

# Nicaragua: A Brief History of Daniel Ortega-Rosario Murillo regime and the World Bank, the IMF, the US Government

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**The violence against demonstrators protesting against brutal neoliberal policies is just one of the reasons why different social movements have condemned the Nicaraguan regime led by Daniel Ortega and the Vice-president Rosario Murillo. The left has many more reasons to denounce the policies of the regime. To understand this, we must go back to 1979.**

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## PART I: The story of the Daniel Ortega-Rosario Murillo regime

### **An authentic revolution in 1979**

On 9 July 1979, an authentic popular revolution triumphed over the dictatorial dynasty of the Somoza regime. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (in Spanish - *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*-FSLN) played a fundamental part in the victory thanks to its role in the armed struggle, its political initiatives and its capacity to represent the aspirations of the people. Nevertheless, the FSLN would never have won out against the dictatorship without the immense mobilization of the majority of the Nicaraguan population. Without the courage and abnegation of the people, the Somoza dictatorship, supported by Washington for several decades, could not have been decisively overthrown. Support from Cuba also had a decisive effect.



**The FSLN played a fundamental role in the victory of an authentic popular revolution in 1979**

In the years that followed, the health, education, housing, freedom of expression and organization, and labour rights in both town and country and the living conditions of a large portion of the popular classes improved significantly. Banks along with a number of industrial and food corporations were nationalized. This resulted in great domestic enthusiasm and a really important international support. Tens of thousands of volunteers from all over the World (mainly from Latin America, North America and Europe) arrived in Nicaragua to help in the work brigades, to contribute to the improvements in health, education and housing and to prevent the revolution from becoming isolated.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Nicaraguan big capital, big multinationals present in the region (food industry, mining, etc.), US imperialism and its vassals (such as the “socialist” regime of Carlos Andr s Perez in Venezuela or dictatorships as in Honduras) formed a coalition to try to put an end to this extraordinary experiment in social liberation and renewal of national dignity. They found it necessary to contain the spreading of such tendencies which became very vigorous in the 1990s. In fact, social revolt was rampant in the region, in particularly in Salvador and Guatemala where revolutionary forces close to the Sandinistas had been active for decades. Neither did Cuba hesitate to defy Washington and the American dominant classes by bringing its support to the Central American revolution.

## **The Contras**

The revolution’s enemies at home and abroad created the Contras, a counter revolutionary army that aimed at overthrowing the Sandinistas. They obtained so much fire-power that they had the capacity to hit the revolution very hard and prolong the conflict until 1989. It was financed, trained and advised by Washington, who presented the Contras to the international community as a liberation army. What’s more, US forces mined the ports, an act condemned in 1986 by the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The US ceased forthwith to recognize the competence of the International Court of Justice.

### *Washington financed and trained the Contras*

In spite of social and democratic achievements, the policies of the Sandinistas quickly showed their limits. The agricultural reform, so long awaited by so many in rural Nicaragua, was quite insufficient: the authorities took too long to redistribute land and property titles to small farmers. It was among these small farmers who were disappointed by such reticence that the Contras developed a social base. The majority of the urban population took part in the revolution whilst feelings were more mixed in the rural areas.

## **“Direction: Command”**

Of course, the primary cause of the difficult situation with which Nicaraguan society had to cope was the imperialism of the US and the local elites who wished to maintain their privileges and continue to exploit the people. But the policies of the Sandinistas themselves also played a part in the failure to extend, consolidate and develop the revolution. Among the causes that originated among the leaders were their authoritarian tendencies, expressed by the slogan “Direction: Command”. This meant that the Masses should await orders from above to apply the revolution. This advice sapped the Masses’ revolutionary ardour.

*The Sandinista leaders’ slogan “Direction: command” sapped the Masses’ revolutionary ardour*

The way the war was conducted was also cause for concern. The left of the FSLN (particularly through the magazine *Nicaragua Desde Adentro*) criticized Humberto Ortega, the head of the army and Daniel Ortega's brother, for forming a regular army equipped with expensive heavy tanks, unsuitable against the guerrilla methods of the Contras. [1] The conscription of the country's youth in order to reinforce the army was also badly perceived by the population.

### **The Sandinista government introduced a structural adjustment plan**

As from 1988, the Sandinista leaders introduced a structural adjustment plan that degraded the conditions of the poor without affecting the rich. [2] These policies very much resembled the usual conditions imposed by the IMF and World Bank while at the same time, under pressure from Washington, the two institutions had suspended their aid to the Sandinista authorities. [3] These adjustment policies were very much criticized by certain tendencies within the FSLN because it burdened the popular classes with the adjustment effort.

*A structural adjustment plan is like a kalashnikov, it all depends on who's doing it*

I remember well the reply by Omar Cabezas, [4] revolutionary leader and member of the Sandinista Assembly, in a public gathering in 1989 when we asked him how it was possible that the Sandinista government could apply a structural adjustment plan just like an IMF plan. The gist of his reply was that a structural adjustment plan is like a kalashnikov or a FAL rifle, it all depends on who's doing it. If it's the revolutionaries that are doing it then it's fine. We certainly cannot be satisfied with this kind of answer.

### **The export-oriented extractivist model with low wages is maintained**

Actually the Sandinista leaders conceded a lot to the employers, especially concerning wages, which remained very low. The argument that was used to vindicate this policy was that Nicaragua had to export as much as possible on the global market and that in order to be competitive it had to squeeze wages. Few or no measures were taken to move away from the export-oriented extractivist model with low wages. If they had really wanted to break away from that model that depends on competitiveness on the global market, they should have gone against the interests of the capitalists that still dominated the export-oriented extractivist industry. They should have supported the small and medium-sized producers who supplied the domestic market.

*They should have supported the small and medium-sized producers who supplied the domestic market*

In 1989 the FSLN government reached an agreement with the *Contras* on putting an end to fighting, which was of course a good thing. It was presented as the victorious outcome of the strategy that had been adopted. Yet it was a Pyrrhic victory. The Sandinista leadership called a general election in April 1990 and felt certain they would win. Election results struck the Sandinista leadership with an amazed wave of panic: the right had won because it had told voters that if the FSLN won, fighting would resume. The majority of the people wanted to avoid further bloodshed [5] and thus reluctantly voted for the right. They were hoping for an end to war for good. Some were also disappointed by the FSLN government's policies in the countryside (deficient agrarian reform) and in cities (negative consequences of the austerity measures enforced by the structural adjustment programme begun in 1988) though Sandinista organizations could still rely on a lot of support among young people, workers and civil servants, as well as among a significant number of farm labourers.

The Sandinista leadership expected to reap 70% of the votes in the April 1990 elections, so it was flabbergasted, as it hadn't perceived the growing discontent in a large portion of the population. This illustrates the gap between the majority of the people and a leadership that had become used to giving orders.

The orientation of the Sandinista leadership was mostly determined by Daniel Ortega and his brother Humberto.

