

Parties and Pacts in Contemporary Nicaragua

**By Katherine Hoyt, Ph.D.
Nicaragua Network
1247 "E" Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
kathy@afgj.org**

**Prepared for delivery at the
2001 Meeting of the
Latin American Studies Association
Washington, DC
September 6-8, 2001**

Introduction

Democracy has a number of aspects. Some observers restrict it to the institutional forms of electoral democracy while others feel that it must include participatory aspects between elections such as a role for citizens in decision-making on national economic policies and similar issues. This writer is a member of the latter group and therefore, finds the developments in Nicaragua, where elections are held regularly and the outward forms of democracy are maintained but where accountability has been restricted and participation constrained, to be distressing.

Democracy has gained only a tenuous foothold in Nicaragua. Its history has not been promising. Traditionally, the party in power changed only when the opposition leader put together an army and overthrew the government. The strong influence of the United States in Nicaragua has not helped matters. The U.S. military occupied the country for 20 years during the last century and controlled many aspects of its government and economy. We “oversaw” elections in the 1920’s and were able to convince Liberal general Jose María Moncada to lay down his arms by promising him the presidency in 1928 **before** the election was held.

After suffering for 45 years under the dictatorship of one family, the Somozas, Nicaragua experienced a true social revolution beginning in 1979. The country achieved what some analysts argued was the most democratic distribution of land in Latin America. In 1984, the Sandinistas held what most observers, including a LASA delegation, classified as free and fair elections and, by early 1987, the country had approved a democratic constitution. But as late 20th century revolutionaries, the Sandinistas held a unique combination of democratic and vanguard principles, believing they represented the general will of the people in a true sense and could submit themselves to free elections and win them fairly. This, in spite of fighting a war against counterrevolutionaries financed by the United States. In 1990, the Sandinista government held elections again and, much to its surprise, lost.

The FSLN turned over political power to a tenuous coalition which had been cobbled together by the United States and was led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Many Nicaraguans seemed to feel that Mrs. Chamorro, who had held together a family divided by the conflicts between supporters and opponents of the revolution, could heal some of the wounds of the whole nation. While her government engaged in none of the vengeance hoped for by anti-Sandinistas, she subjected the country to the harsh structural adjustment ministrations of the IMF and World Bank. These policies included abandoning the food subsidies and expanded health and education services the Sandinistas had instituted as well as switching agricultural priorities from state farms, cooperatives and small farmers to big private growers. Her aides and high officials were also accused of corruption.

One of the 14 parties of Chamorro’s National Opposition Coalition (UNO) was the Liberal Constitutionalist Party of Arnoldo Aleman. Aleman was elected to the coveted post of mayor of the nation’s capital and largest city, Managua. From that base, he was able to enlarge his party’s influence and his own power base. In 1996, he was elected President of Nicaragua. His principal electoral opponent was Daniel Ortega, running again at the head of the Sandinista ticket.

This paper will demonstrate how the leaders of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC) and the Sandinista Party, now the two major political forces in the country, have returned Nicaragua to the old days of *caudillismo* by means of a political pact which divides government positions between their supporters and protects the two leaders, Arnoldo Aleman and Daniel Ortega, from legal prosecution. We will examine the events leading up to the pact and its negotiation. We will look at the contents of the Pact, including the Constitutional amendments and changes to the

electoral law which were pushed through the National Assembly to expand the membership of the Supreme Court, of the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic, and the Supreme Electoral Council, among other measures. Opposition from within the two major parties and from outside the parties among civic leaders and citizens in general (which was unable to prevent the various aspects of the “Pact” from being put in place) will occupy our attention next. And, finally, we will focus on the pact’s impact upon the country’s institutions and upon the municipal elections of 2000 and the elections to elect a new president, vice-president and National Assembly on November 4th of this year.

This paper, then, will show that, while the hopes for an effective democracy that were raised with the revolution and its putting in place of the forms of electoral democracy have not been dashed, they have been put into serious question by the return of the old *caudillismo* and a political pact that echoes those of an earlier era in Nicaraguan history when the old Conservatives and Liberals pacted to protect their interests and divide the spoils of the nation.

Arnoldo Aleman and the Liberal Constitutionalist Party

Arnoldo Aleman comes from a Liberal family. His father participated in Somoza politics and, at a press conference held during a visit to the United States in early 1996, he stated that he was “proud to be his father’s son.” When asked about his involvement in the leadership of the Somoza youth organization, he stated merely that he had never served in the Somoza government or in the Sandinista government.¹ As a former mid-size coffee grower, he is known to be anti-oligarchy.

The Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC) broke away from the Somozas’ Liberal Nationalist Party in the 1960s. In the 1970s, its leader, Ramiro Sacasa Guerrero, Somoza’s own cousin, went so far as to propose a dialogue between the government and the opposition, including the Sandinistas, and he allied his group with the center parties of the Democratic Liberation Union (UDEL) led by Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. During the Sandinista era, the PLC was a member of the Coordinadora, a right-wing alliance of parties that opposed the revolutionary government. In 1983 the PLC acquired its identity as a party and at that time suffered a “mutation.” Exiled Somocistas, who had no party because the Somoza era Liberal Nationalist Party (PLN) had disintegrated, began to join the PLC, and it gradually became a successor to the PLN.² In 1989, the PLC joined 13 other parties in the National Opposition Union (UNO), which had been cobbled together by the United States for the elections of February 1990 and was led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as the candidate for president. The PLC’s important achievement was the candidacy of Arnoldo Aleman for Mayor of Managua on the UNO ticket. Mrs. Chamorro won the election for President and Aleman was elected Mayor of the capital city.

During his tenure as mayor, Aleman built fountains and traffic circles, paved streets, and painted over Sandinista murals on government buildings. In 1991, he attempted to organize his own private police force which he called “municipal inspectors.” This proposed force was likened to the AMROCS, a paramilitary shock force of the Somoza era. When Daniel Ortega said that the FSLN would call up ten members of the Sandinista Militias for every member of Aleman’s force, the project died.³

Aleman saved money by hiring an Italian sanitation company to collect the trash. The company used its own trucks and collected fees directly from the local residents. The city could sell its trucks and lay off crews. Money was saved in other ways as well: by early 1996, the city was US\$6 million behind in its payments of Social Security benefits for municipal workers. Aleman used the resources from the mayor’s office to expand the PLC as a national organization loyal to

himself. Where the PLC's original support came from that sector of the bourgeoisie that was most damaged by the Sandinista government (as opposed to those who knew how to co-exist with the revolution) the party has built a nation-wide, organized grassroots base, not unlike that of its arch-rivals the Sandinistas, based on the country's poor. The PLC's vote-getting ability was put to the test in 1994 in the elections on the Atlantic Coast and the party came out on top.⁴

The Liberal Constitutionalist Party is not an ideological party in the sense that there are debates among its members about political philosophy and policy. But, the Party is a member of the Liberal International and Aleman has claimed the inheritance of the Liberal Party of Nicaragua, which brought about liberal economic reforms, public schools, and the separation of church and state in the 1890s. In one particular area, however, the PLC has strayed from Liberal ideology. It has allied itself with Catholic Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Marcos Membreño, head of research at the Central American University in Managua, asks

Now why has Aleman allied himself with Cardinal Obando? I think for a number of reasons. First, ...because of his weakness. He does not have military power, nor police power, but in its stead he has put his faith in spiritual power.... That, on the one hand. On the other hand, Cardinal Obando is furiously anti-Sandinista.... In addition, Aleman knows that in allying with Obando he is able to achieve an element of ideological cohesion within his cabinet.... And it is known that the circle of power that surrounds him, that is closest to him, is composed of highly conservative Catholics, and some of them are Opus Dei.⁵

It has also been noted that, where the Somozas gave women the vote, jobs in the government bureaucracy and encouraged their political activism as professionals and workers, Aleman has taken a much more traditional stance on women's issues. He has exalted their role as mothers, as have, traditionally, the Conservatives and, it should be noted, the Sandinistas.⁶ Under the Aleman presidency, for example, the Nicaraguan Women's Institute was absorbed into the Ministry of the Family.

Membreño notes that Aleman has had to attempt to reconcile the interests of the small urban and rural property owners who voted for him with those of Somocista capital and Cuban capital in Miami who had provided financing for his campaign. Somocistas expected to be able to return finally to Nicaragua and retrieve the properties that had been expropriated by the revolutionary government. But much of the large-scale, state-owned property was already privatized by the Chamorro administration into the hands of members of the old oligarchy. And, with the Sandinistas holding a substantial number of seats in the National Assembly and Sandinista sympathies still very much alive in the Army and Police, the return to Somocistas of properties that had been given out under agrarian reform and urban land reform was not going to be possible.⁷

Arnoldo Aleman won the presidency as the candidate of the Liberal Alliance in the elections of October of 1996 with 51% of the vote to Daniel Ortega's 38% as head of the Sandinista ticket.⁸ Even Cardinal Obando had a role in the campaign, giving a sermon just hours before polling was to begin (and after campaigning had legally ended). In it he likened the FSLN to a viper which would bite any unsuspecting person who picked it up.

At about the time of Aleman's inauguration in January, five Liberal Party members wrote a strictly confidential strategy document entitled "PLC Strategy 2000" which laid out the steps the writers felt the PLC must take to remain in power "until 2016." The document states "The

Liberal Alliance is fragile. Our first goal must be Liberal reunification under a single banner taking the PLC as the center. The rebirth of the great Liberal Party is the first task. This unification will be realized sooner and more effectively if ... the Liberal family comes together as in 1855, 1893 and 1946, around an authentic *caudillo* of quality, [who] in this case is Dr. Arnaldo Aleman Lacayo.” The strategy paper goes on to say that a major goal must be to legitimize and welcome back into the party the Liberals who have been attacked by the Sandinistas since 1979, noting that “their economic means, friends and influence would be of great assistance.”⁹

The document states that the historic parallels must be reestablished and that the Sandinista Party cannot be allowed to usurp the place that the Conservatives traditionally held in Nicaragua, allowing Liberals to govern with the consent of at least a wing of the Conservative Party. “Liberalism cannot alternate with Sandinismo as the opposition or permit it to exist over the long term,” the document asserts. The writers do say that the Liberal government must enter into a dialogue with the FSLN but, “upon the failure of the dialogue, the closest Conservative will be called as interlocutor.” Meanwhile, the document emphasizes that “the most important objective is to effectively recover properties” from the Sandinistas, with the strategy of not attacking agrarian reform frontally, but rather gaining the return of mansions and large properties, especially any in the hands of the “nine comandantes.” Second, the links between the FSLN and its bases of support must be broken by social programs benefiting the poor and by cutting off the financial oxygen of the non-governmental organizations, which the writers see as mainly Sandinista.¹⁰

The document turned out to be prophetic in some areas and emphatically wrong in others. The Alliance WAS fragile. In fact, even before the inauguration, the small Liberal Nationalist Party (PLN) had already left the alliance, saying that Aleman had violated a promise to make the PLN leader Enrique Sanchez Herdocia head of the National Assembly.¹¹

In 1998, Eliseo Nuñez, then head of the Liberal bench in the National Assembly, left the Alliance, declaring that “there are many inside the Liberal Constitutionalist Party who don’t believe in the Liberal philosophy.” He accused Aleman of wanting to dissolve the Liberal Alliance and strengthen the PLC. He stated that the President had asked all Cabinet ministers and National Assembly deputies to renounce party membership in other Liberal parties and join the PLC. The President was also accused of favoring exiles from Miami and of concentrating control of patronage in his own hands. Nuñez added that he has kept his closest associates off balance by frequent cabinet rotations.¹²

The Aleman government did not inaugurate any programs for the poor that might have broken the link between the FSLN and its base; it did, however, regularly attack the non-governmental organizations and their work in a number of different ways. But what needs explanation here is the forging of a formal pact with the Sandinistas that has been likened by many precisely to the “historical parallels” or pacts with the Conservatives that were signed in yesteryear.

