in the reconstruction of other countries. When we had the earthquake in Nicaragua (in 1972—ed.), capital came from many parts of the world. And we are thinking of attracting nontraditional capital to Nicaragua on a basis of mutual respect and on the basis that the laws of Nicaragua are obeyed.

No one should confuse a private company with the security interests of a nation. This is what Americans have traditionally done in Nicaragua. The State Department has been, so to speak, the guardian of all the multinationals, the guarantor that their loans would be repaid. Therefore, nontraditional capital throughout the world, especially from the open and democratic Latin American countries who want to help us in the process of reconstruction, is welcome to Nicaragua. The only condition is mutual respect and fair treatment. We have the example of Mexico, which is at the point of economic take-off with its oil boom.

I believe that all the peoples of Latin America are going to have to trade more among ourselves, to have closer relations among ourselves, to mutually protect each other, and protect our economies this way.

We are fully aware of the problem that faces us. But, as I said yesterday in a conversation, after all we have been through, we are prepared to endure come what may. We are also aware that we will be facing serious austerity. And the Nicaraguan who believes that once

will be great flows of capital, lots of money in Nicaragua, that the problems of construction will be immediately resolved, that there will be plenty of work, that there will be food for free, that the problems of public health will be resolved in 48 hours, is totally mistaken. A revolution must be built there with tremendous sacrifice. We face tremendous problems, but we choose this road.

Freedom has a price and it is large, and we are going to pay it. We are already paying the price with blood today; tomorrow we will pay it with work. And I believe that the strength and honor reflected by the provisional government in recognizing the public debt—[which was] poorly used, poorly applied and granted maliciously and with fraud—represents a guarantee for future capital, and investors which will say: "Well, if the public debt, though badly granted, is recognized, how could debt well granted not be recognized?" Nicaragua will have to manage every last cent honestly. And we believe that with a totally honest administration, if not in the short term at least in a reasonable time, we will be able to reach an adequate level.

The threat of intervention

Q: Some people think that, given the results of the recent OAS consultative meeting, the risk of a U.S. invasion has disappeared. But the U.S. government does not appear resigned to the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution and is openly trying to intervene in Nicaragua, even militarily. How do you judge this danger?

A: Look, we have not eliminated the possibility of a direct invasion by the U.S. For many of the officials of the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department, and the presidency of the U.S., it is an imperious necessity. For others, it is a shameful act. It depends on which side you look at it. But if we were to think that with the results of the OAS meeting the dangers of a unilateral armed invasion from the U.S. had stopped, we would be in the seventh galaxy, section two.

We have our feet on the ground and we are aware that this danger is imminent. The U.S. in turn, must be aware that we are decided. If we were to be defeated militarily, it would be the first time that the U.S. army would have defeated an armed people. If they did not learn with Sandino (a Republican liberation figure in

the early 1920s—ed.)—who with sticks and stones gave a spanking to a well-organized army such as the U.S. army—if they did not learn a lesson in Vietnam, well they will have to be taught another lesson. But, another thing that must be taken into account is that times have changed a great deal. They cannot drop an atomic bomb on us and wipe us off the face of the map. They cannot send their army in with impunity and claim a war between the U.S. and Nicaragua. It would be ridiculous. Even if they won the war, they would be the great losers.

I ask myself if America's youth are prepared to die in the Nicaraguan countryside in defense of United Fruit, in defense of the multinationals, in defense of Carter's "human rights." Notice the following fact: when the U.S. was at war with Korea, there were no demonstrations against the draft, at least not as public as with the Vietnam war. A great number of Americans refused and made public their opposition to that war. Even Cassius Clay refused to go. All this we have seen, we have thought about it, and while we are aware that American youth have problems, we are also aware that American youth is changing and it will not be easy to feed them elitist ideas.

That's what I see in terms of direct intervention. But we also see the danger of the U.S. using the OAS, using TIAR (Inter-American Defense Treaty—ed.), paramilitary organizations, CONDECA (Central American Defense Council—ed.), or whatever, to intervene in Nicaragua. There is also the possibility that the invasion would not be an armed intervention, but an economic intervention. But we think that the U.S. would have a difficult time putting up a blockade like they did against Cuba. We have confidence in the countries of Latin America, they will not let themselves be pulled into that again. The OAS—an organization which we consider anachronistic, obsolete, a toy in the hands of U.S. imperialism, a State Department pet—rebelled. The pet bit its master. Why? Because we Latin Americans are tired of what happened to the Dominican Republic, we are tired of the Nicaragua of 1912, of 1932, and we are also tired of protecting the image of the United States.

