

tom thompson

Somozas have failed Nicaragua

Editor's note: Tom Thompson is an assistant professor of political science at the University who specializes in international affairs. His column will appear every two weeks in the Emerald.

For several weeks now the Somoza dynasty, which has ruled Nicaragua as a family fiefdom for 42 years, has seemed to be coming apart at the seams. With the coordinated attack by guerillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) on eight Nicaraguan cities Sept. 9, the political crisis in Nicaragua exploded.

Yet General Anastasio Somoza Debayle manages to cling to power. His 10,000-man National Guard has retaken six cities and for the time being appears to be putting down the popularly supported civil rebellion.

If ever a dictator deserved to be overthrown it is General Somoza. The 52-year old General insists that his government is a bulwark against communism in Central America, and repeatedly has accused Cuban leader Fidel Castro of financing, training and supplying the guerilla forces of the FSLN, which have plagued Somoza increasingly in recent years. General Somoza's charges, however, seem to be primarily a smokescreen to draw attention away from himself.

The fact is that the Somoza leadership is virtually without redeeming political or social value for Nicaragua, or for the rest of the world. The political power of the original Somoza, Anastasio (Old Tacho) Somoza Garcia, father of the current president, had its origins in the second of two U.S. Marine



interventions in Nicaragua: 1912-1925 and 1926-1933.

The Marines trained a police force to control turbulent Nicaraguan politics, and they worked through "Old Tacho." When the Marines finally pulled out in 1933, they left "Old Tacho" a present: A combined army and national police force known as the National Guard, well-trained and well-equipped, by U.S. instructors and with U.S. funds.

During 45 years of Somoza rule, the U.S. has not only trained and armed the National Guard, but propped up the Nicaraguan economy and given the Somozas continuing political support.

The Carter administration apparently has stopped military aid to Somoza and in July

the Senate wisely ended U.S. training of the Somoza National Guard.

The French newspaper *Le Monde* recently reported that on Sept. 13, Viron Vaky, the newly appointed U.S. assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, told a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Carter administration was pressuring General Somoza to resign.

The Somozas have run Nicaragua as though it were a cattle spread in the Wild West days. They have thoughtfully cut themselves in on every business in the nation.

Through the family and its connections, General Somoza owns outright or controls the national airlines, at least 30 percent of the prime farmland, cement, meat-packing,

metal fabricating and concrete plants, a construction monopoly, a newspaper and t.v. station and a port called — you guessed it — Puerto Somoza. Somoza controls the country's financial system, too.

Opposition leaders — including businessmen, industrialists, workers, campesinos, and students — have demanded Somoza's resignation.

Somoza accepted an offer from the Carter Administration to help set up negotiations between the general and his foes. But his expensive American public relations men now have a difficult time representing Nicaragua as a "democracy" and a "Free World" ally.

Somoza has done virtually nothing for his people, half of whom are illiterate. Yet the Somoza family is said to be worth about \$500 million. Even when disaster struck Nicaragua, in the form of the 1972 earthquake that levelled the capital city of Managua, Somoza responded characteristically and quickly — by making a financial killing.

In a conciliatory moment, Somoza recently offered to step down when his term expires in 1981 and to hold "free" elections for his successor. General Somoza's retirement at that time would not likely have any positive effect on life in Nicaragua.

The current dictator's 26 year-old son, already a major in the National Guard and head of a recently created elite unit personally loyal to him, will be ready to get firmly in the saddle and continue family rule. The "free" elections would be "postponed."

No matter what else happens, Nicaragua is in for more exploitation, bloodshed and strife.

yours

Student liked campus office

Although I am no longer a student at Oregon I would like to say that during my two years at UO one of the best discoveries I made was the Office of Student Services and the excellent counseling it can offer.

They can help a student if they're on probation, need advice on their degree and career choice, have a conflict with the school or staff or would like information on the Lifelong Learning Services or the Physically Limited Students Services.

Located in Oregon Hall, the staff in this office provides personal, friendly, caring and effective advice and help for students with academic and even personal problems.

Kit Hill,
Senior, psychology
Cal State, Hayward



theirs

Problems remain after Camp David

From the Salem Capitol Journal.

The United States is trying to preserve the "Spirit of Camp David" in pressing for further steps to bring a permanent peace to the Middle East.

And no one thought the task would be easy.

The euphoria that greeted the signing of the Camp David accords quickly evaporated as Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President

Anwar Sadat began talking publicly about the issues that still divide them deeply.

As expected, the accords drew a hostile response from other Arab nations and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

President Carter reportedly took Sadat and Begin aside after his address to a joint session of Congress and urged them to cool their public rhetoric before they pushed the peace effort back into a stalemate.

We assume that both Begin and Sadat, and especially Begin, were talking for home consumption. Begin gave up a great deal more than some of his more militant supporters view as acceptable trade-offs for peace. He faces a difficult job of selling the agreements to the Israelis.

Sadat also has problems, although his primary opponents are not in Egypt but in the other Arab nations.

No one will fault Carter if the

peace negotiations crumble. He achieved more at Camp David than anyone thought possible. But the issue is not whether Jimmy Carter will go down in history as a great peacemaker, but whether there will in fact be peace in the Middle East.

The United States must keep the pressure on both Begin and Sadat to follow through with the provisions of the accords and to bring the other Middle East nations into the fold.

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