### **The *piñata***

After the victory of the right, a significant part of the estates formerly expropriated from the Somozistas after the 1979 victory were appropriated by a few Sandinista leaders, who consequently became very rich. This process was called *piñata*. Those who organized the *piñata* accounted for it as meeting the need to secure assets for the FSLN against a government that might want to confiscate the Party's assets.

They claimed that it was better to turn them into private property owned by trustworthy people such as themselves. In fact, quite a lot of those historical leaders acquired the mindset of the *nouveaux riches*.

### **The Sandinista Army after the defeat in the April 1990 elections**

The Sandinista leadership, with Daniel and Humberto Ortega at its head, negotiated the transition with Violeta Chamorro's new government. Humberto was still General in Chief of a starkly reduced army. The most left-wing members of the army had been dismissed, under the pretext that they had supplied missiles to the "Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front" (FMLN), which was still attempting to bring about a general uprising in Salvador. In the context of presidents Gorbachev [6] and Bush [7] coming closer together, Soviet authorities had denounced the fact that SAM 7 and SAM 14 missiles that had been supplied by the USSR [8] to the Sandinistas had been passed on to the FMLN and used to shoot down US army helicopters operating in El Salvador. [9] Four Sandinista officers were imprisoned on an order from Humberto Ortega with the following explanation: "Blinded by their political passion and guided by extremist arguments, this small group of officers flouted military honour and the Institution's and Military Command's loyalty, which is the same as flouting the sacred, patriotic and revolutionary interests of Nicaragua." [10]

This led to strong criticism from the Workers' National Front (which included Sandinista trade union organizations), from the Sandinista Youth as well as from a number of FSLN activists. Moreover a left-wing faction of the FSLN disapproved of Humberto Ortega remaining head of the army under a right-wing presidency instead of joining the political opposition to the new regime and leaving his position to his deputy, who was also a member of the FSLN.

### **The FSLN and the Chamorro government**

Only a few months after Violeta Chamorro started her mandate as president, a massive protest movement spread throughout the country in July 1990. Managua and other cities were covered with Sandinista barricades and the trade unions launched a general strike. This resulted in a compromise with Violeta Chamorro's government, which was forced to withdraw some measures, but the Sandinista grassroots was disgruntled at the FSLN leadership having halted protest actions. Later, the Front's leadership gradually made concessions to Chamorro, accepting the dismantling of the

public banking sector, the reduction of the public sector in both agriculture and manufacturing, the end of the State's monopoly on foreign trade. Chamorro also organized the cleansing of the police force and incorporated former Contreras into it. This police force was in the front line to repress social protests in 2018, along with paramilitary militia, about which more will be said below. Chamorro did not directly tackle the army, in the context of the co-existence agreement with the FSLN leadership. Now in the opposition the Sandinistas committed themselves to disarming the people.

*In July 1990, Managua and other cities were covered with Sandinista barricades and the trade unions launched a general strike*

The first six months of 1991 were marked by a radicalization of the FSLN leadership, under the combined pressure of Sandinista trade union leaders and of actions initiated by the grassroots movement that wanted to stand up for the revolution's achievements. We can only stand in awe in front of the degree of self-mobilization of the popular masses, who, determined to resist, adopted various forms of struggle: land occupation, occupation of plants, worker-managed production, general forms of struggle (strikes, marches, barricades) addressing various sectors. Young people's dynamism was an essential factor.

Some of the Sandinista leaders, however (not members of the national leadership but rather former Sandinista ministers such as Alejandro Martínez-Cuenca) openly mention the need for a 'co-gobierno,' a kind of conditional external support to Violeta Chamorro's government, and support the policy enforced by the International Monetary Funds, for to some extent it can be perceived as in line with the policy followed by the Sandinista government from 1988. [11]

### **The first FSLN Congress in July 1991**

The first FSLN Congress, held in July 1991, still displayed the movement's great vitality and the leadership submitted a text in which it criticized the deficiencies in its own agrarian policy in the 1980s and the verticality in the way it functioned. [12] A token of this radicalization was that the Sandinista MPs left parliament for an unlimited period to protest against neoliberal reforms and the offensive of the right.

However, in the run-up to the 1996 elections Daniel Ortega initiated a shift to the right.

### **Daniel Ortega's sharp right turn in 1996**

During the 1996 electoral campaign, Daniel Ortega bent over backwards to reach out to the upper classes, showing he had been converted to the benefits of the market economy and moderating his discourse towards Washington. The right-wing candidate Arnaldo Alemán won the elections with 51 % while Daniel Ortega only gained 38 % of the votes. Sergio Ramírez, former member of the National Directorate that broke away from the Sandinista National Liberation Front to start the Sandinista Renovation Movement, got no more than 0.44 % of the votes.

According to Monica Baltodano, former FSLN activist: [13] *"The confrontations at the heart of the Sandinista Front between 1993-1995 [Author's note: of which one of the outcomes was the foundation of the Sandinista Renovation Movement] convinced Ortega and his inner circle of the importance of controlling the party apparatus. This came to a head at the Front's 1998 Congress, where what was left of the National Directorate, the Sandinista Assembly and the Congress of the Front began to fall apart. They were replaced by an assembly where most of the participants were leaders of popular organizations faithful to Ortega. Eventually even this assembly ceased to meet. At*

*that point, there was a significant fracture. It was by then obvious that Ortega was drifting ever further from left-wing positions and was centering his strategy on broadening his power-base. He sought power for power's sake.*

From then on, to increase his power, he embarked upon a series of alliances. The first one, with President Arnoldo Alemán, resulted in the constitutional reforms of 1999-2000. The central proposition of the alliance with Alemán consisted of reducing by the percentage required to win the elections to 35%, sharing the posts of all State institutions between the two parties and guaranteeing the safety of properties and companies belonging to the leaders of the FSLN. In exchange, Ortega gave Alemán assurances of "governability". It was the end of strikes and industrial action. The Sandinista Front stopped opposing neoliberal policies. Organizations whose main leaders became elected Members of Parliament in the ensuing years or integrated the structures of Ortega's circle of power ceased to resist or struggle". [14]

In other words, at the end of his mandate, Arnoldo Alemán made a pact with Daniel Ortega so that they could have more loyal representatives in the institutions thereafter. Thus they strengthened their presence in such institutions as the Electoral Council, the Court of Auditors and the Supreme Court.

Daniel Ortega lost the presidential elections in 2001 with 42 % of the votes against Enrique Bolaños, former Vice-President of Arnoldo Alemán, who gained 56 %.

### **Daniel Ortega made a pact with Arnoldo Alemán, one of the main right-wing leaders**

The Alemán-Ortega Pact was triggered by the decision of Enrique Bolaños, now president, to lash out at his former team-mate Alemán by supporting his indictment for corruption and the subsequent conviction of 20 years imprisonment. In 2003, Daniel Ortega saw to it that the men he had placed in the judicial system arranged preferential treatment for Alemán, allowing him to serve out his sentence in house arrest.