Nicaragua stands before the eyes of the world. We have here a small, poor country, a Third World country, and look at the recognition we have received: from Libya, Iraq, Vietnam, so far from us and yet looking so closely at the events in Nicaragua. And the U.S. can no longer intervene with such impunity in Nicaragua. Throughout the world anti-imperialist battles are being debated and supported. With what authority does the U.S. condemn the Cuban intervention in Angola and favor intervention in Nicaragua? One goes against their interests and the other in favor of them. My God, one would have to be blind not to see this as reality.

We are aware of three possible kinds of intervention: direct, indirect and through economic means. We believe that the last is what they are going to go with.

And, simultaneously, they are going to try everything to keep us in a constant state of guerrilla warfare. We are certain that the National Guard will not be really retired. They will be retired, but simultaneously the U.S. will use them to encourage guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua. We are sure of this. What is more: we are sure, but hoping we are wrong.

We respect the U.S., but we don't trust it. We have no reason to trust the U.S. when for years it has treated Nicaragua so unjustly. One thing is the respect it merits as a nation and another thing is confidence in its leaders. Don't believe that by heaving a sigh the revolution will be won and everything will be over. No, no. As a local television commentator says: "There is still more to come."

The children will forge the future

Q: *One question interests us greatly: the education of the children and the fight against the destruction of youth through harmful drugs. Surely, you have thought much about these tasks, how to educate the new generations after Somocismo. . . .*

A: I definitely believe that the correct guidance of our youth is a noble task. Our nations, including the U.S., will lose their strength if their youth are not properly guided. One of the most serious problems in Latin America, and of my country as well, is that of the children. From a medical viewpoint, we have the figure that only one out of every seven children reaches the age of five. There is a tremendous problem of illiteracy. There are not enough schools nor the basic necessities to give even an elementary education to the children. There are no decent nutrition programs for the children.

I believe that the future of the country will be forged through its children. It is not the present generation which will benefit from the government's programs. We are constructing a nation for our children. Our efforts today will lead to the achievements of our children. The improved living conditions, better health, better culture, all the achievements of the revolutionary process. The majority of the technical programs to be launched in all areas of Nicaragua will be directed toward the children. We in the provisional government are concerned about the children. Because we know that our plans are going to take effect when the children of today reach 20, 25 and 30 years of age, when they are the men who govern the country, when we pass on to them the leadership of a country, so that they will judge us differently from the way we judge our parents.

If our parents had taken the road of struggle that we have chosen so decisively, perhaps we would have had another sort of country. If our parents had said to the U.S.: "No, sirs, do not meddle in the affairs of Nicaragua," if they had been as hard as we now are, today our children would not have the need and the danger of taking up arms to fall on the field of combat.

You have seen the children of Nicaragua on television, Mr. Quijano. In the International Year of the Child, this will be the first revolution in the world won by children. Something very significant happened on June 9, 1978, in the city of Esteli, when the Group of Twelve entered Nicaragua. We entered Nicaragua on June 5 to form the Broad Opposition Front, to promote the political work of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, to achieve the unity of the Nicaraguan people, to carry out the political task of creating an anti-Somocista front, and we toured different parts of the republic.

In Esteli, Father Miguel D'Escoto, who is today in the OAS, was speaking before a junior high school which was on strike because a 14-year-old student had been killed. He was explaining to them what was behind the Group of Twelve and the FSLN, the reasons for the battle in Nicaragua, what forces were moving, so that they would understand the problem from a different point of view, from that of a priest and of a member of the Group of Twelve. They asked questions, they went to the podium, they questioned Father D'Escoto through the microphone. They were junior high school students. A delegation of elementary school children arrived and requested permission to enter and participate. They were listening and, then, all of the sudden, one of the boys asked permission to raise a question. The eight-year-old went to the microphone and said: "Father Miguel D'Escoto, what can the children of Nicaragua do for the revolutionary process in our country?" Those of us who were there trembled from head to foot, because we had been told that the Nicaragua people were depoliticized, that they did not know how to fight, that we would have to spread consciousness and that this was our mission. And we said to ourselves that if this was our mission, then we had failed because our mission had already been accomplished. If an eight-year-old child has this consciousness, it is clearly absurd to think that he is immature.

