

# Thin evidence against Nicaragua

by Bill Bigelow

The American war against Nicaragua grinds on. Despite the official cut-off of CIA funds to the counter-revolutionaries, U.S. policy remains consistent: to create the conditions for the overthrow of the Sandinista government.

In recent weeks U.S. strategy has assumed three different but related approaches, each aimed at smoothing the path toward an eventual direct military intervention:

- Assistance to the contras;
- Undermining Nicaragua's international standing;
- Building the prestige of the conservative Nicaraguan opposition.

Though last June the Senate reluctantly voted to end aid to the contras, the Reagan administration apparently finds this mercenary war against Nicaragua too valuable to abandon. An investigation by Jack Anderson revealed that the contra aid is still flowing. The Reagan administration encourages private foundations, church groups, corporations and foreign countries such as Israel, Taiwan and Guatemala to pick up the slack in the funding. The New York Times reports that this funding has totalled over \$10 million in the last six months alone.

Nicaragua estimates a death toll of 7,400 during the last three years. In a recent and frighteningly typical attack, 200 mercenaries entered the tiny village of Tapasle, deep in the Matalgalpa mountains. When villagers refused to single out members of the voluntary police and local election board, the contras randomly chose eight young people and slit their throats as their families looked on in horror.

To fairly distribute the burden of defense throughout the entire population, the Sandinistas have resorted to a military draft. The government has also been forced to hold down wage increases and other social spending to pay for the war. The Reagan administration hopes the measures will generate divisions and intense conflict throughout Nicaragua. In Reagan's dream scenario the Sandinista party itself would buckle under the military and economic pressure, necessitating a "rescue mission" a la Grenada.

The war of words against Nica-

ragua is also escalating. Recently, President Reagan condemned the country as a "totalitarian dungeon" and ridiculed Nicaragua's upcoming elections as a "Soviet-style sham." In July, the U.S. Defense and State Departments jointly released a background paper which charged that Nicaragua was "a nerve center of subversion to neighboring countries" and a "pernicious" aggressor against Nicaraguan government of trafficking cocaine to American cities.

Evidence is thin or non-existent in all cases. One ex-CIA analyst, David MacMichael, said the Administration's subversion report was based on charges that "they can't back up," and the Nicaraguan government has pointed out that, if the country is such a large-scale arms exporter, it's strange that not a single shipment has yet been intercepted. Surely the hope of the U.S. government is that if enough charges are leveled against Nicaragua — no matter how groundless — some will stick, and an image of Nicaragua as a bandit nation will emerge.

Consistent with this desire has been the U.S.' portrayal of Nicaragua's upcoming elections as meaningless. In fact, the elections promise to be the most democratic in the country's history. All political parties have been guaranteed radio and TV time in order to argue their points of view. Though Nicaragua is still at war, parties have been assured the right to travel throughout the country and to hold public assemblies.

Contrary to the U.S.' derisive characterization of the elections as a one-party race, there are actually seven political parties contesting for president, vice-president and the 90 assembly seats. Political perspectives of these groups range from conservative to liberal to Marxist-Leninist.

The U.S. government's obsession with portraying Nicaragua as a renegade nation is based not on fact but on fear. If Americans were to see Nicaragua successfully developing a genuinely democratic and independent society — both politically and economically — they might not be so easily convinced that all third world revolutionaries are puppets of the 'soviet Union. U.S. policymakers would then be forced that much closer to admitting the underlying economic factors motivating their

decisions.

Arturo Jose Cruz returned to Managua in July and announced his intention to run for President of Nicaragua. Cruz, former Nicaraguan ambassador to the U.S., and now darling of that country's right wing, immediately assumed the leadership of the Democratic Coordinating Committee (CDN), an alliance of the Private Enterprise Council (COSEP) and three conservative parties. The group has been characterized by the Washington Post as "weak, poorly organized and incapable of serving as a political alternative in Nicaragua."

But despite Cruz' announced electoral aims, the CDN had little to gain from participating in the elections — no observers gave the alliance a prayer of winning — and much to lose: its claim to be representative of popular opinion in the country. Thus, Cruz and company began making demands upon the Nicaraguan government they knew would not be met, in order to justify their ultimate decision to boycott the elections. They wanted the elections supervised by foreign countries — not just observed, but controlled by non-Nicaraguans. Other preconditions included an end to the military draft and an agreement by the Sandinistas to enter into negotiations with the contras, whom most Nicaraguans see as mass murderers. These were set as preconditions for participation, rather than as part of a platform on which the CDN could run and test its popularity.

The winners of this spoof on democracy are: the Reagan administration, which can now claim that the Sandinistas "excluded" the opposition and really are anti-democratic; the contras, whose prestige was enhanced by Cruz' recognition of them as a legitimate political force; and

Cruz' own CDN alliance, which is now being trumpeted by the U.S. as the real democratic alternative in Nicaragua.

