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Voices of fighters against oppression

"NICARAGUA: The Sandinista People's Revolution." Edited by Bruce Marcus. Pathfinder Press. 412 pages.

By PIRI THOMAS

These speeches by leaders of the Sandinista People's Revolution read like a testament of repeated interventions in the sovereignty of Nicaragua for over a hundred years by U.S. administrations. To quote Sergio Ramirez, one of the Sandinista leaders, "To survive as a nation, Nicaragua has had to fight for decades against the imperialist ambitions of the United States - from 1885, when we were invaded by the first filibuster, to 1979, when the revolution definitively proclaimed national independence."

The U.S. Military has long cast eyes on the strategic and commercial values of building an inter-oceanic canal across Nicaragua with or without its permission to join the Atlantic and Pacific

Borge, Ray Hooker, Jaime Wheelock, Bayardo Arce, Victor Tirado, Lucio Jimenez, Humberto Ortega, Daniel Nunez, Luis Carrion, William Ramirez and Carlos Fernando Chamorro, editor of *Barricada*, the Sandinista newspaper. their words are the collective experiences of Nicaragua's struggles against U.S. interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua.

Our government is now more than ever a rootin'-tootin'-shootin' military-democracy, with President Reagan riding high on an overdose of billions for defense. With the present administration's policies, plans for expansion, with or without permission, are no doubt included for Nicaragua. Manifest Destiny means to its adherents, that might makes right, even when the right is so very wrong.

Some of the Sandinistas are Marxist-oriented, which does not necessarily mean they are Communists. Marxism clarifies in dialectical terms the causes and effects of capitalism on the economically oppressed. No one has to become a Communist in order to know he or she is being brutally exploited.

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I learned from reading "Nicaragua" that Big Brother, Big Business, has long considered Nicaragua (among others) as a source for resources, with its people as cheap labor, forced into the rape of their own homeland. South Africa, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines are among others who can attest to the facts of puppet rule backed by U.S. military might, while the multinational carpet-baggers pick the people's freedom clean.

"Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution," are speeches that clearly define the dangerous situation of U.S. Marines on war maneuvers in Honduras and the mining of Nicaraguan ports by the U.S. Navy. These are among the allegations which Nicaragua has brought before the International Court of Justice against the United States, who in turn refuses to participate.

These speeches are not propagandized rhetoric. They are hundreds of pages of historical facts about U.S. interventions. These words from Nicaraguan citizens in uniform will help us Americans to understand that our government is preparing once again to commit our sons and daughters to another bloody adventure in manifest destiny, which in the clarity of history's eyes, is always at the expense of innocent lives on both sides.

It seems to me soldiers fight better protecting their homelands, than when invading someone else's without even being attacked, let alone threatened. I have learned from reading "Nicaragua" about the beauty of a people, who have at last achieved freedom and are willing to die if need be to the last man, woman and child in order to preserve their nation's sovereignty.

I drew from these words of the Sandinista leaders, who in free democratic elections, were put into office in Nov. 4, 1984. I know. I was there during the elections with six-hundred other observers.

To those who are interested in facts and figures now before the World Court, the matter now before the World Court.



PIRI THOMAS

oceans. The U.S. Marines invaded Nicaragua in 1912, and again in 1926, but were repelled by General Augusto Cesar Sandino and his small army of peasants armed with old rifles.

The U.S. Marines left Nicaragua in the Thirties, but not before the U.S. had installed the cruel dictator, Somoza, and the bloody National Guards. Somoza had Sandino shot to death under a flag of truce on the pretext that Sandino would have a say in the government. Anastasio I, followed by his even crueler son Anastasio II, ruled Nicaragua with terror.

Happily, the U.S. backed regime came to an end with the victorious insurrection of July 19, 1979, which announced to the world, the birth of freedom in Nicaragua.

The more I read "Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution" the more I understood what our past and present governments are all about in terms of imperialism towards Central America. This book holds the voices of all those who fought oppression and overthrew it.

The battle cry of "Free Homeland or Death!" flows from the soul of all Nicaraguans, like Augusto Cesar Sandino (the spirit of Sandinista people's revolution.) Daniel Ortega, duly elected President of Nicaragua, Sergio Ramirez, Vice-President, Magda Enriquez, Tomas

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"Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution" is a fountain of information with names, dates and places spanning over 100 years of U.S. interventions in Nicaragua. I learned that Nicaragua is a land of artists, most creative in their flows, but like the poet-writers of other revolutions, have been forced to shoot with one hand while writing with the other.

Nicaragua is a country with an over 50 percent population of teenagers that are the soldiers fighting the U.S.-backed Contras. The very young who are old long before their time and only their hard-won freedom can serve to rejuvenate them. The promise of Nicaraguans to themselves as well as to the rest of the world is very simple, "A Free Homeland or Death."

The Nicaraguans are prepared to bear the full brunt of U.S. military intervention, that would, no doubt, produce bloody hardship with double portions for the women and children as victims of the manifest destinists. Once can sense

the beautiful dignity in this book. One can feel the joy of liberation in this book. One can hear the battlecry: "Tierra Libre o Muerte" (Free Homeland or Death).

American revolutionists would have rallied to the cause of freedom that stretches from Bunker Hill to Nicaragua. "Tierra Libre o Morir" (Free Homeland or Death) is the cry of Sandino and the Nicaraguan patriots. "Give me liberty or give me death" is the cry of Patrick Henry and the American patriots. Tell me freedom lovers, what's the difference?

"Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution" should be read, studied and believed, for it is written in the blood of its people.

If your favorite bookstore hasn't got "Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution," get it straight from Pathfinder Press. Check out the truths of these speeches. Then make up your own minds. Punto!

Piri Thomas is a poet, playwright, and author of the best-seller "Down These Mean Streets"