

E-Z chair logic

I must offer my apologies for writing last week's editorial in a language some of the *Gazette* readers did not understand and for not making the connection between the symbolic logic and Jamie Glazov's commentary (*Gazette*, October 23, 1986) obvious to even such an astute reader as Jonathon Tarlton.

I thought the connectons were obvious.

I intend here to rehash my interpretation of the argument Glazov presented and then go on to criticize his use of "facts" and his implied and other arguments.

The "widely accepted set of facts" I suggested Glazov was citing were:

"If 'B', (someone was a member of the Sandinista government), then 'A' (that person was anti-Somoza)".

Glazov demonstrated that the truth was "not always if 'B' then 'A'".

In my interpretation, Glazov then attempts to use this evidence together with other evidence to show that the contras are more democratic than the Sandinista government (eg., 'C', 'J', 'P', or 'Z').

I don't dispute Tarlton's interpretation of the argument Glazov implies because it is quite obvious that this is the thesis Glazov implies but doesn't state for a number of reasons.

He doesn't state this argument because:

- 1) He probably didn't have the facts to support it,
- 2) He probably even doubted the validity of the argument.

THE FACTS

Glazov says "less than five per cent" of the FDN (the main contra group) were members of "that small constabulary", Somoza's National Guard. Furthermore, he says none of them have political roles and they have no part in the leadership.

At five per cent of the 25,000 Glazov estimates as the force of the FDN, that makes about 1,200 ex-National Guardsmen who are now members of the FDN. That's quite a lot for a "small constabulary".

Incidentally, Amnesty International in their March 1986 publication *Nicaragua, The Human Rights Record*, estimates the force of the FDN at 10,000.

Glazov assures us that none of the ex-National Guard have political roles in the organization.

Since the National Guard was a military organization, it would be expected that none of them have purely political roles. However, this is not the case.

Colonel Ricardo "El Chino" Lau was a member of Somoza's National Guard and has been linked with the murder of Archbishop Romero. Until mid-1983, he was the FDN's chief of intelligence. At the CIA's behest, he was reassigned to a military command so he could take control of the FDN's Death Squad operations.

Three members of the FDN political directorate who have been linked with Somoza are:

Enrique Bermudez Varela, a colonel of Somoza's National guard, and military attache of the Somoza government in Washington. Now he is the Military Chief of the FDN.

Adolfo Calero Portocarrero was a CIA agent in Nicaragua from 1961 on. Presently, he is the Commander in Chief of the FDN.

Alfonso Callejas Deshon was a vice-president under Somoza in Nicaragua. Since 1982, he has been a member of the FDN and acts as a fundraiser.

Emilio Echaverry Meija a Fierro was a member of the National Guard and special assistant to dictator Somoza. He is now the FDN's chief of staff.

In the general staff and military command: Mario Ramon Morales was a National Guard captain from 1978. Now he acts as the logistics chief of the FDN staff.

Edgard Antonio Hernandez Flores Abel was a major in the National Guard who studied counterinsurgency at the school of the Americas in Panama. his present job is the FDN staff intelligence chief.

Juan Alcibiades Espinal Rudo was a National Guard captain; now he is FDN staff operations chief. Hugo Gongora was a National Guard captain; now he's Chief of field forces of the FDN staff.

The list goes on. Virtually the whole of the military command of the FDN is staffed by former members of Somoza's National Guard, Somoza's government of the CIA.

Glazov specifically mentions four people to make a link between the Somoza regime and the Sandinista government. The first two of these are brothers, Miguela Fransisco D'Escoto. Miguel D'Escoto's link with

Somoza is that his father was a diplomat for Somoza. Glazov describes him as a "top official" in the Sandinista government. Francisco D'Escoto is the Nicaraguan Ambassador to great Britain and was a minister under Somoza.

Joaquin Cuadra was a comander in the National Guard. Today he is a "top official" and "key advisor" in the Sandinista directorate.

Sergio Ramirez was an "outspoken supporter" of Somoza; now he is a member of the Sandinista junta.

What do these descriptions, stripped of their hyperbole, mean? When dealing with specific facts, these descriptions mean less than nothing.

"Top official", "outspoken supporter" and "key advisor" can mean whatever you want them to mean when you don't get too specific.

The only specific facts Glazov cites which relate a member of the Sandinista government to the Somoza regime are in the case of Francisco D'Escoto. If Glazov could provide some specific facts about the positions the other men occupy in the Sandinista government or positions which they occupied under Somoza, it would help to clarify his facts.

Incidentally, Miguel D'Escoto is now the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister. Just because his father was a diplomat under Somoza doesn't mean he supported his policies — to assert so could constitute a theory of political genetics.

Secondly, what does Glazov mean by the "Sandinista government"?