The Nicaraguan child is in the battle because of a biological need to survive. You have seen children on television who, when asked "Why are you in the fight?" would answer "If I don't fight, the Somocistas will kill me, and I don't want Somoza." When a 12 or 13-year-old child, or one even younger, has this consciousness of the need to fight, we must think seriously about what is going on with that country. And you must look at one very strange thing: in the International Year of the Child, the Nicaraguan child—poor, immature, illiterate—has something very great: he is giving his life for the cause of liberty for his people. These children are giving all they have, their own lives, which is the only patrimony they have. And we, what right do we have to deprive them of this if they want to live in a country which they want to build for themselves?

The children of Nicaragua have seen the conditions in which their older brothers and their parents have

been raised and they do not want to continue living in these conditions. So, they rebel to have a better life. The examples are innumerable.

We have seen how Somoza, conscious of this problem, has tried to exterminate the children of Nicaragua, the youth of Nicaragua. All youth from eight to 20 years are assassinated by the National Guard. Nicaraguan mothers say to their children: "Go with the Sandinista Front," not because they want to part with their children, but because it is a chance to live. The child has a chance of defending himself. If he stays at home, the National Guard will come in and kill him. The examples are countless and I will give them to you, together with the government's program, the report of the OAS Commission on Human Rights, where you see the huge number of youth, of children assassinated.

The children of the U.S. have enormously caught my interest. I have three sons and I am involved in this so that my sons will have an example of how they must bear themselves. How can I present myself to them in the future if I do not bear myself correctly? But look, in my country, children are shoeshine boys. In the countryside, they must abandon their studies of three or four months, because they must help provide for their families. I know American society. I belong to many scientific academies in the U.S., I have studied in American universities. Therefore I have had extensive contact with the U.S. Their children have caught my attention. I have seen them constantly playing in the parks in their bluejeans and their tennis shoes. There are child care centers in the barrios of San Francisco. By the Cow Palace, there is an enormous park; I enjoyed, when studying at the University of California and living there, going to the park, seeing the children play there. There is a football field, a baseball field, races, they ride their bicycles. At this very moment, while we are talking, in New York, in Los Angeles, in all parts of the United States, children between the ages of eight and 15 are in some park playing baseball, in some center eating their hot dog, their hamburger, their chili-burger, and anything you could want—of course, with their key around their necks, but, in the end, having children's fun. I wish that the children of my country were in this situation and not in the mountains of Nicaragua or in the cities of Nicaragua a shootout, taking a life or giving his life.

A child of ten or eleven in my country knows what it is to kill a Guard; he knows what it is to take a human life. And they do it consciously, because they know that if they do not take that life, that man will take theirs. This is terrible; when human beings come to such cannibalism, to this process of destruction. If it is a sinful thing for an adult, it is a terrible tragedy when a child has to kill another human being. I envy the American child who is playing in the park, who is watching a television program, instead of being out there with a gun killing people. But I am also worried,

and I ask myself: "This child, at 18, at 20 years of age, when he enrolls in the army or in the marines, in what country of the world is he going to die?"

I have honestly asked myself this question many times upon seeing an American child. I had a neighbor when I lived in California. His name was Mike; he must now be a boy of some 16 years, the image of the American boy with his key because his parents have gone to work. Then the child always had the housekey dangling from his neck, like an anti-rabies card. He would come in and open his refrigerator and take out what his parents had left for him to eat and go out again. He would come to us and say to my mother or to my wife: "Listen, give me frijoles." Beans fascinated him. Many times I have had the memory, and I have it now when I see my son of the same age, as when I knew this boy Mike. And I ask myself this: "Will Mike die in some country in some war defending some multinational company? Will there be a Vietnam prepared for him, will there be a Nicaragua prepared for him, will there be a Santo Domingo prepared for him? In what African country will he die? In what European country will he die as part of the occupation troops?" What would be terrific would be to say: "Man, this boy is going to be a scientist."