Later, in 2009, two years after his election as president of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega gave his support to the Supreme Court's decision to quash Alemán's conviction and release him. A few days later Alemán returned the favour by ensuring that the parliamentary group of the Liberal Party he led voted for the election of a Sandinista at the head of the National Assembly.



### **In 2005, Daniel Ortega reconciles with the ultra-conservative Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, converts to Catholicism and marries in Church**

In 2007 Daniel Ortega won the presidential elections by making pledges to several major enemies of Sandinismo. Daniel Ortega had won over Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, who had fought hard against him as he had fought hard against the Sandinista Revolution throughout the 1980s and 1990s, to the extent that he had openly supported the *Contras*. To improve his relationship with the reactionary cardinal, Daniel Ortega apologized for the way the Church had been treated during the



revolutionary process. He converted to Catholicism and asked Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo to officiate at his marriage to his companion Rosario Murillo in September 2005. [15]

*In 2006, Daniel Ortega gave his support to the adoption of an ultra-reactionary law totally prohibiting abortion*

### **In 2006, Daniel Ortega supported the total prohibition of abortion**

In 2006, a few months before the elections, the FSLN's parliamentary group, led by Daniel Ortega, gave their support to the adoption of an ultra-reactionary law totally banning abortion, including in cases where the pregnant woman's health or life are in danger or where the pregnancy resulted from rape. This legislation came into effect with the new Penal Code in July 2008, under the presidency of Daniel Ortega. Previously, "therapeutic" abortion (in case of danger to the woman's health or when the pregnancy resulted from rape) had been authorized in the country since 1837. [16]

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## **PART 2: The evolution of the regime of President Daniel Ortega since 2007** **article**

**In order to win the presidential election of November 2006, Daniel Ortega succeeded in making his election acceptable to the ruling classes, and in particular to the COSEP (Superior Council for Private Enterprise), the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, represented by Cardinal Obando y Bravo, former presidents Arnoldo Alemán and Enrique Bolaños, and the IMF. Daniel Ortega had also done his best to keep the support of a number of leaders of Sandinista popular organizations. He succeeded in doing that, and has continued to do so until today. These leaders consider Ortega to be the protector of a series of entitlements achieved by the organisations, and above all of their leadership.**



What Daniel Ortega succeeded in doing between 2007 and 2018 is reminiscent of what Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) did during the 1960s and 1970 (*see the box on the PRI regime*): defend the interests of big capital, open the economy more to major foreign corporations, and maintain good relations with the IMF, the World Bank and other multilateral entities, while maintaining the support of a number of popular organisations over which it has very strong influence, and by maintaining a policy of minimal social assistance (financial and material support for the poorest citizens, but without intervening structurally on the causes of poverty), all of which was enabled by an international economic situation that was favourable to exportation and by aid from Venezuela. Like the PRI in 1968, Ortega did not hesitate to use violence against social protest. But, proportionally to the size of the population, in 2018 he did it on a larger scale than had the PRI. Like the PRI at that period, Ortega still has the support of several anti-imperialist governments

(Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia) and a part of the Latin American Left. How long can that last? That will depend on several factors: the scope of the economic crisis, which is reducing the manoeuvring space for the policy of distributing crumbs to the poorest segment of the population, the ability of the social movements and the radical Left in Nicaragua to overcome their disorientation and disgust, the brutal repression, the discredit to Sandinism and socialism resulting from the caricatural nature of the regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo, and the ability of the international Left to overcome its perplexity.

### **The PRI regime in Mexico**

The PRI, which came into existence in 1946, had succeeded, starting in 1950-1960, in co-opting and diverting what remained of the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920 and the major social advances achieved during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas between 1934 and 1940: nationalization of oil and of the railways, expropriation of 16 million hectares from the big foreign or national landowners and the redistribution of the land to the native indigenous communities for their collective use, and the victory won over the banks – primarily in the USA –, reducing the public debt by 90% (see Éric Toussaint, *The Debt System* [17]). The PRI monopolized power and surrounded itself with satellite parties. It controlled the trade unions and the public service, along with most farmers' organizations. It controlled all the organs of the State, a part of the strategic industries and the means of mass communication. It engaged in very harsh repression during the student protests of 2 October 1968, resulting in the Tlatelolco massacre. The exact number of dead due to that repression has never been revealed. Serious sources estimate it at 300. The PRI government eventually recognised some thirty deaths, but that number is not convincing. As part of the repression of 1968, the PRI had hundreds of leftist militants eliminated in a generalized wave of disappearances in order to stay in power. It used paramilitary groups to organize the repression and perpetrate executions. Beginning in the 1980s, it gradually eliminated many of the social advances that still existed from the period of 1910-1940. As a State-Party, it has adopted the recommendations of the Washington Consensus, massively privatized the public sector and begun an intensive liberalization of markets in Mexico.

Despite the repression, the PRI government benefited from an embarrassed silence on the part of several governments and parties of the Left in Latin America until the 1990s since it had interests that deviated from those of Washington in certain significant areas.

To understand the complex nature of the policies of the PRI since it has been in power and its specific relations with the Left in Latin American, it is worthwhile to consider a few examples. The “third-worldist” president Echeverría (1970-1976) broke off relations with the Pinochet dictatorship and welcomed hundreds of persecuted Chilean militants. He also offered asylum to leftist political activists from Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. But at the same time, Echeverría (who was also a collaborator with the CIA) was the first to massively apply the policy of forced disappearances in order to eliminate Mexican *guerrilleros*. But progressive policies such as providing asylum for leftist exiles from Latin American led a part of the Left to refrain from criticizing the PRI regime. Accordingly, when the human-rights activist Rosario Ibarra (whose son was “disappeared” by the PRI regime in April 1975) took part as a member of the Eureka Committee in the meetings of FEDEFAM (*Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos* – Federation of Associations for Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared), she was harshly criticised by mothers of *desaparecidos* in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, etc.), especially Chileans, who refuse to include Mexico in the list of regimes who practiced forced disappearances. The Chilean members did not want the regime of President Luis Echeverría to be mentioned, in part because it provided asylum to leaders and members of Popular Unity who were fleeing the Pinochet dictatorship. Later, the Mexican government was among the first to recognize the Sandinista regime that had overthrown the Somoza dictatorship. It also supported the process of negotiations between the guerrillas in El Salvador and the regime in place there. The Mexican government had also allowed Fidel Castro and his comrades, including Raul Castro and Che Guevara, to train in Mexico before launching their expedition against the Batista regime in November 1956, leaving the Mexican coast aboard the yacht Granma. The Mexican regime defended the Cuban regime against the USA after the victory of the revolution in 1959.