Is there no distinction between the party and the civil service in Nicaragua? If there is, as one would expect in a democratic government, then should Glazov and those of similar ilk not praise the Sandinista party for not imposing partisan hiring practices on its civil service — if these "top officials" Glazov mentions are in the civil service?

The links Glazov uncovers are embarrassingly tenuous. Surely supporters of the contras can do better if they wish to pursue this line of argument.

Glazov reports that the Sandinistas have admitted that members of their "secret police" used to also work in the same capacity for Somoza.

Perhaps. Glazov says the Sandinista decree of October 15, 1985 "formally abolished all civil liberties in Nicaragua."

Glazov is probably referring to the state of emergency which was first declared in 1982 and extended in 1985. This act, invoked while Nicaragua was under attack by U.S. backed contra forces, involves censorship, military conscriptions and nationalization of property owned by contra members, among other things.

The act is not unfamiliar to Canada's War Measures act and other acts adopted by governments which are at war, including Israel. The passing of the act is reported to have been well



received by Nicaraguans, who felt it would help the government in its struggle against the contras. To say that it formally abolished all civil liberties is false.

The Sandinista government allows Amnesty International observers to carry out investigations into human rights abuses in the country, unlike many countries the U.S. supports.

Amnesty International's report of March 1986 details some human rights abuses in Nicaragua, mostly over short term imprisonment of soldiers of conscience. However, for any serious human rights abuses, the organization also received information on the public trial and imprisonment of the military personnel found responsible.

Amnesty International found that, subsequent to 1982, the contras committed most of the abuses of human rights in Nicaragua.

THE ARGUMENTS

The argument which Glazov implies but does not state is well posed by Tarlton (see letters section).

If the facts Glazov cited were to serve any purpose whatsoever in his main argument, they are used to generalize a conclusion about the character of the whole Sandinista government.

To defend the FDN, Glazov says one individual (connected with Somoza) means little, if anything, in a twenty five thousand force. By Glazov's mathematics, are four (the number he connected with Somoza in the Sandinista government) out of 200,000 (an estimate of the number in the Nicaraguan military, civil service and the Sandinista party) more influential than 24 (the number of key FDN personnel I have specifically connected to the Somoza regime) out of 10,000 (Amnesty International's estimate of the size of the FDN)?

Figures aside, is there any validity to Glazov's implied argument? Guilt by association is frequently used to condemn political parties of any stripe. It is one of the weakest forms of E-Z logic.

Nothing is proved by establishing such tenuous links. It can indicate a pragmatic lack of prin-

ciple on the part of the people implicated in the crimes of association. It may indicate a genuine change of faith on their part.

It may also indicate an open-minded and "christian" sense of forgiveness or an anti-totalitarianism on the part of the government criticized. It may indicate nothing at all or it may indicate a confluence of policies on the part of the two parties criticized.

In any case, if there is other evidence that is available — as is the case with the Sandinistas — it is a cop-out argument.

A better form of argument in assessing "competing political units claims to legitimacy" is to look at their actions. In terms of human rights abuses, these are well documented by Amnesty International. It is left to the readers to come to their own conclusions about his evidence. Other evidence on the activities of the Sandinistas and the contras is detailed on the next two pages.

A weaker form of argument than this, but stronger than Glazov's is to look at the different declared policies of the different political units, rather than their implied policies as Glazov does.

Lastly, one could judge a government's claim to legitimacy the same way we judge our own, but often forget to when we criticize other governments — by democratic elections.

Glazov forgets that the Sandinistas were elected in free and fair elections that were praised by Canadian delegations which went down to observe them. Over 75 per cent of eligible voters turned out for the elections and elected the Sandinista National Liberation Front with 67 per cent of the vote.

Perhaps Glazov patronizingly considers himself a better judge than the Nicaraguan peoples. To suggest that he is a better judge of democracy in a society he has no experience of than the people of that society is presumptuous and is contrary to the United Nation's recognition of a country's right to self determination, placing him in the same camp as Ronald Reagan.

- Toby Sanger

Editor: Toby Sanger
National News: Pat Savage
Campus News: Erin Goodman
News Editor: Clayton Burns
Sports Editors: Joann Sherwood and Dean Goodman
Arts and Culture Editors: Ellen Reynolds and Heather Hueston
Literature Editor: Pat Savage
Science Issues Editor: Atul Sharma
Art Director: Ariella Pahlke
Production Manager: Geoff Stone
Calendar Page Editor: Michael Vlahos
Advertising Manager: Craig Munroe (424-6532)

Typesetters:
 Beth Cumming
 Robert Matthews
 Gilda Stefani
Staff Dis Issue:
 Mark Alberstat
 Stephen Shay
 Kathy Kennedy
 Alexis Pilchos
 Rick Janson
 Sean Forbes
 Charles Spurr
 Heather MacCrimmon
 Dwight Syms
 Troy Wagner
 Russ Adams
 Paul Grandy
 Mark Piesanen
 Scot Campbell