Conservative Party deputy Jose Cuadra notes that, from January of 1997 to June of 1998, President Aleman did not need a pact with the FSLN. With 42 Liberal deputies in the National Assembly (out of 93) and twelve from other parties that could be counted upon to support Liberal initiatives, he had adequate backing for legislation and was a mere two votes short of the number required to amend the Constitution. But, Cuadra notes, halfway through 1998, the Liberal bench “went into crisis,” and eight deputies, led by Eliseo Nuñez (as was noted above), left. Four eventually returned to the fold (Nuñez included), but then several of the twelve began to waver. Cuadra says that he believed that Aleman wanted to change the Constitution so that he could be reelected and for that he now needed the support of the FSLN.¹³

Common wisdom in Nicaragua maintains that President Aleman needed a pact with the Sandinistas in order to amend the Constitution to protect himself from prosecution for corruption. The President's accumulation of personal wealth as Mayor of Managua and later as President has been a particular focus of concern because of the rapid drop in living standards for the vast majority of the country's inhabitants. According to the United Nations, 44% of the population survives on less than a dollar a day in income.¹⁴ Other figures put the percentage of those living on less than \$2 per day at over 70%.

Many of the accusations of corruption against President Aleman himself and against members of his administration were made by the Comptroller General of the Republic, Agustin Jarquin. The authority of the Comptroller was greatly enhanced by the amendments to the Nicaraguan Constitution of 1995 and by the appointment of Jarquin to that office in 1996. Jarquin obtained financing from international donors to give his office the capability to audit all the government's accounts, including the autonomous agencies and the state-owned banks.¹⁵ In 1998, he uncovered corruption and illegal activities at Channel 6, the state-run television station and the Central Bank. He fined the Managua mayor's office (the Mayor was a Liberal) and the Ministry of Finances and uncovered problems in the state-owned electric company and basic grains distributor.

President Aleman countered by accusing Jarquin of accruing too much power in his post, of being too slow in investigating corruption in the previous Chamorro government and of receiving funds from outgoing Chamorro administration officials. Aleman said that there had been "irregularities" in the Comptroller's review of the electric company, the telephone company, the Social Security Institute and the Customs Agency. Dissident Liberal Eliseo Nuñez, however, said that the President was only seeking to cover up the corruption in his own government.¹⁶

After FSLN Deputy Victor Hugo Tinoco filed a formal accusation of irregularities in the acquisition of Aleman's properties, the Comptroller's Office began an investigation. The Comptroller took the President's own report of his properties and wealth when he took office as mayor of Managua in 1990 and compared it to a similar one he made upon assuming the presidency in early 1997.¹⁷ In February of 1999, the press reported that the President, upon hearing that the assessment process could lead to a formal audit of his recently acquired properties, had threatened the Comptroller, telling him, "If you want to play hardball, we'll play hardball" and then had hung up the phone.¹⁸ The Comptroller's office released its report at the end of February. It revealed that the President's wealth had increased from the US\$26,118 that he reported as a Managua City Councilman in 1990 to over three hundred thousand dollars in 1995 and close to one million dollars upon assuming the presidency in January 1997. According to the report, the President had continued to acquire properties, bank accounts and stock since then, as well as to use government funds and workers to make improvements on his properties, including roads, wells and fencing.¹⁹

But the President did not take the charges lying down. He refused to meet with the Comptroller to discuss the recent increase in his personal wealth. Instead, he made countercharges that the Comptroller had signed "possibly illegal" contracts with journalists and others for substantial sums of money to investigate the government and to promote the work of the Comptroller's office. In the case which turned out to be the most serious for Comptroller Jarquin, a television journalist named Danilo Lacayo was hired under a false name to investigate corruption. The Police investigation concluded that proof existed to prosecute Lacayo for "illicit association to commit a crime, usurping professional qualifications and functions, and wrongful use of a name."²⁰

On August 30, the Comptroller's Office annulled the privatization of 51% of the stock of the government-owned Nicaraguan Bank of Industry and Commerce (BANIC). The Comptroller demonstrated serious irregularities throughout the process of capitalization and privatization of the bank. The large majority of those implicated were members of President Aleman's closest circle. BANIC granted large, irregular loans to cronies of the President and to the corporation that had been buying land for the presidential family all over the country. Outgoing BANIC directors illegally approved over 20 million cordobas in bonds, compensation pay and salary overdrafts for themselves during the capitalization process. Officials rejected the charges and foreign bankers in control of the bank said that they would sue the Comptroller!²¹ In the flurry of bank failures that was to mark the next year, BANIC also went under.

As the charges and counter-charges continued, a poll showed that large numbers of people believed the Aleman administration to be the most corrupt in Nicaragua's history. The Consultative Group of international donors expressed concern about the government's transparent use of donated funds.²²

On November 8, 1999, Comptroller Jarquin was arrested, along with journalist Lacayo, and former advisor of the Comptroller Nestor Abaunza. All were officially charged by Judge Vanessa Chevez with fraud against the state in the hiring of Lacayo to do undercover investigation of corruption. Jarquin chose not to hide behind the immunity from prosecution that his office granted him, saying that he trusted instead the justness of his cause.

In an interview while he was in jail, Jarquin responds in the following way to the question "Are we faced with a dictatorship?"

The present government was elected democratically; it is a civil government, but clearly we can see that it is not headed in the correct direction. For example, when a system is set up in the government agencies to collect 'voluntary quotas' –in quotation marks-- for the party in power, this is an aberration that is totally in opposition to democracy.... When we see the intervention of the Executive in the National Assembly, in the court system, we are seeing negative signs that could lead to a dictatorship. When there is excessive protection of officials, based on immunity and officials do not take seriously their responsibility to adequately manage public funds, then we are generating a situation that could end up as a dictatorship. We are faced with the fact that there has, indeed and lamentably, been a regression in the country.²³

Jarquin here carefully lays out the degradation of Nicaragua's democracy; not yet a breakdown in democracy, but what he calls "a real threat" of such a breakdown. In the same interview, he notes that the mobilization of citizens demanding his release from jail was an important sign of a rise in the level of consciousness among the citizenry which could, he speculated, lead to the abandonment of the bi-partisan pact that was being negotiated as he spoke.

Ambassadors from donor countries visited the Comptroller in jail and expressed concern. Businesspeople and economists stated their worry about the impact on investment and international aid. Farmers, protesting policies mandating denial of credit to small farmers at the Inter-American Development Bank, waved signed saying "Si hay para robar, también hay para sembrar!" (If there is money to steal, there is also money to plant!) and "Con Jarquin hasta el fin!" (With Jarquin to the End!). The government loosened up somewhat, allowing previously suspended audits to move forward in the Ministry of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Bureau and the Customs Bureau.

In the same week in which Jarquin marked one month in jail, Nicaragua commemorated International Human Rights Day on December 10th with a march of thousands demanding the Comptroller's release, and Sweden pulled out of an aid project in Nueva Segovia because of miss-use of funds by the government. Edgard Espinoza, the agronomist who had headed the project until he was dismissed by PLC city government officials, stated that "The Swedes canvassed some 260 beneficiaries of our programs and established that the PLC was using them for political ends. They therefore made the wise decision to withdraw their financial support."²⁴

Finally, on Christmas Eve and after 44 days in jail, Jarquin, Lacayo and Abaunza were all released when an appeals court threw out the charges. Released to a hero's welcome, Jarquin called for a referendum on the constitutional amendments introduced by the Liberals and Sandinistas in the National Assembly, based on the pact completed while he had been in jail.²⁵ Measures in the pact would de-fang the Office of the Comptroller and give Arnaldo Aleman immunity from prosecution for corruption even after he left the office of the Presidency.

The Sandinista Party—Breaks and Cracks

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is, in contrast with the PLC, definitely an ideological party with ideological battles the basis for many, but not all, of the divisions within it. If, as Guilio Giardi and Donald Hodges affirm, the three most important aspects of Sandinista thought are the ideas of Sandino, Marxism and the Christian theology of liberation, then their differing interpretations of the theories of Marxism have led to the greatest controversy. Elsewhere, this author has maintained that, while a major contribution of the Sandinista revolution was to bring together—in theory and in practice—representative, participatory and economic democracy, there were many conflicts within the FSLN around these issues. And, in the end, one must question whether that combination of democracy and vanguardism that emerged was or is tenable.

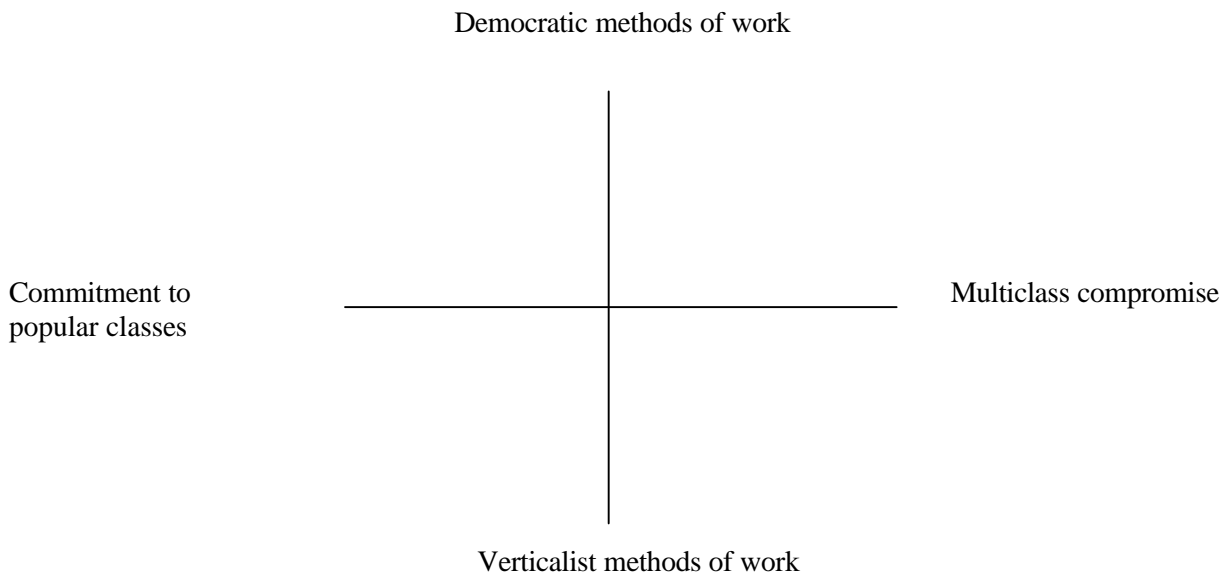
During the years the Sandinistas were in power, many analysts assumed that the collective leadership characteristic of the Sandinista party and government was less authoritarian than "one-man rule" in other revolutionary countries. The nine men constituting the National Directorate met (on Fridays, according to Nicaraguan lore), arrived at consensus on the issues and then sent down their orders. Victor Hugo Tinoco says that, in Nicaragua, the ideas of a vanguard party were combined with a cultural tendency toward *caudillismo*. He adds that Nicaraguans produced a variation in which "*caudillismo* of one person was replaced by a *caudillismo* of nine people. But in the end it was still *caudillismo*, if a collective one."²⁶

