

Contra Sandinisto

By JAMIE GLAZOV

One of the most common myths propagated by the Sandinista government and its supporters today is that the anti-Sandinista rebels, the contras, are mostly all former National Guardsmen and "Somocistas." As all substantiated evidence reveals, such charges are not only false and absurd, but they manage to deny all that is fact and accept all that is fiction.

The charge rests on the fact that several of the contra commanders were members of Nicaragua's National Guard. But not all officers and men of that small constabulary were unquestioning "guardians" of the Somoza dynasty, as is often unwisely alleged. Somoza surely did not think so, as his periodic bloody purges of the Guard demonstrate. Somoza was constantly afraid of a coup by his reform-minded officers sympathetic to the democratic opposition.

The biggest and most powerful contra group (25,000 strong) is the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), operating in northern Nicaragua. The FDN has consistently been accused of harbouring "Somocistas." Roughly ninety percent of FDN fighters are individuals who once supported the Sandinista regime and fought against Somoza. The whole spirit of the FDN is founded on an anti-Somocista ideology. Ex-national Guardsmen make up less than five percent of the FDN; they have no political roles and have no part of the leadership. Most of the contras are peasants. Significant numbers are also made up of Indians and Blacks, whose cultures have been the object of Sandinista persecution and "scorched-earth" policies. The contra ranks have also been swelled by deserters from the Sandinista army and leadership.

Many former Sandinista leaders are in the ranks of the FDN. This is shown by the fact that Adolfo Calero is now commander in chief of the FDN. Calero was one of the most prominent anti-Somoza activists in the 1970's. He was for years a highly respected political leader in Nicaragua and led the famous attempt in 1978 to oust Somoza from power. Somoza imprisoned Calero twice, the last time in Sept. 1978. Calero fought for the Sandinista cause and after the revolution he supported the Sandinista regime. It was only in 1982 that he decided that the Sandinistas, with their increasingly totalitarian and expansionist ideology, had betrayed the revolution. Disenchanted with the Sandinistas, he broke off his ties with the regime and joined the resistance.

In 1985 the FDN and other smaller contra forces reorganized under the banner of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO).

The three directors of the UNO are Adolfo Calero, Alfonso Robelo — the former member of the Sandinista junta, and Arturo Cruz — also a former member of the Sandinista junta and former Sandinista ambassador to Washington. These individuals are directing a force which seeks to bring democracy to Nicaragua, the goal that all Nicaraguans shared when they rose up and overthrew the corrupt and repressive Somoza regime. If Calero, Robelo and Cruz are the voices of "Somocismo", then the word certainly doesn't fit the definition of its preconceived stereotypes.

The Sandinistas and their friends abroad have unceasingly used the example of Enrique Bermudez, a member of the FDN, to prove their so-called argument that the FDN is filled with Somocistas. First of all, one individual means little, if anything, in a twenty-five thousand force. Secondly, while it is true that Bermudez was once in Somoza's National Guard, it is common knowledge that he was an avid opponent of Somoza. It is no secret that Somoza and Bermudez hated each other. Somoza regarded Bermudez as "too moderate" and often called him a communist because he felt Bermudez was not sufficiently enough devoted to the government. Somoza also terribly envied Bermudez because he was enormously popular with the troops. Bermudez was finally forced out of Nicaragua by Somoza. During the last years of Somoza's rule Bermudez lived in exile in the U.S. and Japan. It would also be important to remember that Bermudez never had any connection with the crimes associated with Somoza and often spoke out against them. If Bermudez is the best example Sandinista sympathizers can provide of "Somocistas" in the FDN then their arguments leave much to be desired.

There is something even more interesting in this whole controversy. Not only are there few Somocistas in the ranks of the contra rebels in Nicaragua, but many are to be found in the ranks of the Sandinista (regime). Many of Somoza's former National Guardsmen and other individuals associated with Somoza's crimes today serve the Sandinista regime. To name a few:

Miguel D'Escoto is from one of the most prominent families of the Somoza Dynasty. Born in California, he is the baptized godson of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, the founder the Somoza dynasty. His father was one of Somoza's top diplomats, serving the dictator in Paris and other major cities. With the millions of dollars that the D'Escoto's made from the sale of Nicaraguan subterranean exploration rights given to them by Anastasio Somoza, they bought themselves millions of dollars worth of titles and royalties. Thanks to his godfather's

largesse, the young D'Escoto was able to study and travel in the U.S., where he was ordained a "priest" (he has since been defrocked). Today Miguel D'Escoto is a top official in the Sandinista government.

