

OP-ED

Sandinista goals were evident long ago

By Alfred G. Cuzán

In a recent letter for the *New York Times*, Frank R. Safford, Professor of Latin American History at Northwestern University, argues that, as with Cuba 25 years ago, the United States, "by attempting to bring down a revolutionary government," gives it "no choice but to align itself more completely with the Soviet bloc." By "equating Marxism with Soviet alliance," he says, "we [meaning the United States] are acting quite successfully to fulfill our own dire prophecies." It is worth relating the political history of the top leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the ruling elite of that which Safford calls "a revolutionary government." The biographies of these men leave no doubt of their status as communists and Soviet agents long before they replaced Somoza as dictators of Nicaragua in the 1979 revolution.

It is appropriate to begin with Tomás Borge, minister of state security, because, at 55, he is the sole surviving founder of the Sandinista front. In the early nineteen fifties, Borge and Carlos Fonseca Amador, while university students, joined the traditional, Moscow-line communist party, the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), and studied Nikolai Bukharin's *The ABC's of Communism*. The party sent Fonseca to a youth festival in the USSR and upon his return the young man wrote a book, *A Nicaraguan in Moscow*, setting the Soviet Union up as a model for Latin America.

In 1959, Borge and Fonseca, like many young revolutionaries of that time, deserted the traditional Latin American communist parties and formed guerrilla movements under Castro's tutelage. Having been defeated in battle by Somoza's National Guard, Borge and Fonseca fled to Cuba. In 1960, they and Silvio Mayorga met in Honduras, where they founded the FSLN as a Marxist-Leninist organization. Back in Cuba, Borge and Fonseca were joined by the Ortega brothers: Daniel (now president of Nicaragua) and Humberto (currently minister of the armed forces); and

another brother killed in combat during the revolution. Fonseca, too, died in battle, in 1976. Borge and the Ortega brothers emerged as the dominant triumvirate within the FSLN shortly after the revolution. All three are members of a recently created five-man committee within the nine-member national directorate of the *frente*. This new Sandinista "pentarchy" is headed by (who else?) Daniel Ortega.

In 1975, Jaime Wheelock and Luis Carrión established their own FSLN faction, which they named the Marxist-Leninist Proletarian Tendency. Like many other communists, old and new, these two men were born to upper-class families. The darling of American progressive academics, Wheelock studied at the University of North Carolina and is reputed to be a scholar. As minister of land reform, he is one of the "inner five." He has described the FSLN as "the guardian angel of Nicaragua."

Carrión came to the FSLN via a group of "revolutionary Christians," middle and upper class university students financially secure enough to pursue utopia in idyllically-situated monasteries or "popular" churches in working class neighborhoods. This is how wealthy "priests" like the Cardenal brothers and Miguel D'Escoto (none of them members of the directorate) became public relations front men for the FSLN. Only Carrion soon discarded any pretense for religious belief. Today he is deputy minister of state security, a member of the national directorate though not of the pentarchy.

Named deputy-chief of the Sandinista pentarchy is Bayardo Arce, the party's organization man. In 1984, before the election of Ortega and a Sandinista dominated constitutional assembly, Arce gave a secret speech to the PSN, the old communist party to which Borge and Fonseca had originally belonged before founding the FSLN. The speech was surreptitiously recorded and published abroad, to the embarrassment

of the Sandinista apologists the world over. In it, Arce called the election a "hindrance" and confidently forecast the creation of a one-party state joining all communists into a single organization. In 1982, Arce and Daniel Ortega signed a sycophantic eulogy to Leonid Brezhnev, mourning the loss of a great defender of the "Great Fatherland" to which the Sandinistas betrayed their country long ago, i.e., the USSR,

In light of the political biographies of the Sandinista elite, it should be evident that, contrary to Professor Safford's tendentious letter, the FSLN was thoroughly aligned with the Soviet Union even before it seized power in 1979. In light of this history—which should be known to a Latin American historian—how can Safford suggest that it is the United States, rather than the Sandinistas, the Cuban communists, and the Soviet Union, who is turning Nicaragua into the second of Moscow's satellites in the Americas?