With the 1990 electoral defeat, the FSLN party structures opened up. The First Party Congress in July of 1991 made the Sandinista Assembly the highest organ of the party between congresses. The National Directorate became divided on important issues—many but not all of the divisions occurring between a social democratic current and a more orthodox, vanguardist current—with consensus harder to reach. For this reason, Daniel Ortega, as general secretary of the party, took on more decision-making powers and called for an extraordinary party congress to bring the party out of its stalemate. While the May 1994 congress did, in fact, end the stalemate, it ended it with one current of opinion defeating the other by majority vote rather than by compromise and negotiation between the two sides. Each democratic reform that was approved at the congress was counterbalanced by a decision that reinforced some aspect of vanguardism. For example, while the Congress voted to hold party primaries before general elections and approved quotas of 30 percent for women and 10 percent for youth in all local, regional, and national leadership organs, Congress delegates voted to maintain the two membership categories of affiliate and

militant and to retain the description of the party's character as "vanguard." The social democratic wing of the party lost out as the more orthodox wing gained 53% of the seats in the National Directorate and 65% of seats in the Sandinista Assembly. Former Vice-President Sergio Ramirez was not re-elected to the National Directorate. But Henry Ruíz did (unsuccessfully) challenge Daniel Ortega in the voting for General Secretary of the party, which as Ruíz himself stated, "never happens in a left party."²⁷

In October 1994, the Sandinista Assembly voted to remove Carlos Fernando Chamorro from his position as editor of the Sandinista daily newspaper, *Barricada*. Other journalists, including Sofia Montenegro, resigned in protest. In January of 1995, Sergio Ramírez resigned from the FSLN, followed three weeks later by Dora María Téllez, Luís Carrión, and Mirna Cunningham. On May 21, 1995, the Sandinista Renovacionist Movement was formally founded as a political party.

But, the break did not mean that ideological controversies within the FSLN disappeared. We can see the differences among Sandinistas as formed by two cross-cutting cleavages. The first is between commitment to the popular classes and openness to multiclass compromise. The second is between more democratic versus more verticalist methods of work.²⁸ We can see in this way that only one of the four quadrants left the party (that of those committed to multiclass compromise and democratic methods of work) leaving three others to continue to do battle among themselves. And they have continued to do battle, as we shall see.



Vilma Núñez, former Supreme Court Justice and President of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights, challenged Daniel Ortega for the presidential nomination of the Sandinista Party in the party primary of February 1996 and at the May 1996 party congress. This challenge to the choice made by the leadership of a revolutionary party was extremely important and positive. What was negative was that the night before the congress vote, a member of the FSLN National Directorate, in true vanguard fashion, went from departmental delegation to delegation to tell members that the candidate had to be Daniel Ortega.²⁹

While the FSLN lost the 1996 elections with Daniel Ortega at the helm, the party did conserve its base and it remained the largest and best-organized political party in Nicaragua and one of the

strongest parties of the left in Latin America. It was the break-away Sandinista Renovation Movement, led by Sergio Ramirez, that was unable to gain popular support and achieved only one deputy in the National Assembly. It seemed at the end of 1996 that the challenges for the FSLN in the years immediately ahead were to continue its own internal democratization and to craft economic proposals that would address the plight of the 70% of Nicaraguans who were, and are today, living in poverty. The question to be asked is whether the Sandinistas were able to meet either of these two challenges.

As a result of the primary process, almost all of the FSLN deputies in the National Assembly were new to the job, having been grassroots activists of the party and the popular movements in the departments. According to Victor Hugo Tinoco, head of the Sandinista bench in that period, the FSLN was able to keep more unity within the bench than the Liberals by means of wide-ranging discussion and debate on the bills before them. The deputies united with representatives from the non-governmental organizations representing women to oppose, unsuccessfully as it turned out, the Aleman initiative to reduce the Institute on Women to a mere division of the newly-created Ministry of the Family. This unity among the deputies was in contrast to the period before the 1996 elections when all of the conflicts within the FSLN party were being played out among the members of the Sandinista bench and no one was ever certain which deputy was in which party or current at what moment.³⁰

In 1997 the economic crisis the country faced got worse with large and medium-scale farmers unable to pay their debts to the banks. Farmers put up barricades on the principal highways. Many owners still did not have titles to the land they had acquired under the Sandinista agrarian reform, often because the old owner was unwilling to accept bonds in lieu of return of the property. Because credit for small farmers and cooperatives was so difficult to obtain under the market-based system imposed on the country by the IMF, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, some Sandinistas feared that if small farmers received legal title to their lands, it would be only to sell the land immediately to put food into their children's mouths for a few weeks. Property was becoming concentrated again in fewer hands; the only difference being that some of the new big landholders were now Sandinistas. Liberal and Sandinistas lawmakers worked out a new property accord which affirmed the validity of urban and rural land reform titles while establishing that owners of land or houses over a certain value had to pay for the property.

As the Sandinistas prepared for their party congress scheduled for May of 1998, many stated that the party needed new leadership at all levels as well as new methods for choosing leaders.³¹ Manuel Espinoza, writing in late 1997, said that he had asked Daniel Ortega, who he noted in passing has been called a *caudillo*, the question of what he thought about the calls for new leadership. Ortega said, "We are ready for the Congress to make this decision. We are not attached to any post. From the moment we enter into the Congress, we leave it in the hands of the Congress, and it is that body which must make the decision."³² The use of the imperial "we" did not auger well for democratic leadership change!

But the party debate of the issues that would come before the Congress, including such philosophical subjects as the continued commitment to socialism, was abruptly overshadowed on March 3rd by the allegations of sexual abuse brought against Daniel Ortega by his stepdaughter Zoilamérica Narváez. Shortly thereafter Narváez filed criminal charges of sexual abuse, rape, and sexual harassment over a period of 20 years (dating from when she was eleven years old) against Ortega, who was protected by parliamentary immunity. From the beginning, it did not appear as if there was any possibility that he would be stripped of the immunity in order to stand trial. He acquired legislative immunity when he was given a seat in the National Assembly as a

former candidate for president in the 1996 elections. The FSLN party leadership accused Narvaez of participating in a conspiracy to destroy Ortega and the party, failing to note that she had waited to make the accusations until substantial numbers of Sandinistas already felt it was time for him to step aside and that she would not have made the charges at all if the harassment had not been continuing. Lisa Zimmerman notes that “the scandal has served to highlight many of the obstacles that the FSLN faces in carrying out a meaningful transformation: the ‘cult of personality’ that has formed around Ortega; the failure of established mechanisms in the party to deal with charges of ethical failings against its members, and entrenched patriarchal attitudes and values.”³³

At the Congress, Daniel Ortega ran unopposed for General Secretary and was re-elected. Victor Hugo Tinoco ran against Tomás Borge for Vice-General Secretary and lost by only 25 out of 423 votes. Reportedly, Borge had been outraged to learn that Tinoco was planning to challenge him and had urged him not to go through with his plans. But Tinoco proceeded with his challenge, reaffirming the democratic principle of open election of party officials. Only four of the members of the new National Directorate had served on the previous Directorate: Ortega, Borge, Tinoco, and René Núñez. Monica Baltodano chose not to run, saying that she “would rather be a dreamer than a killer of dreams.”

The questioning of Daniel Ortega’s leadership within the party did not stop with his re-election as general secretary, however. Henry Petrie, who was stripped of his post in the FSLN Managua departmental committee for his support of Narvaéz, said that *caudillismo* was destroying the party. He stated, “I don’t think it is the denunciation of Zoilamerica that is doing the damage. It is the attitude of Daniel, and the attitude of the FSLN. If Daniel were more mindful of the interests of the FSLN, and if he were really aiming at a more revolutionary attitude, then he would say, ‘I will step aside, and I will resolve this matter.’ But he doesn’t do this.”³⁴

About the rush to defend Ortega, Alejandro Bendaña said, “Danielismo’ is manipulated to preserve the apparatus, the power, [and] the organization as intact as possible, in other words, not to deal with the underlying problems. The defense of ‘Danielismo’ is not simply the defense of Daniel but also of those individuals in the FSLN who aspire to a greater share of power. ... They see this as a threat, as something that will further weaken the FSLN.”³⁵

Bendaña saw two reactions to the Narvaez accusations and also the possibility for hope:

There are two general reactions: those who did not know and cannot believe and many of us who knew and didn’t want to say. In many senses we may be guiltier than the others, but less so if we are coming out of the closet [now]. Just as there were abuse, treachery, lies, abominable things, not only in one but in many cases, there also came from within the FSLN a person symbolic of a new generation, a woman, a victim and survivor, who said this cannot be. She defends herself, but in the process she is defending women, the best of Sandinismo and the potentiality of transforming our society against the abuse of power and everything that is wrong with the Sandinista Front. In time, not just now, we will learn whether there is enough room within the Sandinista Front to wage this battle.³⁶

Within a few months the media was full of rumors of and opinions about a political pact being hammered out between Daniel Ortega and Arnoldo Aleman. In an August interview published by *El Nuevo Diario*, Daniel Ortega said that one could not make comparisons between his negotiations with Aleman and the infamous pacts of earlier in the century, especially that between

Anastasio Somoza Debayle and Conservative Fernando Aguero in 1971. Ortega noted: "First of all, Aleman is not Somoza. The fact is that Somoza disappeared from this country with the revolution of 1979. Aleman represents a government, which, while it is certainly very marked by what was Somocismo, is the fruit of a democratic process that the revolution began. Under different conditions, we would have had Somoza's grandsons running the country today. He is linked to Somocismo, but I insist that he is not Somoza."³⁷

When reminded by interviewer Marcio Vargas that Ortega himself and other Sandinista leaders had called Aleman "Somocista," Ortega clarified, "I have said that this government has the vices of Somocismo, but that does not mean it has the power that Somoza had. This government has the political apparatus, it's undeniable that it has very strong instruments, but it doesn't have either military or economic power, although it has made advances in recovering economic ground."