Francisco D'Escoto is the brother of Miguel D'Escoto. Until the revolution, he served Somoza as Advisory Minister in Ginebra. He is known to have been one of the strongest backers of the Somoza regime. When the Sandinistas took power they showed their "anti-totalitarian" mentality by making Francisco D'Escoto the Sandinista Advisory Minister in Washington, D.C. Today this former Somocista serves as the Nicaraguan Ambassador to Great Britain.

Joaquin Cuadra was one of the most feared and ruthless commanders in Somoza's National Guard. He founded and led a Nazi group called the "Camisas Negras" (The Black Shirts), which was established to liquidate any opposition to the Somoza regime. This group was heavily funded by the Somoza government. Cuadra is popular for having created the famous pro-government slogan "Somoza Forever". Interestingly enough, it is this man who today serves as a top official and one of the key advisors in the Sandinista directorate.

Sergio Ramirez was an outspoken supporter of Anastasio Somoza during the late 1970s. He wrote many articles in praise of the dictator, of which the most popular appeared in a magazine called "Poliedro", which he directed. At some of the most critical moments of the Somoza government's existence, Ramirez put his weight behind Somoza and openly endorsed the regime. Today Ramirez is a member of the Sandinista junta.

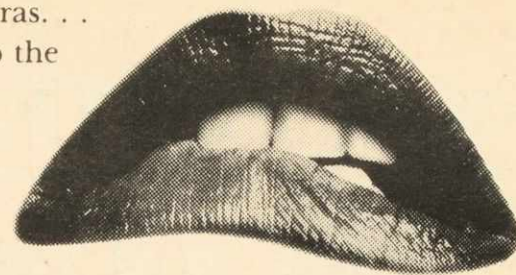
Tomas Borge, head of the dreaded Sandinista secret police, recently admitted that many of the Sandinista "Black Shirts" who terrorize Nicaraguans in their neighbourhoods today used to perform similar services for Somoza.

The Sandinistas have surpassed their predecessors in abusing the basic rights of their own people. The Sandinista decree issued on Oct. 15, 1985, which formally abolished all civil liberties in Nicaragua, diminished the last hope that democracy might return to Nicaragua under the communist regime. The contras offer the democratic alternative.

That Nicaraguans bore the brunt of Somoza's repressions, that hundreds of courageous and freedom-loving Nicaraguans died heroically fighting against the corrupt and brutal Somoza regime is a given. What is too often forgotten, as history demonstrates, is that the greatest enemy of the Nicaraguan people was never in the ranks of the resistance, but in Managua — as it is today.

Before you head downtown to the Mardi Gras...

Come to the



THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

a different set of jaws.



Friday, Oct. 31st

Special Price:

7:30PM

\$2.00 to anyone

Doors open at 7:00PM

who attends the

McInnes Room

movie in costume

Admission \$3.00

STRATOBLAST!

Fender®

STRATOCASTERS IN STOCK AND PRICED TO TAKE OFF



Telecasters, Basses and Amps also in stock and priced to move!

HALIFAX FOLKLORE CENTRE

1528 BRUNSWICK ST. PH. 423-7946
YOUR EXCLUSIVE DOWNTOWN FENDER DEALER

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT MARY JANE'S

?

HALIFAX'S NEW NATURAL & INTERNATIONAL FOOD STORE

NATURAL FOODS, VITAMINS & COSMETICS
CHINESE, INDIAN & JAPANESE GROCERIES
FRESH PRODUCE, BAKED GOODS, COFFEE & TEA
CHEESES, DELI MEATS, HERBS & SPICES
BOOKS & KITES & KITCHENWARES & MORE & MORE

NEW FOODS ARRIVING EVERY WEEK

Student Discount with Valid I.D.

Mary Jane's

Alternative Tastes

Ltd.

1313 HOLLIS ST. 421-1313

ONLY A 5 MINUTE WALK FROM DOWNTOWN

FREE PARKING AND OPEN EVERY DAY