The PRI government of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988 to late 1994) repressed the Zapatist uprising beginning in January 1994. The PRI's power monopoly began to break up with the tragic events of the earthquake in 1985, which hit the City of Mexico very hard. The society was forced to organize itself in the face of government inaction during the catastrophe, which marked a new social and political awareness. The decisive break-up of the PRI's monopoly became evident with the election for governor of Mexico City in 1997, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (the son of Lázaro Cárdenas) was elected governor as candidate of a party opposed to the PRI.

The PRI returned to power in 2012. In July 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, an opponent of the PRI and leader of Morena, a centre-Left group, was elected president.

Let us return to what happened between Daniel Ortega's victory in the November 2006 election and the beginning of his presidential term in 2007. In the words of former guerrilla commandant Mónica Baltodano: *“With Ortega's arrival in the presidency in 2007, a tendency that had been becoming more and more clear was patently manifested. The economic pragmatism shown by the FSLN with*



*respect to privatizations and neoliberal policies was fully displayed. That initiated a new phase in which Ortega entered a rapprochement process with the other pillar of national power: the heads of big business grouped under the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) umbrella. That was when the symbiosis was initiated between Ortega and big national capital. I call it a symbiosis rather than an alliance because what defines the nature of the current regime is that its main mission is to create or strengthen the market economy conditions, buttressing big capital, while handing out crumbs to the poor to keep them pacified. [...] That economic power group has a community of interests with big national capital. It's not an alliance for tactical reasons as some believe, warning the big business leaders to be careful for fear they'll be knifed in the back one day. No, no, no, what they have is a symbiosis of interests. Ortega and his group are with big capital because they themselves are now an important capitalist group and the government represents its community of interests with the traditional oligarchy and transnational capital."* [18]

### **Daniel Ortega refused to challenge the legitimacy of the debt claimed against Nicaragua and renewed agreements with the IMF**

Already after the victory of the revolution in July 1979, the Sandinista leadership had decided not to question repayment of the debt contracted by the Somoza dynasty. And yet that debt met both criteria for considering it odious and refusing to repay it: it had not benefited the nation, and the creditors were aware of that fact since they were directly complicit with the corrupt Somoza regime. [19] And an aggravating factor, although one that is not indispensable for qualifying the debt as odious, was that it had served to finance a dictatorship that was guilty of crimes against humanity.

The debt that was later accumulated by the three rightist governments that succeeded one another between 1990 and 2007 served to finance neoliberal counter-reforms, privatizations, and attacks on the economic and social rights of the population. What's more, it could have been demonstrated that this debt had supported corruption, in particular during the term of office of Arnoldo Alemán (1997-2002). Daniel Ortega, once elected president, could have – had he wanted to – taken inspiration from the president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, who had also been elected in late 2006. Correa had set up a debt audit commission in July 2007 with broad citizen participation (including representatives of social movements that were highly critical of him, such as CONAIE and Ecuarrunari). The task of this commission was to identify the portion of Ecuador's internal and external public debt that was illegitimate and illegal. Based on the work of the audit commission, in November 2008, Ecuador's government unilaterally suspended repayment of a portion of the debt that had been identified as illegitimate and illegal. Through this process, Ecuador had scored a victory over the creditors in 2009. We should add that in May 2007, Ecuador had expelled the permanent representative of the World Bank. It had also requested that the IMF leave the facilities it occupied within the central bank buildings and had decided not to enter into any further loan agreements with that institution. We should also point out that Bolivia, followed by Ecuador and Venezuela, had decided to leave the ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes), the World Bank's arbitration entity.

Daniel Ortega took a completely different attitude – he did everything in his power to maintain good relations with the IMF and stated that he would pursue the reforms it was demanding. He committed to achieving a primary budget surplus in order to continue repaying the debt and reduce the budget deficit. His choice of that option required him to reject a legitimate demand of the country's public-service workers for an increase in their wages, which were and still are particularly low, including in education and health-care. [20]

## **Daniel Ortega increased the number of free-trade treaties**

In 2006, when the FSLN was in the opposition, Daniel Ortega, as its principal leader, persuaded his parliamentary group to vote in favour of the CAFTA free-trade treaty with the USA. This marked another turning point in the FSLN's orientation, since prior to that point the party had accused the government of President Enrique Bolaños of subjugating Nicaragua to Washington's economic interests. The approval of this treaty by the FSLN MPs was accompanied by support for changes in a whole series of laws to conform to the prior conditions imposed by the USA. Other free-trade treaties were approved with the FSLN's support: a treaty with Taiwan (which entered into force in 2008), one concerning Central America with Mexico (2011) and another between Central America and the European Union (2012).

## **Daniel Ortega opened Nicaragua more widely to the interests of foreign companies in the areas of agribusiness, mining and fisheries**

The Observatory of Multinationals in Latin America (OMAL), based in the Basque country and oriented clearly toward defence of the peoples' interests, has conducted in-depth studies of the compromises made by the Daniel Ortega government regarding multinationals, which extended the efforts made by his predecessors in that direction.

Mónica Baltodano makes reference to this and adds her personal experience. The Bolaños government's relations with the Spanish energy transnational Unión Fenosa, she says, were *"tense."* Bolaños had in fact filed twelve actions against Unión Fenosa and the courts had ordered fines against the Spanish company. But, Baltodano says: *"[...]the Ortega government resolved all that. In November 2007, ironically while Ortega was in the Ibero-American Summit in Santiago, Chile, unleashing a virulent discourse against transnationals, Unión Fenosa included, Bayardo Arce [a trusted associate of Daniel Ortega, a former member of the national leadership who profited greatly from the piñata, ET] was in the Moncloa Palace in Madrid, meeting with Unión Fenosa's corporate management. Based on the "Protocol of Understanding between the Government of Nicaragua and Unión Fenosa," which included guarantees of all kinds for the latter and was given the rank of law in Nicaragua's National Assembly on February 12, 2009, all pending trials, demands and fines were wiped out with a swipe of the pen. Later came still other laws, always to Unión Fenosa's benefit. While what we remember is Ortega's constant diatribe against it, Nicaraguan government relations with it were never as fluid as they were with Ortega in office."*

Baltodano adds that under the presidency of Daniel Ortega, privatization of the energy sector, and therefore of Nicaragua's natural resources, increased, benefiting the multinationals, and in particular those in which Ortega himself owns stock. She points to the appropriation, supported by the government, of *"the country's main mineral exploitations"* by the company B2Gold, headquartered in Canada, [\[21\]](#) with dramatic consequences for the environment and for the local communities. She also denounces the deforestation perpetrated by the *"lumber mafias"* through concessions granted by the government.