Seemingly answering the concerns of those who believed that Aleman wanted changes in the constitution that would permit his re-election, Ortega said, "We are against constitutional amendments that favor consecutive re-election or that would favor the creation of a Senate that would include all former presidents....In other areas of constitutional reforms, we are open."³⁸

In January of 1999, the Sandinista Assembly and members of the Sandinista bench in the National Assembly decided that Daniel Ortega would assume his seat in the National Assembly for the upcoming legislative session and also serve as leader of the Sandinista bench in the Assembly. Ortega had not until that point served actively as a deputy. The change was seen as a blow to Victor Hugo Tinoco, who had served as the Sandinista leader in the legislative body and who had been mentioned as a possible candidate for the 2001 presidential nomination for the FSLN. The FSLN communiqué issued after the meeting explained that the reason for the change of leadership was that "This may be a very difficult year because of the laws to be considered as well as the continuing negotiations with the government." It was also believed, however, that Ortega was taking his seat in the Assembly in order to guarantee his immunity against his stepdaughter's charges. There had been some question as to whether a deputy could lose immunity by lack of attendance at legislative sessions.³⁹

Another set of scandals that beset Nicaragua was that of the bank failures. Here, both parties had their hands in the cookie jar. Part of the scandal surrounding the failure of Interbank in August of 2000 was its involvement in the transfer of farms that were part of the Area of Workers' Property (APT) during the revolutionary years into the hands of large capitalist landowners like the Centeno brothers, large share-holders in the bank. The Centeno brothers company, AGRESAMI, would take money it had borrowed from Interbank and loan it to APT farms which were awaiting title, accepting the worker-owners' "right-to-buy" leases to the farms as collateral. When the farms had problems paying the debts, the company took over the leases. According to estimates from the Sandinista Farm Workers Association (ATC), AGRESAMI came into control of 17,000 acres of top-notch coffee land in this manner. It was a case of Sandinista capitalists collaborating in the roll-back of their own agrarian reform.⁴⁰

By November of 2000, when the Banco de Café went under, it was the fifth bank to be liquidated since 1996. The Bancafé failure was notable because at first the government said that it would not, as it had in the four previous collapses, cover all affected deposits. Rather only those up to C\$10,000 cordobas or around US\$770 would be covered. In the end, President Aleman changed his mind and promised that all deposits would be honored. Meanwhile, analysts noted that the effort to attract private banking back into Nicaragua in 1991 had included conditions that were too generous and requirements that were too lax. There were also rumors that the banks had been

allowed to go under based on pressure from the international financial institutions such as the IMF and the Inter-American Development Bank. The collapse of yet another bank completely destroyed the confidence of Nicaraguans in their banks and tens of thousands took their money out of the banking system and either sent it abroad or buried it in jars in their patios. Some put their money in the Banco de Finanzas (the bank that bought up the assets of Bancafé) which was evidently home to part of the Army's pension fund and therefore, some quipped, the safest bank in the country.

Bancafé, and Interbank before it was brought down, according to José Rocha and Gareth Richards writing in *envio*, suffered from “a traditional, deeply rooted and essentially fraudulent tendency in Nicaraguan banking to grant large loans to high-risk individuals or businesses with personal links to the bank's directors.” These fraudulent practices do not typically lead to prosecution. In the case of Interbank, a Managua judge dropped charges against all involved; “everything was resolved through political negotiations between the FSLN, which had considerable interests in the bank, and the ruling PLC.” And who pays? “As in the Interbank case, when Nicaraguan taxpayers were left having to cover the \$80 million that the Central Bank used to guarantee Interbank account holders' money, they are again footing the [Bancafé] bill to get the country out of another fine mess.”⁴¹

In summary, the FSLN leadership had three principal reasons for entering into negotiations for a pact with the Aleman forces, according to Marcos Membreño, speaking at a meeting in Santa Cruz, CA: “1) to preserve Daniel Ortega's parliamentary immunity so that he does not have to stand trial in the sexual abuse case; 2) to ensure that large properties appropriated by the Sandinista leadership after the 1990 electoral defeat, the majority of which have not been completely legalized, are not taken over by the government; and 3) to guarantee positions within the government and on the boards of directors of state-owned enterprises to divide up among their political supporters.”⁴² As we can see in the case of the bank failures, the FSLN needed protection against charges of corruption and fraudulent practices as well.

The Evolution of the Pact

Arnoldo Aleman's first few months in office were marked by protests against his government's policies. Students groups, trade unionists, women, small farmers' groups took to the streets and put up barricades on highways protesting unemployment, hunger, lack of credit for small farmers, rising costs of living, low salaries, and repression of university students along with what some were calling “growing dictatorial tendencies” of the Aleman government. The latter evidently referred to the issuing of decrees or steamrolling through the National Assembly legislation on issues that would normally have involved some sort of national discussion. Included were a new tax law seen to be aimed at helping the return of Miami capital at the cost of local businesses, a decree restricting funding for non-governmental organizations, as well as others. The April 1997 a protest effectively closed down transportation throughout the country. A first round of government-sponsored talks did not produce any results because unions and farmers' groups were not invited. A second round of what the government called “national dialogue” began in July, but the FSLN and several other parties as well as pro-Sandinista organizations boycotted it.

President Aleman spoke of dialogue between political parties at a Liberal Constitutionalist Party Convention on July 11, 1998, saying that “For the good of the country and all Nicaraguans, we will speak with all those that we have to that have true representation,” noting that the foremost group with whom he would be talking would be the FSLN, not with “small political parties.” He mentioned the possibility of electoral and constitutional reform which might include the

elimination of the prohibition of persons with double citizenship running for office and changes in government funding for political parties and campaigns.⁴³

However, the negotiations already had been going on for several months between teams headed up by presidential advisor Jaime Morales and Sandinista advisor Dionisio Marengo. In August rumors had it that a pact had already been signed or was ready to be signed between Liberals and Sandinistas. The pact was rumored to contain the elimination of the prohibition on presidential reelection after this current term, the creation of a Senate and other measures. Reaction was intense, principally from minority parties left out of the talks. Sergio Ramirez reminded the press that the 1979 revolution was fought precisely to combat this type of bipartisan pact. Conservative leader Noel Vidaurre noted that the Conservatives had made pacts before in Nicaragua's history but that these agreements have never benefited the people.

Daniel Ortega said that the FSLN was reclaiming lost political space to which it has a right as the second largest party in the country. He stated, "This is not a pact.... It's not secret. It's something legitimate to defend the spaces that others have been taking away from the FSLN."⁴⁴

At the end of September, the parties announced agreement on changes to the electoral law. National Assembly Deputy Eliseo Nuñez, now back in the PLC fold, told the press that he had held conversations with Victor Hugo Tinoco, head of the Sandinista bench, and that the Liberals and Sandinistas in the Assembly had come to an agreement that would include replacing all the members of the Supreme Electoral Council with members named by the political parties. Another possible change mandated that 90% of the electoral council members at the departmental and municipal levels would be named by the two main parties. According to Nuñez, the reforms would also make it more difficult for a political party to gain legal status.⁴⁵

In early October, there was a controversy about the role in the talks of former Defense Minister Humberto Ortega. Monica Baltodano said that it was inappropriate for him to represent the FSLN when he had stated that he was not a member of the party. Victor Hugo Tinoco, a key negotiator, responded that Ortega had played an early role in the talks, but was not now a member of the special commission. FSLN deputy Bayardo Arce confirmed this saying that Ortega's "exploratory" mission to establish talks with the PLC had been authorized by his brother Daniel Ortega.⁴⁶

Socio-economic policy was not originally contemplated as part of an agreement between Sandinistas and Liberals. But, for a short time, the agenda broadened to include it. Talks on economic policy consistently hit a bottleneck, however, on the subject of the government's structural adjustment programs that were mandated by the ESAF (Economic Structural Adjustment Facility) agreements the government had signed with the IMF in order to qualify for debt relief. Daniel Ortega even met with Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo to inform him of the progress of the talks and to seek his assistance in achieving consensus on several economic subjects. According to Ortega, "The only way to confront the ESAF is through a broad-based popular movement of national character that would demand a new proposal [to the IMF]."⁴⁷ As it turned out, the economic policy nut was much too hard to crack and the final version of the pact contained no economic measures, a fact which was to make it seem even more of an agreement drawn up to benefit the powerful.

During the last three days of October 1998, over 50 inches of rain fell over much of Nicaragua and Honduras as a result of the passage of Hurricane Mitch through Central America. It was the greatest disaster to hit Nicaragua since the destruction of Managua by the earthquake of 1972. Thousands died and the property damage was enormous.

Negotiations on the Liberal—Sandinista pact slowed down, but were not suspended. In January Victor Hugo Tinoco told *La Prensa* that on-going talks between the PLC and the FSLN were causing “strong disagreements” within the Sandinista Party. He noted that the Liberals were insistent on the re-election issue and, in general, “There were too many demands that we could not accept.” With relation to the dissidents within the Sandinista Party, Tinoco admitted that “There is a group within the FSLN which feels that there is too much love for the Liberals.”⁴⁸

Daniel Ortega denied that there was a conflict within the Sandinista Party and said that news reports of an Ortega-Tinoco split were part of a right-wing attempt to weaken the FSLN.⁴⁹ Talks began again in earnest in June of 1999. Tinoco left the negotiating team to be replaced by Rev. Miguel Angel Casco. Monica Baltodano stated that there was no unity within the Sandinista Assembly about a pact and that a referendum should be held on whether to amend the Constitution. Violeta Chamorro criticized the pact as an attempt on the part of the Liberals and Sandinistas to either deceive the people or to cover up their “dirty tricks.”⁵⁰ There began to be rumors and questions about so-called “secret clauses” of the pact.

By late June, voices from the international community were beginning to be heard. United Nations representative Carmen Angulo stated that “Dialogue is better than confrontation,” and said he hoped that the international community would support the idea of dialogue. In contrast, Ana Quiroz, director of the Emergency Coalition for Transformation and Reconstruction, said she had “heard concerns from the international agencies with whom we work about the results of this dialogue...that until now has only revealed political interests.”⁵¹ Within a few weeks, the European Union, the World Bank and other organizations had expressed concern about the probable enlargement of the Supreme Court from twelve to sixteen Justices. They were not concerned about the increase in the budget that would be required, but rather that, with the appointment of the new judges by the pacting parties, the principle of judicial autonomy would be violated.⁵²

The invariably ironic and caustic Nitlapán-*envio* team, writing in August, noted:

After weeks of public pre-accord announcements and intense debates in the media, the negotiations seemed to go on hold in mid-July. There must still be a few wrinkles to iron out under the table. For example, some unmanipulable functionaries still to be fired and agreements still to be reached on who will replace them. Or certain property conflicts yet to be resolved—especially those related to worker-owned companies, which one FSLN faction wants to turn into “associative” properties so that Liberal or Sandinista business interests can eventually slip them into their own holdings portfolios through the magic of the omniscient market. Other points for discussion or agreement during this “lull” have so far been kept under wraps. These include government promises of “fiscal benevolence” toward Sandinista entrepreneurs as well as permission for the Sandinista business clan to operate its companies. Among this clan’s most conspicuous figures are Humberto Ortega and his covey of name-lending front men, and the landed Coronel Kautz brothers, both deputy agricultural ministers during the Sandinista Government.⁵³

The pact was completed on August 17, 1999. The announcement was made by the spokesmen for the PLC and FSLN, Silvio Calderon and Rev. Miguel Angel Casco respectively. On the 23rd, a special commission began the task of turning the agreed-upon points into proposals to be presented to the National Assembly for consideration as amendments to the Constitution and

changes to the electoral law.⁵⁴ Casco said that even after eleven difficult sessions, the agreement reached was only “partial,” meaning, evidently, that the parties were not able to come to agreement on all the points that were put on the table.