Mr. Quijano, in this struggle we are giving our all to solve this problem today, before my son reaches the age at which he can pick up a gun. I would not reproach him if he did so upon reaching that age and we were still in the same conditions. But it is very interesting to interview Nicaraguan children and to see how they think. It is said that children, drunks and lunatics always tell the truth. There are sayings in Latin America to this effect. My seven-year-old daughter a year ago painted Somoza as a fat devil; she always put on the horns. With their cousins, my sons play at war, because they live in an environment of war, they know the boys at the front, they know that I am in this, I have spoken to them about why I am in this. And they play war, some being Sandinistas and others the Somocistas. But it is almost impossible to get the group which is supposed to be Somocista to play their part. They have tremendous quarrels over how to choose sides.

I had two Nicaraguan boys who are now on the southern front. One is 16-years-old, and the other 13 years, who two weeks ago left for the southern front. We said to him: "We'll give you education, schooling." He said: "No, I want to fight." He fought in Masaya in 1977, a veteran of the war, 13 years old. He has no father; his father died. His mother: he doesn't know where she is ... she could have been killed in a bombing somewhere. He knows that he has a brother who is possibly fighting in the Sandinista front. And his whole ideal is to return to combat. There was no human power to stop this boy. He has an older sister, 23-years-old, who lives in Los Angeles, and he didn't want to go there with her. He is in the southern front, a boy who in Masaya had the experience of throwing a bomb at

a jeep that was carrying National Guardsmen. He told us that it was a "presto bomb" because it was in a jar of Presto coffee that he had the bomb, and he saw them bounce and he saw them stretched out.

My God, I say to myself, this child who has wounded or killed several National Guard soldiers, lived in my house, and played football with my son. One has to see this child at 10 o'clock at night, dead asleep. In the day, an activist, the youngest political exile that was ever in Mexico with his bucket collecting aid for Nicaragua; he gave speeches, press interviews, he did a whole series of things. At night, he came to my house, played with my son, and was a child again. At night, he used to come in at six or seven and he became a child again. In the daytime, he was a man—the child that played with toy cars, with an electric train; that played football with my son. He rested and, while waiting for news, he slept. He was a child, but a child that had had the sad experience of having taken people's lives and, when you saw him playing, you saw him as any other child in the world.

This is tragic, this is terrible. This is something that fosters a certain consciousness in us, something that Americans don't have. These children are not communists. These children are Nicaraguans. These children are children who want to live another way, under other conditions. These children are very much children. The examples of Nicaraguan mothers and fathers with their children are tremendous.

Look, when on June 5, despite the sixteen-and-a-half-year sentence over us, the Group of Twelve decided to enter our country; all of us, except the priests from the Group of Twelve, had sons. We were happily married, but we left our children, our wives, because we considered it our absolute duty to show with deeds what we had said with words. Somoza never thought we would enter (the country) and when he saw us at the airport he must have thought: "that bunch of lunatics, they are not afraid of me." In reality, we were not only afraid of him, we were terrified, because we know the assassin that he is. But, we had the commitment to fulfill our duty and be an example. In a personal way, I want to tell you this, that when we arrived in Costa Rica, I said good-bye there to my sons.... You know what this means when you are going to certain death? Hours before taking the plane to Nicaragua I spoke to my son and I said to him: "Look, Carlos, I have to go back; you know what this means and I want you to know that I am going because I have to go." The answer he gave me was: "You don't have to give me any explanations; just do your duty."

My son is now 11-years-old; he was then a child of 10. Do you think that I would fail to go back? Impossible. Because my son is perfectly well aware of the necessity of doing this duty. And if I do not do it, he is going to pick up the banner to show me an example; he is going to say to me: "You did not do what you had to do; now it is my turn to die." This is what is

happening with Nicaraguan parents.