Mónica Baltodano describes in detail how the multinational Pescanova succeeded in making lucrative deals under the Ortega government: *"A lesser known example is the fishing exploitation operated by the Spanish transnational Pescanova. Spanish environmental researcher María Mestre published a report in a December 2010 issue of Diagonal on how Pescanova has functioned in Nicaragua after arriving in 2002 with the acquisition of Ultracongelados Antártida, S.A., Spain's largest seafood cooking plant, which owned a third of a Nicaraguan shrimp farming company operating in Chinandega. From there Pescanova began expanding its shrimp rearing and processing, raising shrimp larvae in laboratories and continually expanding its fish farming area. By 2006,*

*Pescanova had 2,500 hectares in concession, and two years later, now under the Ortega government, it had doubled that, controlling 58% of the surface granted in fishing concessions. Between January and April 2009 alone, it increased its ownership to 82% of the total surface granted in concessions, although not all of that was put into production.” [22]*



### *The Interoceanic Canal*

This two-centuries-old project was reactivated by the government of Daniel Ortega. On 14 June 2013, the National Assembly of Nicaragua approved, by a vote of 61 to 28, a bill which grants a concession for a renewable term of fifty years to the Chinese consortium HKDN Nicaragua Canal Development. The estimated cost is 50 billion dollars, or 41 billion euros. Construction began in 2015 and was to be completed in 2019, with the canal to open in 2020. But the project has been suspended since the Chinese company has gone bankrupt and its owner has disappeared.

The project is opposed by environmental scientific groups. There is a serious risk of pollution of Lake Nicaragua, which is vital as a freshwater reserve for biodiversity and for the local population, which drinks the lake's water and uses it to irrigate agricultural land. In terms of social impact, 25,000 persons are to be displaced by the project.

### **Total prohibition of abortion entered into force in the criminal code in 2008**

As mentioned in the preceding article, in 2006 the Sandinista parliamentary group, hand in hand with the conservative MPs, voted in a law totally prohibiting abortion. It was under the presidency of Daniel Ortega, who refused to call the measure into question, that the prohibition was included in new criminal code that entered into force in July 2008. There are no exceptions whatsoever to the prohibition, including cases of danger to the health or the life of the pregnant woman or pregnancy resulting from rape. Amnesty international says in its report [23]: *“The high level of teenage pregnancies in Nicaragua means that many of those affected by the revised laws are girls under 18. The repeal of the legal provisions allowing for therapeutic abortion endangers the lives of women and girls and puts medical professionals in an unconscionable position.”* Before the adoption of the new criminal code, “therapeutic” abortion (in case of danger to the health of the pregnant woman or pregnancy resulting from rape) was legal and considered legitimate and necessary, dating back to a law adopted in 1893 under the government of the liberal Zelaya, and which was an initial result of changes that began as early as 1837. A government that represents its people's interests would have further advanced the legislation by extending the right to an abortion (for example, authorising a pregnant woman to decide on her own regardless of the causes of the pregnancy, and by eliminating the conditions that required three practitioners to agree on interrupting the pregnancy and the pregnant woman to obtain authorization from her husband or close family). Instead, Ortega decided to take an overwhelming step backward.

This retrograde legislation is accompanied by serious attacks on organizations defending women's rights, who have been among the most active in the opposition to the Ortega government. In particular, the autonomous women's movement (MAM – *Movimiento Autonomo de Mujeres de Nicaragua*), strongly mobilized against the abortion ban, is now being targeted by the authorities.

Feminist movements have been the victims of administrative, police and judicial repression. In order to gag them, Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo have ordered them to join the women's movement that is aligned with the regime. In another very troubling measure by the regime, Murillo has made a point of denouncing the autonomous women's movement and the support it enjoys abroad in its struggle for the right to abortion as being "the Devil's work."



## The use of religion

Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo systematically make use of references to the Catholic religion, constantly proclaiming that God is at their side. The regime headed by the presidential couple has caused a profound ideological backslide. In the rest of this text, "God," "Devil," "Faith" and "Divine Justice" are capitalised because that is how they appear in all Murillo's and Ortega's writings.

Speaking of the changes the FSLN has undergone under the leadership of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo, Mónica Baltodano writes: "[A second change that should be analysed is the one that has brought the Sandinista Front] *from rationalism to religious fundamentalism. The revolutionary program involved respect for religious beliefs but promoted laicism. The 1987 Constitution established that the State has no official religion and that public education was secular. And what do we have now? The use and abuse of grassroots religiosity and its constant manipulation to strengthen the Ortega-Murillo family power project. The state institutions are operating as reproducers of religious beliefs to emphasize that everything that happens in the country is 'God's will,' thus establishing that Chayo-Orteguista authority [that is, of Rosario Murillo and Daniel Ortega, ET] comes from divine will, just as in the old absolutist monarchies the power of the kings came directly from God. This divine link, according to the official discourse, makes Nicaragua 'blessed and prosperous.' As a result of this model, religious hierarchies legislate, churches determine, civil authorities promote religious beliefs and all state and municipal institutions are full of religious images, symbols and messages.*"

With Rosario Murillo, references to God and the Devil go back a long way. I found an excerpt from a piece she wrote in 1991 as head of Ventana, the cultural supplement of the Sandinista daily Barricada. In preparation for the first Congress of the FSLN, she wrote "*Within the Front, one finds Sandinistas and non-Sandinistas. Millionaires and the destitute. **Souls of God and souls of the Devil** [...]. Yes, gentlemen, the Sandinista Front is currently a front, and as a front, where one finds anything and everything, it is currently a shit-pile.*" [24] Later, Murillo abandoned this offensive characterization of the Front as a heap of excrement, but on the other hand she introduced into all her speeches a Manichean, religious-fundamentalist, conservative, obscurantist representation of events and people.

In the speech Rosario Murillo gave on 19 July 2018 on the occasion of the celebration of the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the revolution, she constantly called on Faith and the grace of God, denouncing the diabolical actions of the demonstrators who protest the policies of the regime of which she is co-leader.

The following day, she continued in the same vein in a declaration on Canal 4 television, which is

owned by one of her sons: *"We know that there are institutions which will be capable of recognising the crimes of those who have caused so much pain, so many deaths, so much suffering, so many aberrant, diabolical crimes in our Nicaragua. And we trust in Justice, and also trust in Divine Justice."* [25]

She continued later: *"This people of God, because the Nicaraguan people are God's people! Few peoples in the world show so much Faith and so much Devotion, with such a strong relationship with God. And we Catholics, with the Virgin Mary, with so much [...] Faith."* [26]

In the same speech, she opposes the people to the women and men who are struggling for decriminalization of abortion in the following way: *"A people who have defended life in all its forms, from the mother's womb... From the mother's womb! Whereas many of them pretend to be conducting civil actions, when in fact there is nothing civil about them because they are criminals, they have marched in the streets of Managua, demanding Abortion. Committing an offence against life! That is the truth."* [27]



*A view on part of the demonstration on 30 May 2018, with several hundreds of thousands of protesters against repression*

She then describes the demonstrators who have been protesting since 18 April 2018 as the real perpetrators of the hundreds of deaths mourned by the people: *"...the People know it, they know who has caused death; they know, because we know, how amongst themselves, because of their conflicts caused by their ambitions, for their conflicts caused by their culture of drugs, with which they have sought to terrorize the country, these are drug users, alcoholics, individuals linked to all sorts of crimes and delinquency. The People know that they caused death among themselves and then blamed the Government."* [28]

The previous day, 19 July 2018, during the big rally held by the regime, Daniel Ortega had gone just as far in this Manichean and inquisitorial reasoning. He had claimed that the protestors engaged in diabolical and satanic practices. He stated that the terrorists tortured people "satanically" (*sic!*) at the barricades! [29] He literally said that the protesters are "terrorists" and "putschists" who are totally "satanized." He called on the Catholic bishops to "exorcize" these "Devils" or "demons" (the terms Ortega uses to designate the demonstrators) and chase out the Devil who has taken possession of them. Ortega claimed that they burn corpses near the barricades and dance around them. He called on the bishops to respect God's word and not support the demands of the dissident demonstrators that the presidential couple resign.