A few days later, the Sandinista Assembly met for nine hours to discuss all 12 points of the pact. The pact was approved, with even the most controversial point, the seat in the National Assembly for Aleman when he left office, opposed by only 18 of the 155 members.

Daniel Ortega called on those who were FSLN deputies in the National Assembly to vote for the measures when they were being considered by that body. Most deputies seemed ready to heed that call. However, there were several who answered negatively, or at least doubtfully. Monica Baltodano said that she would go “to the tomb of Carlos Fonseca and let myself be guided by what Carlos tells me as well as what a great many people who can’t make themselves heard are saying.” But, she added, “I think I will maintain my position [of opposition].” The son of the party’s founder, deputy Carlos Fonseca Teran, was adamant in his rejection of the points in the pact, whatever the political cost to him.

Jose Gonzalez, a deputy from Matagalpa, said that he would oppose the seat in the Assembly for Aleman and would decide soon about his position on the changes in the Comptroller’s Office, noting “if the FSLN doesn’t take cases of corruption to the Comptroller’s, it will appear as if we are approving it.” Victor Hugo Tinoco, however, said that, while he would continue to point out what he believed were political errors made by his party, he would vote in a disciplined manner based on what the party as a whole decided.⁵⁵

One would have thought that the jailing of the Comptroller at this very moment would have resulted in the Sandinistas forcing some concessions on certain measures from the Aleman forces given the vulnerability of the government at a time of national and international outcry. After all, the FSLN had, in general, been supportive of Jarquin’s anti-corruption efforts. A group of 30 FSLN legislators did see it as an opportunity to demand some changes in the pact, even though the negotiations were basically completed. But when Daniel Ortega returned from an overseas trip he brought everything under control again. In spite of the government’s vulnerability, not a word of the pact was changed.

On November 19th, PLC and Sandinista deputies presented to the First Secretary of the National Assembly the proposal they had hammered out to amend the Constitution incorporating the measures of the pact. National Assembly President Ivan Escobar Fornos said it “represents a good opportunity for Nicaragua to move forward.” Bayardo Arce of the FSLN added that it supported the modernization of the country. All 38 PLC deputies co-sponsored the measure, while 27 of 36 Sandinistas signed on.⁵⁶

Leaders of five other Liberal parties released a communiqué stating that they were not parties to the pact and that the authoritarianism and corruption of the present government could not be considered as authentically liberal. Among them were Eliseo Nuñez of the Liberal Salvation Movement, Julia Mena of the Liberal Independent Party (PLI), and Enrique Sanchez of the Liberal Nationalist Party. A group of dissident Sandinista deputies held a press conference to declare that they would not vote for the amendments in the Assembly. Speaking for the group, Monica Baltodano stated that the Liberal/Sandinista pact “makes us Sandinistas appear to be accomplices in the crimes of this government, including the jailing of the Comptroller Agustin Jarquin.”⁵⁷

On December 9th, 1999, the National Assembly approved the 16 articles in the bill amending the Constitution as contemplated by the Pact. The vote was 71 in favor, 17 against and 2 abstentions. The vote meant that the Constitutional changes had thus passed the first of two hurdles. They now had to be passed by the next National Assembly session in the New Year. Prominent among those opposing the amendments were Sandinista deputies Monica Baltodano, Angelina Rios, Carlos Fonseca and Jose Gonzalez. Fonseca said that the vote was nothing less than the abandonment by the majority of the Sandinista representatives of the very principles for which so many people gave their lives during the revolution and subsequent contra war.⁵⁸

Less than a month later, on January 18, 2000, the constitutional amendments passed the second required vote in the new session of the National Assembly, inaugurated just a few days before. The vote was 70 deputies in favor, 12 against, and 5 abstentions. Eliseo Nuñez stated that Nicaragua did not need 16 justices on its Supreme Court. At that rate, he maintained, the United States would have 960 and China 6,400.

Commentators noted that the amendments could face a constitutional challenge because an addition had been made between the first and second vote. A clause was added that increased from one to two years the amount of time that a candidate must live in a municipality before running for mayor of that town. This constitutional amendment was evidently an attempt to prevent Pedro Solorzano from running for Mayor of Managua in late 2000. With this measure and the new division of Managua into three cities (Managua, El Crucero, and Ciudad Sandino) as a result of legislation coming out of the pact, Solorzano, who lives in El Crucero, would be prohibited from running even if he had moved the few meters across the border that day.⁵⁹

On the very same day that the constitutional amendments were passed, the National Assembly also passed a new electoral law that put in place the elements of the Pact which dealt with electoral matters. Seventy-five deputies voted in favor of the new law, four voted against it.⁶⁰

In March of 2000, Rev. Miguel Angel Casco, who had been the FSLN spokesperson on the pact after Victor Hugo Tinoco left the negotiations, resigned both from the National Directorate of the FSLN and from the party itself. He joined those who said that the pact was designed to keep the present leaders in positions of power while justifying their illegal wealth gains or other abuse.⁶¹

What's In the Pact?

It was difficult for those who were following the negotiation of the Pact to keep track of exactly what was included in it, because the measures changed over time. But with final passage of the amendments to the Constitution and the electoral law, it finally became possible to say with certainty what was in the Pact.

The following are the main features:

- a) The Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic was expanded from one to five officials of equal rank. Agustin Jarquin became one among five and his Vice-Comptroller, Claudia Frixione, became a mere alternate.
- b) Automatic life-time seats in the National Assembly were granted to out-going Presidents and Vice-Presidents.
- c) The number of Supreme Court Justices was increased from 12 to 16.
- d) It now requires a two-thirds vote of the National Assembly to strip a President of his or her immunity.

- e) The number of magistrates on the Supreme Electoral Council was increased from five to seven.
- f) Municipal Electoral Councils will be established. Their presidents and vice-presidents will alternate between the PLC and FSLN. [This is already the case in all Departmental Electoral Councils and all polling centers.]
- g) Parties that decide to create an electoral alliance will lose their own legal status if the alliance does not win a certain percentage of votes.
- h) Legal standing will only be granted to a party that presents a list of signatures equivalent to at least 3% of the last electoral roll.
- i) The proportion of votes needed to win the presidency on the first round is reduced from 45% to 40%. A candidate can win on the first round with as little as 35% if the second place candidate has five percentage points less than that. A second round is necessary if these percentages are not met.
- j) Popular subscription associations—or petition candidates—will no longer be allowed in local city government elections.⁶²

The first five measures were achieved by amending the Constitution, the second five by changes in the electoral law.

The Pact Attacked and the Pact Defended

Attacks on the Pact were a constant during the entire period of its negotiation and approval. As early as May of 1999, Sergio Garcia Quintero, a representative from Nicaragua to the Central American Parliament and a member of Aleman's PLC, wrote a document for a Managua newspaper entitled "Reflections on the PLC Crisis." In it he offers sixteen reasons for President Aleman's decline in popularity as well as for what he saw as the decline in the party. He said that one reason was the fact that the PLC does not behave like a serious political party, but like a mercantile organization at the service of the private interests of a big boss and his highly questionable clique." Another reason, he noted, was "the fact that the President of the Republic has gotten into bed with Comandante Daniel Ortega, totally against the desires of Liberals, with no other objectives than to get that Sandinista faction's complicity in the reforms to the Constitution and the Electoral Law and the promulgation of new laws, which in turn have no other ends than to favor the personal, political and other interests of Arnoldo Aleman and his main cronies."⁶³ When the contents of the Pact were revealed, Garcia called for demonstrations and a civil disobedience campaign to stop it.

Rank and file Liberals were outraged as well, including Liberals in Miami who had supported Aleman's candidacy for the presidency believing that they would be able to return to Nicaragua and reclaim their properties without fear of Sandinista reprisals. Cristobal Mendoza, president of the Committee of Poor Nicaraguans in Exile, said, "Aleman claimed that, once president, he would crush the Sandinistas once and for all, and create thousands of new jobs in Nicaragua so that we could all go home. He said he would be waiting with open arms to greet us." But, Mendoza complained bitterly, now the President "is busy making deals with Daniel Ortega and the other FSLN millionaires."⁶⁴

President Aleman defended the pact arguing that it represented a "search for points of convergence" with the FSLN. He said that, for example, the new requirement that a party would need 3% of the total vote in elections to maintain its legal status as a party was to avoid taxing the citizens to finance the election campaigns of small unrepresentative political groups. His supporters said that their leader should hold a seat in the National Assembly so that the legislative body "can benefit from his experience." The enlargement of the Comptroller's Office from one

office holder to five would, according to the President's supporters, "modernize and strengthen the institution."⁶⁵

But it was from within the FSLN that the criticism of the pact was the strongest. Human rights leader Vilma Nuñez, spoke out consistently against the pact. When it was finally signed, she said that she felt like a member of a family that had been preparing for the death of a loved one and even has the coffin ready. But, she said, they still feel the blow when the family member dies. "The FSLN gained nothing," she said, "not even the elimination of the second round [in presidential elections] and that was their main demand." She went on to say, referring to the enlargement of the Comptroller's Office, "Now, the leadership of the FSLN has made itself the accomplices of the enthroning of corruption in our country."⁶⁶

But, Nuñez noted, the experience of 1994, "when many valuable comrades left the party" to form the Sandinista Renovation Movement, "taught us a lesson." She goes on:

All the internal groups publicly criticizing the way the party is being run...unanimously agree that the struggle to rescue the FSLN, transform it and turn it once again into an instrument of popular struggle must take place within. I think that the main thing right now is to stop being afraid [Nuñez and others had received threats because of their opposition to the pact], because one of the factors working against the FSLN's transformation is the fear that has taken hold of party militants: the fear of breaking myths, of being silenced by reprisals and also of losing the material means that the revolution provided to many. What unites us all is the conviction that the FSLN belongs to all Sandinistas, not just to the top leadership that has currently kidnapped the party.⁶⁷

As noted above, opposition to the pact was expressed by a number of Sandinistas at the meeting of the Sandinista Assembly in August of 1999, after the pact was signed. Those Sandinistas continued to speak out and, in September, the National Directorate of the FSLN released a strong statement condemning the dissidents and defending the pact. The communiqué notes that the FSLN, concerned about the economic and social crisis the country is experiencing, has worked to establish agreements about changes to the Constitution and electoral law that will create better conditions and possibilities for winning the next elections. This, the members of the National Directorate say, is the only way to put in place progressive policies that will favor the interests of the poor, the workers, young people and women.