Many parents did not actively participate, they limited themselves to criticizing the government, to saying: "Somoza is a problem, but while the gringos are in this country influencing it, victory is going to be impossible." Someone had to say: "Despite the gringos, Somoza and the gringos must go." We must tell Somoza to get out and tell the gringos not to interfere. If he won't go, we will throw him out and if the gringos get involved, we will have to kill them. And we are determined to die fighting American soldiers. But they must know one thing: that we are going to be women, men, children, elderly, all the people of Nicaragua, and all the peoples of Latin America who are going to fight on Nicaragua territory. We know they can defeat us. But even if they defeat us, we will win, because morally this is a just battle. The best, then, would be that we respect each other, and for them not to intervene in our affairs and not to send their youth to die on Nicaragua territory. We Nicaraguans are determined to defend our nation under the banner of our vanguard: "A free nation or die." Never in the history of Nicaragua has there been such a consciousness and such courage as in these moments.

My wife is Mexican. Nevertheless, when a few days ago, before the OAS meeting, we were preparing ourselves for an American intervention, we got a signal: "When it happens, everyone inside." And my wife said, "You have to go fight, and I go with you; our sons stay behind, but I go with you." We were decided. You can't imagine how many Nicaraguans of age here, how many professionals, how many women were reported saying: "If the OAS intervenes, please count us in, because we are willing to go and die there." It is not a threat, it is a fact. I hope that not a single American soldier ever sets foot on Nicaraguan soil to invade or subvert the Nicaraguan process. We are aware of our obligation as they would be if a Nicaraguan soldier came in to invade the U.S. They know that they have to defend their territorial integrity and their national dignity. We Nicaraguans are so determined.

Change has never been a crime

I hope this doesn't happen. On the contrary, I hope there will be a greater understanding, closer relations among our peoples and our governments—that the past is forgotten, that conquests are forgotten, and that there be a human and dignified relationship between the American and Nicaraguan peoples; that there be absolute fraternity between the American government and the new Nicaraguan government; that we forget that we are enemies, because we aren't—we are human beings with different outlooks.

The ideal (situation) would be if we had much to thank the American people and the American government for, and nothing to reproach them for, and that

there would be mutual collaboration and respect. What we have to do is so simple: respect each other and treat each other as human beings. On our side, we have the best intentions. There is no desire for revenge. We reach out to tell you: "people of the United States, citizens of America, on the basis of respect and justice, your Nicaraguan brothers are willing to collaborate and work with you, with mutual respect, to see each other as human beings under circumstances of equality. We want to have fair and equitable relations with you. There is no rancor among our people. Our people need you. The answer is up to you."

These are the feelings of the Nicaraguans. We do not seek revenge. We are sick of violence. And if the Pentagon, or whoever, is going to insist on maintaining violence, they should know that we don't want any more of it. We have used violence to attain peace. Once we've attained that, we want no more problems. Let them solve their problems, and if we can help them, fine. And let them help us to solve our problems—but on the basis of a deep respect.

Believe me, it pains me to speak poorly of Americans. This has been a very difficult time for me, to have to harshly attack and say many blunt truths to President Carter; to tell him that his human rights are a farce, to tell him he is mediocre because I believe that, and to tell him, he is a hypocrite, because I believe that too. Carter has behaved like a man who has a Bible in one hand and a bludgeon, a dagger, in the other. Carter is a traitor to himself. I feel this very personally. This is a very harsh thing to say, but we have the moral authority to say that he has acted badly on the question of Nicaragua. He has a Bible in his hand, but we wish he would read it. One must not only have the Bible in his hand, but one must also read it and practice what it says. With Nicaragua, Carter has practiced the very opposite of what the Bible says.

All this is to create a consciousness among the American people. We don't blame Carter for all our problems. In this modern era, it has been his lot to be Somoza's accomplice. We know he has problems. (We know that) to save the face of the United States, they want him out. Fine. But it is never too late to change, and the day that a change takes place, we personally, as a government, are willing to say: "Mr. Carter, we see that you have changed your policy, and that the opinion we had of you has changed. Now you are an honest president, a man who uses the Bible in the way you described in your first speeches." If the facts prove to us Nicaraguans that he has rectified his actions, then we too will rectify our conduct and opinion of him, an opinion which is not unfounded. He is lying to us—that's how we feel. We must tell him what we feel. But, at the moment he changes his course of action, we will also have to publicly change our opinion and our personal attitude toward President Carter. This is lawful. In the history of humanity, change has never been a crime.