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### **PART III: A Brief History of the Relations between the World Bank, the IMF, the US Government and Nicaragua**

**Central America is considered by the US government as part of its own exclusive sphere of influence. The policies adopted by the World Bank in terms of granting loans to the countries of the region are directly influenced by the political choices of the US government. The case of Nicaragua and Guatemala during the 1950s makes this clear.**



*Somoza, Kennedy and World Bank President Eugene Black on a Nicaraguan Stamp of 1964*

*“Thus one of the largest developing country borrowers, in number of loans, was Nicaragua, a nation with one million inhabitants, controlled by the Somoza family. Washington and the Somozas found their relationship highly convenient. The United States supported the Somozas and the Somozas supported the United States – in votes at the United Nations, in regional councils, and by offering Nicaragua as a base for training and launching the Cuban exile forces that met disaster at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Between 1951 and 1956 Nicaragua received nine World Bank Loans, and one in 1960. An American military base was established in 1953 from which was launched the successful overthrow, by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), of Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz, who had legalized the Communist Party and threatened to expropriate the assets of the United Fruit Company. Guatemala itself, with three times the population of Nicaragua, and though it was one of the first countries to receive a survey mission (published in 1951), did not obtain a loan until 1955, after the overthrow of its ‘communist regime’.” [30]*

On 12 April 1961, just five days before the United States was due to launch a military expedition against Cuba from Nicaraguan territory, [31] the directors of the Bank decided to grant a loan to Nicaragua although fully aware that the money would be used to reinforce the dictator’s economic power. It was the price to pay for his support for the assault on Cuba. Below is an excerpt from the official minutes of the discussion between the Bank’s directors on this 12 April 1961:

- Mr. [Aron] Broches. *I am told that the Somoza Family is in everything and it would be difficult to find anything in Nicaragua which did not raise this problem.*
- Mr. [Robert] Cavanaugh. *I am concerned that we would appear to be fostering an arrangement under which people will be urged to sell land that the President wants...*
- Mr [Simon] Cargill. *If the project itself is satisfactory I don’t believe that the interest of the President is such a problem that the whole thing should be held up...*
- Mr Rucinski. *I agree that it is too late to turn it down.*
- Mr. Aldewereld. *The problem of land ownership and of the Somoza family is an unfortunate one but it is one we have been aware of from the very start and I think it is too late to raise the question now.* [32]

Concerning the attitude of the Bank with regard to the Sandinista regime during the 1980s and the influence that was brought to bear on it by the US government, we quote another excerpt from Catherine Gwin’s study: “A more recent example in which the Bank’s refusal to lend clearly



*coincided with U.S. policy is that of Nicaragua in the 1980s. The reason for the suspension of lending was the accumulation of arrears. However, in September 1984, the Nicaraguan government formally proposed a solution to its arrearage problem.” [33]*

Gwin details the concrete proposals formulated by Nicaragua and she explains that although these proposals were acceptable, the Bank made no effort to help the Sandinista regime. She pointed out that this was in contrast to the flexibility adopted by the Bank in respect to other regimes which were allies of the US.

**Reminder:** While the Somoza clan had held power in Nicaragua since the 1930s thanks to United States’ military intervention, on 19 July 1979 a powerful popular movement overthrew the dictatorship forcing the dictator Anastasio Somoza to flee. The Somoza family had a stranglehold on a huge proportion of the country’s wealth and encouraged the implantation of foreign corporations, especially from the US. The people hated them. The World Bank had showered loans on Somoza’s dictatorship. After the dictatorship fell, a coalition government brought together the traditional democratic opposition (led by top businessmen) and the Sandinista revolutionaries. The latter made no secret of their sympathy for Cuba or their desire to undertake certain economic reforms (land reform, nationalization of some foreign companies, confiscation of Somoza clan landholdings, a literacy programme...).

Washington had supported Anastasio Somoza to the bitter end but feared that the new government might spread communism in Central America. The Carter administration, in office when the dictatorship was overthrown, did not immediately take an aggressive stance. But things changed overnight when Ronald Reagan moved into the White House. In 1981, he announced his commitment to bring down the Sandinistas. He provided financial and military backing to a rebellion by former members of the National Guard (“Contrarevolucionarios” or “Contras”). The US Air Force mined several Nicaraguan ports. (*See box on the condemnation of the United States by the International Court of Justice in The Hague*). Faced with such hostility, the Sandinista majority government opted for more radical policies. During the 1984 elections, the first democratic ones in half a century, the Sandinista Daniel Ortega was elected President with 67 per cent of the ballot. The following year, the United States called a trade embargo against Nicaragua, cutting the country off from foreign investments. The World Bank had put a stop to its loans from the time of the Sandinista presidential election victory. The Sandinistas actively urged the WB to resume its loans. They were even ready to accept a drastic structural adjustment plan. The WB decided not to follow up on this and did not resume the loans until the Sandinista electoral defeat in February 1990, when Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the US-backed conservative candidate, won the vote.

## The condemnation of the United States by the International Court of Justice in The Hague

After Somoza's fall in 1979, the US attempted, by different political, economic and military means, to destabilize and then overthrow the new Sandinista system. This led to a plea by Nicaragua against the US in the International Court of Justice of The Hague which delivered a verdict in 1986 condemning the United States for violation of obligations enforced by international law, in particular the ban on the use of force (article 2 & 4 of the UN Charter) and on attempts against the sovereignty of another state. [34]

It is well worth including the official case overview as published on the ICJ website:

*"On 27 June 1986, the Court delivered its Judgment on the merits. The findings included a rejection of the justification of collective self-defence advanced by the United States concerning the military or paramilitary activities in or against Nicaragua, and a statement that the United States had violated the obligations imposed by customary international law not to intervene in the affairs of another State, not to use force against another State, not to infringe the sovereignty of another State, and not to interrupt peaceful maritime commerce. The Court also found that the United States had violated certain obligations arising from a bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation of 1956, and that it had committed acts such to deprive that treaty of its object and purpose.*

*"It decided that the United States was under a duty immediately to cease and to refrain from all acts constituting breaches of its legal obligations, and that it must make reparation for all injury caused to Nicaragua by the breaches of obligations under customary international law and the 1956 Treaty, the amount of that reparation to be fixed in subsequent proceedings if the Parties were unable to reach agreement. The Court subsequently fixed, by an Order, time-limits for the filing of written pleadings by the Parties on the matter of the form and amount of reparation, and the Memorial of Nicaragua was filed on 29 March 1988, while the United States maintained its refusal to take part in the case. In September 1991, Nicaragua informed the Court, inter alia, that it did not wish to continue the proceedings. The United States told the Court that it welcomed the discontinuance and, by an Order of the President dated 26 September 1991, the case was removed from the Court's List."*

As we've just seen, in 1991, Violetta Chamorro's government, elected in 1990, discontinued the proceedings and would not demand compensation from Washington.