The document goes on:

We are saddened and concerned that this enormous and patriotic task is always slowed down by some comrades who affect the prestige and the honor of the FSLN and its members as well as the coherence, unity and discipline of the party. The National Directorate of the FSLN considers that public expressions in the communications media and in party gatherings that hurt the dignity and honor of FSLN militants or the prestige or unity of the party are not admissible and will be subject to the party statutes. ... Article 19 of those statutes says that members of the FSLN who disrespect the program, statutes and resolutions of the party or who commit grave acts of indiscipline will be sanctioned.⁶⁸

The residue of vanguardism is obvious here, but not in the sense of requiring obedience to decisions in support of radical revolutionary policies. Rather, party discipline, even the old

Leninist democratic centralism, is being enforced in support of traditional Nicaraguan *caudillismo*, that of Daniel Ortega and his closest associates.

Nicaraguan journalist and pundit William Grigsby was not slow in replying on his radio program “Sin Fronteras:”

Yes, reform the electoral law, but not at that price. One thing is changing the electoral law, which we all agree needs to be done. Sandinistas agree unanimously that we need to sweep away this present corrupt Supreme Electoral Council and that we need to change the electoral law to guarantee fair competition, but that is a far cry from what they have done! For example, eliminating popular subscription candidates has nothing to do with fair competition. Expanding the Supreme Court so that there will be four more bones to gnaw on does not increase fair competition. Turning over the Comptroller General’s office to Aleman’s corrupt government so that a thief can watch over thieves does nothing to increase fair competition.⁶⁹

Grigsby does not accept the statement that the only way to help the poor in Nicaragua is to win national presidential elections. “Then why have deputies in the National Assembly,” he asks, “Why elect mayors and city councilpeople?” Beyond that, he does not believe that the FSLN was founded to win elections, but rather to “transform the society of Nicaragua, to create a society without exploiters or exploited, to eradicate poverty and to change the system.” However, those who believe firmly in democratic government would question whether this can be done in a democratic fashion without winning elections at the national level.

Grigsby questions the leadership’s stated commitment to put in place policies that would “favor the interests of the poor,” saying that the FSLN has even changed the verbs, no longer defending and promoting the interests of the poor, but merely “favoring” them. This means, he says that the FSLN is distancing itself from the peasants and workers, the unemployed, the teachers and healthworkers, who have been its traditional subjects. It will favor these groups, he says, but it will also favor others.

If we were to return to the diagram of ideological cross-cutting cleavages drawn above, we would place Grigsby in the quadrant which retains verticalist methods of work and also a commitment to the poor majorities. His foes in the National Directorate would have to be placed in that quadrant containing those who retain verticalist methods of work but who have made a multi-class compromise.

Grigsby says that he is delighted that the National Directorate has cited Article 19 of the party statutes because the leaders of the party, not the dissenting members, are vulnerable under that article to being expelled for violating the principles of the party:

They have made a pact with *somocismo*. This is a violation of our revolutionary principles that are written in our statutes. And they have done it behind the backs of the majority of the members. At the beginning, not even the National Directorate knew. The only ones who were involved were Daniel, Tomas [Borge], and Humberto Ortega. They cozied up to Aleman behind the back of the National Directorate, and they deserve expulsion.⁷⁰

Henry Ruiz, known during his twelve years leading a guerrilla band in Nicaragua's mountains as "Modesto" and who served as Minister of Planning under the Sandinista Government, left the FSLN in March of 2000. He said:

At this point I don't see any way for the FSLN to put itself back together. Neither my head nor my heart nor my commitments allow me to believe there is any possibility of this. During Violeta Chamorro's government, the FSLN played a more coherent role as an opposition force. We waged a more systematic, more sustained opposition. More recently, facing the Liberal government, the FSLN has not acted as an opposition but rather as a collaborator. ... I always maintained and continue to maintain that the current government is a Somocista government, that it seeks to bring back *somocismo*. ... It is inexplicable that the FSLN leadership has come to agreements with this government, that they have formed a pact with it.⁷¹

On December 2, 1999, CENIDH released an exhaustive critique of the agreements included in the Pact. The CENIDH document, entitled "Considerations on the Partial Reform of the Constitution Agreed to by the PLC and the FSLN Leadership," begins by remembering that Augusto Sandino opposed the pact of Espino Negro in 1927 and thus began his struggle against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. Nine years later the 45-year Somoza family dictatorship began. Under the Somozas, there were two infamous pacts: the first, signed in 1950, was between Liberal Anastasio Somoza Garcia and Conservative General Emiliano Chamorro, and the second, signed in 1971, was between Anastasio Somoza Debayle and Conservative Fernando Agüero Rocha. The CENIDH document continued:

It is a constant in our history that the greater the "understanding" or political pacting between the dominant classes—the party in power and the opposition--, the smaller is the possibility of true harmony and democracy among Nicaraguans. Each pact has been forged while ignoring the fundamental problems of our people. From Moncada to Agüero Rocha, what has characterized the pacts has been the dividing up of posts, repression, and the perpetuation of political oligarchies. And, as a counterpoint to this drama, there is less freedom and less social justice for the population.⁷²

The pact has legal, political and economic implications (although the nation may never find out exactly what those last include) but they all benefit only the two maximum leaders of the two parties involved and their closest associates. The pact is designed to keep the two dominant parties in power for the indeterminate future, with one group in power and the other in the opposition but retaining important quotas of power in the different branches of government. In this way, the CENIDH document notes, access to political power and influence is closed to any alternative political force.⁷³

The measure which increases from simple majority to two-thirds majority the number of deputies required to deprive a sitting president of immunity can only be explained, the document alleges, as a way to make impossible any judicial action on the part of citizens against the President for the corruption in which he has been involved. The position of the human rights organization is that this immunity should apply only to acts carried out in fulfillment of the presidential office and not to any other actions or crimes. The seat in the National Assembly to outgoing presidents violates, according to CENIDH, the rights of voters to elect all of the deputies in the Assembly.⁷⁴

But it is for the politicizing of the judicial and electoral branches that the authors of the CENIDH document reserve their harshest criticism. Noting that the reforms create more than 30 new offices for politicians to fill, along with the concomitant increases in expenditure and bureaucracy to be suffered unnecessarily by the public, CENIDH considers that, instead of strengthening democracy, the changes weaken it. The positions on the Supreme Court, in the Comptroller's office and on the Supreme Electoral Council, will all be filled, CENIDH believes, with people personally loyal to Arnoldo Aleman or to Daniel Ortega in detriment to their independence and without regard to their professional competence.

This is particularly alarming in the case of the Comptroller's office because the Comptroller General had contributed to a notable degree to raising the consciousness of the citizenry about the need for transparency in government and the need for public servants to be accountable. This consciousness is as new as it is necessary for Nicaragua, the document notes: "It is a real tragedy that these two discredited parties have decided to abort this institutional experience and put the brakes on an incipient maturing in the exercise of democracy."⁷⁵

With regard to the changes in the court system—the increase in the number of justices on the Supreme Court and the justices being given the power to name and remove the judges on the appeals courts by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote—the CENIDH document asserts that "without an independent judicial branch, there is no possibility of harmony. This politicizing of the judicial branch is a serious attack on the courts' independence and impartiality and does not help to guarantee that human rights will prevail." Politicizing the justice system means access to impartial justice will be impeded, weakening the organ charged with guaranteeing the exercise of all human rights, according to the document.⁷⁶

As part of the conclusion of the document, the human rights group harkens back to Jean Jacques Rousseau to question whether it is permissible to change a democratic constitution in a way that violates the integrity and spirit of the original:

In this sense, one should not only respect the procedures laid down for amendment, but also and principally, the essence of its contents with the objective of preserving the will of those who hold sovereign power expressed in those dispositions that set up a harmonious system (the fundamental compact) that by a simple amendment cannot be destroyed without the participation of those who are the ultimate sovereigns and holders of power: the people.⁷⁷

After the high emotion of these attacks on and defense of the Pact, the rather tongue-in-cheek commentary on the pact by Bayardo Gonzalez, a young Sandinista who has studied political science at Columbia University and at the Kennedy School at Harvard, is almost a relief. He sees the pact not so much as part of the tradition of pacts in Nicaragua but as another of the cases of "pacted democracy" which have been moderately successful in bringing stability, if not social justice, to other countries in Latin America. It installs a two party system, not of the kind that traditionally existed in Nicaragua, where the party in government was changed when the other put together an army and overthrew it, but rather one that lays out "clear lines for political competition and sharing government institutions."

Where the pact's critics have seen the elimination of popular subscription candidates and the establishment of minimum percentages for the legal recognition of small parties as a limitation on democracy, Gonzalez sees it as encouraging small parties to come together to form big parties rather than coalitions of many small parties such as the UNO coalition of Violeta Chamorro which broke apart soon after her election. "It may," he adds, help "create a third center force

organized around the Conservative Party.” This, combined with the lowering of the threshold for victory in a presidential election, could make possible a return to power for the Sandinistas.

Finally, Gonzalez believes that the pact can, by dividing up posts and giving Liberals and Sandinistas a stake in the state whether or not their party holds the presidency, prevent another civil war in the near future in Nicaragua: “The Aleman government has already shown itself to have the characteristics of a dictatorship in the process of being born. The possibility of severe electoral fraud along with the existing political polarization could have brought the FSLN to pick up its arms again. The pact, I believe, prevents this from happening or at least puts it off for many years. No one wants a war in Nicaragua.”⁷⁸

One is tempted to argue, however, that since the pact does not address the principal economic and social ills that Nicaraguans confront, it does not eliminate the causes of political discontent that could lead to civil war. It just guarantees that the organized force most likely to lead that struggle, and necessary according to social scientists in order for a revolution to actually take over state power, will not take on that leadership mantle, having been neutralized by the pact.