Taken together, the components of U.S. strategy towards Nicaragua aim at laying the groundwork for a possible military intervention. If all goes according to plan the contra attacks will continue to weaken Nicaragua economically and undermine popular support for the Sandinistas. At the same time Reagan, the Great Communicator, will attempt to deceive

Americans and the world that Nicaragua has become a dope-dealing, revolution - exporting, totalitarian nightmare, and has to be removed. Meanwhile, the Administration will lionize the Cruz alliance as the genuine democrats of Nicaragua, the true proponents of Sandinismo. For his part, Arturo Cruz will use his new-found prominence to turn the world against Nicaragua and position himself to be leader when the Americans invade.

A big question mark, as the Reagan administration orchestrates its pretexts for a military intervention, is the consciousness of the American people. Daniel Ortega, Sandinista leader and candidate for Nicaragua's president, believes that the answer lies with Americans who understand the true situation in his country. The battle for Nicaragua, he said recently, "must be fought within the United States."

## Black Republicans host Dignitaries

The Oregon Black Republican Council is very delighted and honored to have in our city the following distinguished individuals:

—Samuel Pierce, Housing and Urban Development Secretary, who is one of the highest ranking cabinet members in the Reagan Administration.

—Mrs. LeGree Daniels, chairperson of the National Black Republican Council.

—Dr. Edward Victor Hill, pastor since 1961 of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California.

—Don Newcombe, baseball star for many years, now lecturer.

The following agenda is planned for the Portland area starting Tuesday, October 16:

Breakfast—Holiday Inn Coliseum, 7:00 a.m., \$10.00 per person. Limited seating, so please come early or call 249-0711 to reserve your seating.

Dinner—Red Lion Motor Inn, Portland Center. 5:30, No Host Bar; 6:30, Dinner, \$17.00 per person; 7:30, Program. Please call for reservations at 228-0616.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm - Emerson.



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## Help for United Way

Four area residents are on loan from their employers this fall to help United Way of the Columbia-Willamette reach its \$16.3 million goal.

Joining United Way as Loaned Executives are: Ken Berry, administrative assistant, Portland Public Schools; Kathi Harvey, driver, Tri-Met; Claudia McDuffie, classroom teacher, Portland Public Schools and Lilly Tamura, personnel analyst, City of Portland.

Loaned Executives come from a variety of fields, including government, education and private industry. But, for the next ten weeks will combine their talent a salespeople,

fundraisers, public speakers and negotiators collectively raising more than 60% of the total campaign revenues.

Throughout the campaign, the 82 Loaned Executives seek corporate contributions and assist company campaign chairmen conduct employee giving drives.

Campaign '84 is scheduled to end with a Victory Dinner Tuesday, Nov. 27 at the Hilton Hotel.

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette serves 97 agencies in Clark, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties.

## McCoy on the issues

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The plan was originally endorsed by some parents, the Urban League and the NAACP. However, the eventual scattering of Black students, who bore the desegregation efforts, raised outcry from the Black community. But McCoy attributed the problem to an individual who did not want a middle school in her neighborhood. "She did not want Black children from the inner city brought in. The District did not desegregate on the basis of race but on providing the best program for our students."

McCoy said the scattering of Black children occurred in advance of the formation of middle schools. "The Board spent time trying to get school funding levies passed. This set us back." However, she admitted, "We were not sensitive to the fact that we had so many kids going to so many different schools."

After the mobilization of the Black community and two school boycotts, the unfair provisions in the plan were shelved. McCoy is criticized today for her continuous support of the plan, even after independent research validated its negative impact on Black students.

She refused to respond to this criticism. "Some people were critical while others were supportive. The issue is not relevant to the City Council. I'm not going to rehash it," she quipped.

## Ballot Measure No. 8

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voters have turned down Prison Bond levies," Hertzmark added.

She does not expect the measure to impact criminal but everyday citizens. "We want to see victims have a greater role within the criminal justice system. And there are aspects in Ballot No. 8 already available under existing laws."

Hertzmark said only one provision of this measure that enfranchises victim's rights. "Requiring the Parole Board to notify victims and prosecutors of upcoming parole hearings is

commendable. But it is not worth the rest of Ballot Measure No. 8," she concluded.

Herndon said communities of color would suffer disproportionately if this measure passes. "It is documented that when police officers had the choice to give citations or make arrests, Black people were arrested in much higher percentages than other groups. The likelihood of abuse is too high. The individual rights of Oregonians will slowly erode if it passes."

## McCormick: Job development

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His main campaign issue is job development. "Oregon is one of five states in the union with chronic unemployment. I have a history of creating jobs in the private sector that shows fiscal responsibility. The City Council would show strong, affirmative leadership by working with all communities in Portland to bring jobs to the State. Portland is the window of Oregon and my 17 years in business will bring this about."

To beef up the City's Affirmative action record, McCormick said he would employ a group of "lean, mean private businessmen to provide

quality leadership with strong follow-through" to address the problem.

He said his Affirmative Action record at his many restaurants "is excellent." "I don't know how many I employ but one of the people I do is Charles Jordan's brother. I don't discriminate on the basis of sex, age or race."

McCormick said his advisors have narrowed the field of other City Council candidates down to seven serious contenders. "And the Black community is not going to be disenfranchised if I'm elected. The proof is in the pudding of my 17 years in business."

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