When Daniel Ortega was again elected president in 2006 and took office at the beginning of 2007, the World Bank's and the IMF's attitude was radically different from what it was in the 1980s, and the same applies to Washington's response. Daniel Ortega's regime is now considered to be quite amenable. The agreements that the right-wing governments had passed with the two Bretton Woods financial institutions –the World Bank and the IMF— from 1990 to 2006 were renewed. Ortega's government received loans and proceeded with neoliberal reforms the former governments had launched. In February 2018, the IMF congratulated Daniel Ortega's government. [35] He had decided to implement a counter-reform of the pensions system and social security, which triggered massive demonstrations in April 2018. Ortega withdrew those measures to try and put a stop to the demonstrations but repression had been very harsh with many casualties among demonstrators so the protest movement continued. As for the World Bank, it chose the very moment in April 2018 when his government had just announced neoliberal measures concerning social security to congratulate Ortega on his sound economic policies. [36] We will have to be vigilant about what is going to happen next.

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**P.S.**

- 26 July, 2018:

<http://www.cadtm.org/Nicaragua-the-story-of-the-Daniel-Ortega-Rosario-Murillo-regime>

Translated by Vicki Briault, Mike Krolikowski and Christine Pagnouille

- 13 August, 2018:

<http://www.cadtm.org/Nicaragua-The-evolution-of-the-regime-of-President-Daniel-Ortega-since-2007>

Translated by Snake Arbusto.

- 14 August, 2018:

<http://www.cadtm.org/A-Brief-History-of-the-Relations-between-the-World-Bank-the-IMF-the-US>

Translated by Vicki Briault, Mike Krolikowski and Christine Pagnouille

- 14 August, 2018:

<http://www.cadtm.org/A-Brief-History-of-the-Relations-between-the-World-Bank-the-IMF-the-US>

- The author made frequent visits to Nicaragua and the rest of Central America between 1984 and 1992. He took part in the organization of the voluntary work brigades with trade unionists and other militants of international solidarity that went out from Belgium to Nicaragua between 1985 and 1989. He was one of the FGTB (General Federation of Belgian Labour) activists on Nicaraguan issues. He met with various members of the Sandinista Directorate: Tomas Borge, Henry Ruiz, Luis Carrion, Victor Tirado Lopez in the period from 1984 - 1992. He had close links with the ATC, the Sandinist association of agricultural workers. He was invited to the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the FSLN in July 1991 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum of Sao Paulo held in Managua in July 1992. At the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam, he taught courses in the 1980s on the FSLN's revolutionary strategy before they came to power and in the post-1979 period.

The author would like to thank Nathan Legrand for revising the text and helping with documentary research, Claude Quémar and Brigitte Ponet for reading it through.

- Eric Toussaint, Doctoral thesis in political science, defended at the universities of Liège and Paris VIII in 2004, *Enjeux politiques de l'action de la Banque mondiale et du Fonds monétaire international envers le tiers-monde*

<http://www.cadtm.org/Enjeux-politiques-de-l-action-de>

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**Footnotes**

[1] See *Inprecor* N° 328, April 1991

[2] See the Nicaraguan publication *Envio*, August 1988 extracts were published in *Inprecor*, n°273 October 1988 under the title "Nicaragua: shock therapy"

[3] See Éric Toussaint, *World Bank, a never ending coup d'Etat*, chapitre 5.

[4] For more information on Omar Cabezas: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar\\_Cabezas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Cabezas)

[5] The following comparison gives an idea of human losses in the struggle against the *Contras*: if they were extrapolated on a scale proportionate to the US population, they would amount to two million dead.

[6] Mikhail Gorbachev, born in 1931, was President of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991.

[7] George H. Bush, born in 1924, was the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States for one single term from January 1989 to January 1993. He is the father of George W. Bush, born in 1946, who was the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States, from January 2001 to January 2009.

[8] In 1990, the USSR still existed; it was led by Mikhail Gorbachev. It went through a process of dislocation between March 1990 and December 1991, resulting in the Federation of Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.

[9] See Éric Toussaint, 'Le dilemme de l'armée sandiniste,' *Inprecor* n° 328, 12 April 1991. (in French)

[10] Quoted in Éric Toussaint, "Le dilemme de l'armée sandiniste," (The dilemma of the Sandinista Army) *Inprecor* n° 328, 12 April 1991 (in French).

[11] See Éric Toussaint, « Front ou parti : que choisir ? » (Front or party: which shall it be?) *Inprecor* n° 329, 26 April 1991 (in French).

[12] See Éric Toussaint, 'Renouvellement du Front sandiniste,' *Inprecor* n° 337, 27 September 1991 (in French)

[13] Mónica Baltodano ("Isabel 104" in the underground), one of the leaders of the urban uprising of June 1979 in Managua, a guerillera commandante, former member of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and former Member of Parliament for the FSLN. At the FSLN congresses of 1994 and 1998, Mónica Baltodano was promoting the Izquierda Democratica (Democratic Left) tendency, in opposition to those who were to found the Movimiento renovador sandinista (MRS or Sandinista Renovation Movement) led by Sergio Ramirez who had been Vice-President of Nicaragua from 1985 to 1990 at Daniel Ortega's side. She had then supported Daniel Ortega as General Secretary of the FSLN (against Henry Ruíz, who challenged Daniel Ortega in 1994), convinced by his "left wing discourse". She left the FSLN in 1998, at the time of the Ortega-Alemán pact. In 2005 Baltodano, with former commandante Henry Ruiz, helped found the Movimiento por el Rescate del Sandinismo (MpRS, Movement to Rescue Sandinismo) see (in Spanish): <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=33344> She remains politically active in Nicaragua.