From outside the two pacting parties came the call for a referendum on the pact. As early as July 8, 1999, the idea of a referendum was announced at a march against the pact organized by *Acción Ciudadana*, which incorporated over fifty organizations, as well as political parties grouped together as *Movimiento Patria*. Figures such as Dora Maria Tellez and Sergio Ramirez of the MRS, Noel Vidaurre of the Conservative Party, poet Gioconda Belli, conservative Miriam Arguello, poet Ernesto Cardenal and Daniel Ortega’s stepdaughter Zoilamerica Narvaez joined. The National Feminist Committee and the Network of Women against Violence were there. *Movimiento Patria* leaders said that their goal was to collect 50,000 signatures demanding that the National Assembly hold a referendum on the pact in which all citizens would participate. President Violeta Chamorro expressed her support.⁷⁹

It was not until the pact was signed and the measures putting it into effect were passed by the National Assembly in January 2000, however, that collection of signatures began throughout the country.⁸⁰ A poll taken in Managua in October of 1999 by the Instituto de Estudios Nicaragüenses indicated that 67.7% believed that a referendum in which the citizenry would accept or reject the pact should be carried out before it went into effect. Over 75% of those polled were opposed to the President’s automatically occupying a seat in the National Assembly after leaving office.⁸¹

The Impact of the Pact on Institutions

The first signals from the enlarged Comptroller’s General’s Office were not encouraging. The Superior Council, as the five-member institution was now called, fired some of the staff working on a number of strategic investigations. Then the Comptrollers’ Council asked the Supreme Court to quickly resolve all the challenges to accusations of corruption contained in reports filed by Agustin Jarquin when he was Comptroller General. According to the analysis of *envio*, “the idea seems to be to wipe all these cases off the books and start anew, without, of course, finding any of the accused guilty of wrongdoing or recommending their removal from their top posts.” All of Agustin Jarquin’s functions were taken away from him and he was accused of heading a corrupt administration. (Within a few months, he would resign.) In reaction to this, the Scandinavian countries froze the US\$3 million in aid that they had intended to donate in 2000 to Nicaragua for the strengthening of the Comptroller’s Office.⁸²

In June, Byron Jerez, director of Nicaragua's Internal Revenue Department, resigned after the Comptrollers' Council established that he held "administrative responsibility" for mishandling and misdirecting hundreds of thousands of dollars. But the Comptrollers stopped short of accusations of criminal or civil wrongdoing by Jerez. In fact, Jerez stated that he was resigning voluntarily "with my head held high." He added, "I congratulate the Comptrollers on a true and lawful decision." Jerez had been a close confidant of President Aleman during his Miami days. The most dramatic of the charges against Jerez was in relation to a check for US\$172,000 that he issued to one Juan Alberto Gomez for undisclosed purposes. The Comptrollers ordered Jerez and Jorge Solis, former director of the Nicaraguan oil company PETRONIC and current director of the telephone company (ENITEL) to resign and pay a fine of two to six months salary.⁸³

But the reaction was anything but favorable to the mild ruling. The newspaper La Prensa said the newly-collegial Comptrollers' Office had failed its first test. El Nuevo Diario called the decision "the height of disgrace." Two minority opinions were issued by Agustin Jarquin who even with diminished functions, still took part in decisions, and by a Sandinista Comptroller Jose Pasos.⁸⁴

Earlier in the year, in April, one of the Liberal Comptrollers, Luis Angel Montenegro, had challenged President Aleman to "justify publicly how a one-time seller of charcoal...should now, after ten short years in public office, be Nicaragua's wealthiest man." Aleman had responded "Well, he's just a little accountant who always gets hold of the wrong end of the tick." As a parting shot, Montenegro stated, "No one can misappropriate public funds. Our job as comptrollers is to blow the whistle on anyone who appears to be doing wrong."⁸⁵

Ten months later, all the magistrates of the Comptrollers' Council joined Montenegro in ordering President Aleman to explain why he had a helicopter landing pad built at one of his ranches and show that its construction did not involve public funds. The unanimous decision was sweet news for Montenegro who had brought the accusation of presidential impropriety before his colleagues. The President said that his security advisors had recommended the construction of the heliport and that the cost of the landing pad, which came to US\$35,000, had been met from funds approved for use "at the discretion of the president." The President of the Comptrollers' Council, Guillermo Arguello, noted that the body had been also called upon to investigate the construction of another pad at the President's sister's estate.⁸⁶ Observers saw the first signs that the expanded Comptrollers were finally showing some courage in confronting corruption.

The Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) was another of the institutions most affected by the Pact. In March of 2000, shortly after the pact measures were put in place, CSE head Rosa Marina Zelaya and her alternate Cyril Omier challenged the change to the electoral law that required them to retire one year early, claiming that the constitution expressly forbids such retroactive amendments. On July 3, the Supreme Court ruled against her suit. The FSLN pact negotiators had pushed hard for Zelaya to be removed from the Council, blaming on her irregularities that they felt lost them the 1996 elections.⁸⁷

In July, after the CSE announced that only four parties—the PLC, the FSLN, the Conservative Party and the Christian Path Party—would be allowed to run candidates in the municipal elections of November 2000, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo spoke out against the new electoral law. He remarked, "The law is unjust. It didn't just write itself, legislators are responsible." He went on, "It would have been much better if they had not passed this law; everyone should have a chance to compete in the elections."⁸⁸

In July, the CSE effectively dissolved 26 political parties principally because, the Council said, they had not presented the required number of valid signatures. This number, in accord with the

new electoral law, was equal to 3% of the electoral rolls or about 76,000. Among the parties that were not legalized were the Sandinista Renovation Movement, the National Project of Antonio Lacayo, and YATAMA of the Atlantic Coast.⁸⁹ Several of the parties appealed, saying that they had indeed turned in the required number of valid signatures but their appeals were to no avail.

In October, Sandinista and Liberal leaders asked the Supreme Electoral Council to deny legal recognition to the political parties of former leaders in their respective parties and thus prevent them from running as candidates for President in the 2001 elections. Retired Army General and former Sandinista Joaquin Cuadra was the leader of the Movement for National Unity (MUN) and Jose Alvarado, who served as Aleman's Education Minister and Defense Minister led the Liberal Democratic Party. According to the new law, the political party of any candidate for president must have been in legal existence for at least one year before the elections in which that person runs. The CSE took the case under review.⁹⁰

Former President of the Supreme Electoral Council Mariano Fiallos notes that the new electoral law did two lamentable things. It politicized the CSE and it closed off political participation. Fiallos, who was CSE president from 1984 to 1996, explains that the body now uses the new rules to close off participation to some parties entirely or allow participation to other parties based on partisan calculations. In the case of the Conservative Party and the other parties that gathered signatures, Fiallos states that at first the intention of the Liberals and Sandinistas was to declare that none of them had sufficient valid signatures to gain legal standing. But rumors to that effect resulted in numerous protests, including from abroad, and the decision was made to allow the Conservatives to take part. The Christian Path Party had participated in the previous election as a stand-alone party and, therefore, did not have to collect signatures. In contrast the Conservatives, a much older and larger party, had been part of an alliance in 1996 and was required to go through that laborious process. Fiallos blamed the delay in reporting the results of the municipal elections of October 2000 on political negotiations that were going on behind the scenes. He said that while the new electoral law did not "pass the test" in the municipal elections, those elections at least "were orderly."⁹¹

The four new justices on the enlarged Supreme Court were elected in March of 2000. The PLC at first fiercely protested but then accepted the FSLN's choice of Managua appellate court judge Armengol Cuadra. Cuadra had been a judge in the revolutionary Anti-Somocista Popular Tribunals which handed down judgments against collaborators with the Somoza dictatorship in the early years of the revolution. The Sandinistas also named former National Assembly deputy and Sandinista lawyer and businessman Rafael Solis. Deputies Carlos Guerra and Guillermo Selva were chosen by the Liberal Party. In the months following their appointments it appeared that no faction enjoyed a majority.⁹²

One concern that was frequently expressed (and noted above in the humorous reference by Eliseo Nuñez) was the lack of perceived necessity for Nicaragua to have 16 justices on its Supreme Court, along with alternates and office staff for each. International donors expressed concern. U.S. Ambassador Oliver Garza said: "A country has the sovereign right to make these kinds of changes, even if they cost more, and even if it costs money that the country doesn't have. But, in practice, one says, 'Damn! We're helping the country and they're adding more employees, with more cars and more salaries. Where's the benefit here?'"⁹³

Political Developments Since the Pact

The announcement on July 18th that only the FSLN, PLC, Conservative Party, and Christian Path Party would be able to run candidates for mayors and city council in the November municipal

elections killed the hopes of many, especially among Nicaragua's intellectuals, of a so-called "Third Way" alliance to challenge the two parties of the pact. Originally, four parties had banded together, later to be joined by two others. The parties included: The Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS), the Social Christians (USC), the National Project (PRONAL), the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR), the Conservative Action Party and "Nicaragua Puede" (the "Nicaragua Can" movement).

Signatures had been gathered by all the parties for the MDN to appear on the ballot. But, in early June, the MDN pulled out of the Third Way, leaving the alliance with no spot on the ballot for the November elections. The other parties of the alliance then announced that they would run candidates under the banner of the MRS. Leaders of all of the parties requested that the signatures be returned by the Supreme Electoral Council so that those who had signed to put the alliance on the ballot under the MDN name would be able to sign for the new coalition. When they were finally released, the group scurried to collect enough new signatures to submit to the CSE before the deadline. But they were thwarted by the verification procedure which, Third Way supporters maintain, was used by the two dominant parties to exclude other parties from the ballot.⁹⁴

In August of 2000, a political development occurred which astounded many. Daniel Ortega and the former Comptroller General and leader in the Christian Socialist Party Agustin Jarquin shook hands sealing an agreement to build toward an electoral alliance for the presidential campaign of 2001. According to Jarquin, he and the Sandinistas agreed that they must put together a program which would emphasize economic development, encourage domestic and foreign investment, generate employment and provide solutions to grave problems in the areas of health, education, and housing.

Many wondered what brought these two political figures together. Jarquin served time in jail under the Sandinistas and again in December of 1999, imprisoned by President Aleman with whom Ortega had recently signed a pact which resulted in Jarquin's recent unemployment. At the time, commentators noted, for example, that, "Jarquin may be looking for a political ally with a larger political base than that of his own small Christian Socialist party from which to launch what is sure to be a popular candidacy for high office. Daniel Ortega, although not credibly accused of material graft of the kind that has enriched Arnaldo Aleman, is tainted by the scandal of his sexual abuse of step-daughter and by his pact-making with the corrupt Aleman and may be looking for a squeaky-clean running mate."⁹⁵

Jarquin himself explained his reasoning:

My fear is that a Liberal triumph will enable the apparatus of dictatorial power being nurtured by President Aleman and his closest circle to take root. In my judgment, the Conservative Party is still closed to making common cause with sectors of the Left, which limits the possibility of presenting a genuine national alternative. Being closed to the Left also implies having no real commitment to social concerns. Nicaragua's Social Christians are very disjointed, with a ... frankly poor structure. But they have important international links with the Christian Democratic Organization of America to which Eduardo Frei's Christian Democratic Party, which is governing in Chile in a coalition with a Socialist Party, belongs. The Christian Democratic International has decided to accompany us in this effort.⁹⁶

Also at this time, Jose Antonio Alvarado resigned from the PLC, accusing Arnaldo Aleman of kidnapping the party. In the days preceding his announcement, 123 public employees were fired on orders of the president for sympathizing with him. The precipitating cause of the resignation was President Aleman ratification of the decision of the Ministry of Government to annul Alvarado's 1990 recovery of his Nicaraguan citizenship, which unless it were to be overturned by another body, would prevent him from running for high office. The departure of Alvarado, who many had seen as a possible presidential candidate for the Liberals, was indicative of the depth of the crisis in the PLC, where the President seemed bent on destroying possible successors to his rule. Alvarado became Noel Vidaurre's running mate on the Conservative ticket. The Supreme Electoral Council later confirmed that Alvarado could not run for high office and Alvarado became campaign manager for Vidaurre and his new running mate, former Sandinista Carlos Tunnerman.