[14] Mónica Baltodano, What is this regime? How has the FSLN changed to reach its present-day situation ?, *Inprecor* n° 651/652, May-June 2018 or at: <http://www.inprecor.fr/article-Nicaragua-Qu'est-ce%20que%20ce%20régime%C2%A0%20Quelles%20ont%20été%20les%20mutations%20le%20FSLN%20pour%20arriver%20à%20ce%20qu'il%20est%20aujourd'hui%20%20?id=2144>

[15] See the interesting Obituary published 4 June 2018 on the official Swiss portal of the Catholic Church: Centre catholique des médias Cath-Info, « Nicaragua: décès du cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo à l'âge de 92 ans » (Nicaragua : Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo has died at the age of 92)

<https://www.cath.ch/newsf/nicaragua-deces-du-cardinal-miguel-obando-bravo-a-lage-de-92-ans/> (in French)

[16] See Amnesty International, *The Impact of the Complete Ban on Abortion : Women's lives and health endangered, medical professionals criminalized*, 2009 :

[http://www.amnesty.eu/static/documents/2009/0709Nicaragua\\_report\\_.pdf](http://www.amnesty.eu/static/documents/2009/0709Nicaragua_report_.pdf) On the American continent, there are five countries other than Nicaragua which impose a total ban on abortion: El Salvador, Honduras, Suriname, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Three countries authorize unconditional abortion: Cuba, Uruguay and Guyana. Source:

<https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/societe-seuls-trois-pays-autorisent-lavortement-sans-condition-en-amerique-latine> or in English, see "Global, regional and sub-regional classification of abortions by safety, 2010-14", *The Lancet* Vol. 390 No. 10110 p.2372-2381, 25 November 2017: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)31794-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)31794-4/fulltext)

[17] Les liens qui libèrent, 2017, chapter 11, p. 242-243 (in French). To be published in English in September 2018 by Aakar in India and in December 2018 by Haymarket in Chicago (<https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1234-the-debt-system>)

[18] Mónica Baltodano, What mutations have turned the FSLN into what it is today? Revista Envío <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/4804> (also subsequent references)

[19] See <http://www.cadtm.org/Demystifying-Alexander-Nahum-Sack>

[20] Adolfo Acevedo Vogl, Nicaragua: Hacia el quinto programa con el FMI, 23 novembre 2006, <http://www.cadtm.org/Nicaragua-Hacia-el-quinto-programa>

Adolfo Acevedo Vogl, Cuales son les principales exigencias del FMI?, 21 décembre 2006, <http://www.cadtm.org/CUALES-SON-LAS-PRINCIPALES>

Adolfo Acevedo Vogl, 7 février 2008, LA APROBACION DEL PRESUPUESTO: UN POSICIONAMIENTO Y UNA PROPUESTA. SE APUNTA USTED A RESPALDARLA???

<http://www.cadtm.org/LA-APROBACION-DEL-PRESUPUESTO-UN>

Adolfo Acevedo Vogl, Nicaragua : La Carta de Intencion al FMI y la «sobre- recaudacion» fiscal. Una propuesta ciudadana. 20 septembre 2008,

<http://www.cadtm.org/Nicaragua-La-Carta-de-Intencion-al>

[21] See <http://www.b2gold.com/projects/nicaragua/>

[22] Maria Mestre, « Pescanova, el gigante camaronero de Nicaragua », 3 décembre 2010, *Diagonal*:

<https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/pescanova-gigante-camaronero-nicaragua.html>

[23] <https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/amr430012009en.pdf>

[24] Quoted by Éric Toussaint in an article in French 'Front ou parti : que choisir ?', *Inprecor* n° 329, 26 April 1991

[25] 'Sabemos que hay Instituciones que serán capaces de reconocer los delitos y los crímenes de quienes han causado, tanto dolor, tanta muerte, tanto sufrimiento, tantos crímenes aberrantes,

diabólicos, en nuestra Nicaragua. Y confiamos en la Justicia, confiamos en la Justicia Divina también.'

<http://www.lavozdelsandinismo.com/nicaragua/2018-07-20/declaraciones-de-la-companera-rosario-murillo-vicepresidenta-de-nicaragua-20-07-2018-texto-integro/> ou  
<https://www.el19digital.com/articulos/ver/titulo:79300-rosario-en-multinoticias-20-de-julio-del-2018>

[26] *'Ese Pueblo de Dios, porque el Pueblo nicaragüenses és el Pueblo de Dios ! Pocos Pueblos hay en el Mundo con tanta Fé y tanta Devoción, y con tanta Relación con Dios. Y nosotr@s, los Católic@s, con la Virgen María, con tanta Relación, con tanta Fé.'*

[27] *'Un Pueblo que ha defendido la Vida en todas sus formas, desde el vientre materno... Desde el vientre materno ! Mientras, muchos de los que hoy se llaman "Cívicos", que de Cívicos no tienen nada porque son criminales, han desfilado en las Calles de Managua, pidiendo Aborto. Atentando contra la Vida ! Esa és la Verdad'.*

[28] *'...el Pueblo lo sabe, sabe quién produjo los muertos; sabe incluso, porque sabemos cómo entre ellos mismos por sus pleitos de ambición, por sus pleitos también propios de esa cultura de drogadicción con la que pretendieron aterrorizar al País, personas drogadictas, alcohólicas, personas vinculadas a todo tipo de crímenes y delincuencia; el Pueblo nicaragüense sabe que ahí también entre ellos mismos se quitaron la Vida para culpar al Gobierno.'*

[29] See Rosario Murillo and Daniel Ortega's recorded speeches. The passage referred to occurs after 2 hours and 10 minutes. Nicaragua: Con una multitudinaria concentración el FSLN recordó el triunfo de la Revolución en 1979 - *Resumen Latinoamericano*,  
<http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2018/07/19/nicaragua-con-una-multitudinaria-concentra-cion-el-fsln-recordo-el-triunfo-de-la-revolucion-en-1979/>

[30] Kapur, Devesh, Lewis, John P., Webb, Richard (ed.). 1997. *The World Bank, Its First Half Century*, volume 1, p. 103. It is to be noted that book from which the quote is taken was commissioned by the World Bank on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/313081468322727631/History>

[31] The expedition occurred on 17 April 1961. Over 1,500 anti-Castro mercenaries were to land in the Bay of Pigs, Cuba. It was a monumental fiasco.

[32] This is from KAPUR, Devesh, LEWIS, John P., WEBB, Richard. 1997. *The World Bank, Its First Half Century*, Volume 1, p. 165

[33] Catherine Gwin, in Kapur, Devesh, Lewis, John P., Webb, Richard (ed.). 1997. *The World Bank, Its First Half Century*, volume 2, p. 258

[34] International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)*. Judgement of 27 juin 1986. As a consequence of this judgement the US officially announced that they no longer recognized the ICJ's competence. See <http://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/70>

[35] Nicaragua IMF staff concluding statement, 6 February 2018,  
<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2018/02/06/ms020618-nicaragua-staff-concluding-statement-of-an-imf-staff-visit>



[36] Nicaragua: a general overview, 16 April 2018,  
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>