The November municipal elections results were a clear victory for the Sandinistas. It took street protests and a personal threat by Daniel Ortega to "kick President Aleman out of the presidential palace" to get the PLC-dominated Supreme Electoral Council to release the final results. The FSLN won 11 of the country's 16 departmental capitals, including Managua, Leon, Chinandega, Esteli, Matagalpa, Bluefields, Puerto Cabezas, San Carlos, Ocotal, Somoto, and Juigalpa. The departmental capitals won by the PLC were Boaco, Jinotega, Masaya, and Rivas. The Conservatives won their historical capital of Granada. The PLC won 97 mayoral offices compared to 49 for the FSLN and 5 for the Conservative Party. The victory of Herty Lewites in Managua, with a third of Nicaragua's population, was the main cause for celebration in the FSLN.⁹⁷

The campaign had been marred by "dirty campaigning" and a PLC computer set-up that paralleled that of the CSE's official vote recording system was discovered and disconnected right before the election, foiling what was undoubtedly a scheme to assure a PLC victory, at least in Managua. There was also violence in Puerto Cabezas, North Atlantic Autonomous Region, where residents protested the exclusion of YATAMA from participating in the elections. Abstention reached 44% in the country and there was considerable speculation as to why it was so high. Arguments ranged from "people don't trust the system anymore" to the fact that it was an "off year," one in which the President and National Assembly members were not being elected. Previously in Nicaragua, elections for local and national offices had taken place on the same day.

Herty Lewites won the Managua mayoral race for the FSLN with 44% of the vote, compared to 29% for the PLC candidate, 25% for the Conservative candidate, and 1.6% for the Christian Path Party. Lewites, a Sandinista businessman who left the party and later returned, was best known to Managuans for his amusement park Hertylandia. *Envio* notes that while Lewites owes his victory in small part to the fact that Pedro Solorzano was not allowed to run, people saw him as a good candidate and, as the campaign progressed, it revealed that he was also an excellent politician. He had "a non-confrontational style, eternal good humor and a wealth of proposals." The journal notes that he "is now saddled with the huge responsibility of demonstrating through a transparent, efficient and new style of administration what he himself has been claiming: that the FSLN "is different [now]."⁹⁸

Shortly after the mayoral elections, Daniel Ortega threw his hat into the ring as a candidate for his party's nomination for president. Shortly thereafter, his brother Humberto Ortega, retired head of the Army and Defense Minister, released a statement in which he made the argument that his brother should not be a candidate for president in 2001. He stated that "to expose him in this present electoral contest is neither prudent nor necessary." He went on to say that:

A loss for Daniel Ortega in 2001, a possibility which we cannot dismiss, would make more complex and difficult the future of the FSLN. Another candidate would not present such a strategic danger for the FSLN. On the contrary, the leadership of Daniel Ortega would be increased if he were to support another candidate for the FSLN, assuring unity and cohesion, not just of militants within the party but of thousands of Sandinistas who are not militants, which would strengthen the image of the FSLN among the national electorate.⁹⁹

Victor Hugo Tinoco also announced that he was running for the presidential nomination. He had talks with both Henry Ruiz and with Dora Maria Tellez, both of whom had left the FSLN, about the possibilities of sharing the ticket with him. Tinoco said, "If we're talking with the Christian Socialists, why wouldn't we also listen to what our Sandinista sisters and brothers are saying?"¹⁰⁰ It should be noted in passing that Humberto Ortega, in the piece quoted above, said that a Tinoco candidacy would cause even more difficulties for the party because of the anger among party leaders about his "calculatedly divisive support for dissidents against the leadership of Daniel Ortega and the party leadership."¹⁰¹

In early January the candidacies for seats in the National Assembly of three of the most outspoken FSLN opponents of the Pact were terminated by party officials 24 hours before the acceptance/rejection deadline. The three were Monica Baltodano, Jose Gonzalez and Angela Rios. Baltodano accused top FSLN leaders of being determined to quash democracy within the party. Jose Gonzalez said that when he received the letter he thought it was a message of condolence from his colleagues for him as he set out for a mass marking the second anniversary of the death of his son. But it was not. "Not only was it nothing to do with humanity, it was a calculated ploy, timed to give us no way to respond since the 24 hours will run out on Monday morning, and of course no offices are open on Sunday." Gonzalez said that the FSLN leadership seemed to have lost all sense of humanity.¹⁰²

The FSLN party primary election was held on January 22, 2001. Daniel Ortega won the non-binding "consulta" for the presidential nomination. There was some dispute about whether Victor Hugo Tinoco or economist Alejandro Martinez Cuenca came in second. Martinez Cuenca said that "the process was marred by a series of irregularities which will have to be cleared up in the Party Congress in February." Tinoco was of the same opinion, but said "Why should we challenge [the results]? It's water under the bridge."¹⁰³

On February 24 and 25, the FSLN held its Party Congress and nominated Daniel Ortega for President, leaving the slot for Vice-President open and to be made by the Sandinista Assembly. Within a few weeks, Daniel Ortega appeared with Agustin Jarquin to announce that the latter would be his running mate for the November elections. Former contra commander Steadman Fagoth, a leader from the Atlantic Coast, announced that he and a group of former members of the resistance might very well be joining the "Sandinista Convergence."¹⁰⁴

The maneuvering among Liberals and Conservatives has been extremely complicated. There have been numerous attempts to forge alliances between the two parties in order to prevent a Sandinista victory. The Conservative, wealthy Pellas family, fearful of an FSLN win, withdrew its support from the Conservative Party, to instead support the Liberals. There were attempts to put Violeta Chamorro at the head of a "national" ticket. None were successful. The result has been a scrambled ballot. The PLC candidate for President, finally, is Enrique Bolaños, a Conservative businessman; the Conservative candidate for Vice-President until he was disqualified was the dissident Liberal Jose Alvarado.

But Nicaraguans have not been the only ones interested and involved in their country's politics. When polls began showing Daniel Ortega ahead of Enrique Bolaños by the five points necessary to avoid a run-off election, the United States started expressing its preferences and making forceful suggestions about alliances. In April, U.S. Ambassador Oliver Garza revealed, in what *El Nuevo Diario* called "a threatening tone," his concern regarding a possible Sandinista victory in the elections. Garza claimed that an FSLN victory could mean a return to the 80s, when "there wasn't a free market, there was disrespect for human rights, and the interests of the US were not recognized." In what the newspaper called "a clear intervention in Nicaragua's internal affairs," Garza virtually threatened a cut off of US aid. The ambassador pointed to the US\$500,000 clinic built with US funds that he was helping to inaugurate and said, "There is more than simple diplomatic recognition involved here!" Garza held frequent meetings with Liberal and Conservative political figures pressing for an alliance of Liberals and Conservatives. Rumors were that he wanted to see a ticket with former Liberal Foreign Minister Eduardo Montealegre for President and Conservative presidential candidate for president Noel Vidurre for vice-president.

In late May, Garza again made a pronouncement: "If the Sandinistas win in these elections, but don't change their policies, then neither will the United States change its policies toward them. We will maintain our policy of firmly defending democracy until we see genuine changes in the Sandinista Party in particular." The statement was made while he was standing amidst a group of U.S. troops recently arrived for a humanitarian mission. His message was not lost on observers. Indeed, as if to underline his message, a photo of himself and the troops was widely circulated in the national news media.

As if this were not enough, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Lino Gutierrez, who is a former Ambassador to Nicaragua, visited Nicaragua in early June to hold a schedule of meetings that were seen as part of a campaign to pressure for the formation of a Liberal-Conservative alliance to block the FSLN from winning the November elections. He set out six conditions which would allow the incoming Nicaraguan government to maintain "excellent relations" with the U.S. government. Among them were transparency and governability, plus participation in the war on drugs, counter-corruption and support for free trade. But he went on to say that he was "surprised that anyone who calls himself a democrat can look to Fidel Castro as one of the hemisphere's resplendent lights."

Reactions to Gutierrez' statements varied. Former President Violeta Chamorro (who, in 1990, led a coalition cobbled together by the United States) weighed in with a soft challenge saying, "Even Pope John Paul II has been to Cuba; everyone's been to Cuba." Sandinista International Relations Secretary Samuel Santos said that the FSLN had already shown its true democratic colors when it handed over power to Chamorro after the electoral defeat in 1990.¹⁰⁵

The United States achieved a victory when on July 17, Conservative candidates for president and vice-president Noel Vidurre and Carlos Tunnerman as well as campaign manager (and former vice-presidential candidate) Jose Alvarado resigned amid speculation that pressure from the United States may have influenced their decision. *El Nuevo Diario* noted on July 18th that "a breakfast yesterday with U.S. Ambassador Oliver Garza, and several meetings with officials of that country's State Department the previous week, seem to have been too much pressure for Conservative Party president Mario Rappacciolo who decided to put an end to what they were calling the 'universal ticket.'" The paper went on to report that Rappaccioli had extended his recent visit to Miami in order to meet with several members of the U.S. Congress who have so far not been identified. They supposedly pressured him to close up space within the Conservative Party so that Vidurre and Tunnerman, who have been committed to making the Conservative

Party a home for the “Third Way” groups and others, would resign and the party would then throw its support to the Liberal candidate Bolaños.

The Conservative had formed a political alliance with the Liberal Democratic Party, the Liberal Independent Party, the National Resistance Party, the National Unity Movement, and the Sandinista Renovation Movement. Some members of the Conservative Party “old guard” were unwilling to allow space on the National Assembly and Central American Parliament slates for candidates from the latter two political groups. Former head of the Army Joaquin Cuadra, who is now leader of the National Unity Movement, said that the Conservative Party was under pressure from the U.S. Embassy, the PLC and a segment of the party itself which was opposed to making it a political vehicle open not only for his party but “to other forces, sectors and personalities.”¹⁰⁶

The Conservative Party did name new candidates. They were political analyst Alberto Saborio and Conservative businesswoman Consuelo Sequiera. There was speculation at first that Saborio would promote something called the “cross-over vote” in which voters would be told to vote for Conservative candidates for the National Assembly but then encouraged to “cross-over” and vote for Enrique Bolaños for President. But when commentators noted that the plan could lead to the demise of the Conservative Party if it did not achieve 4% of the votes cast for president, Saborio’s tune changed. Both he and Sequiera pledged themselves to give the campaign everything they had despite opinion poll numbers at 10%, low party finances, and the fact that the candidates are little known to the general public.¹⁰⁷ Sources within the U.S. Government who wished to remain anonymous told this writer, however, that while the Conservatives had every right to name their new candidates for president and vice-president, the “pressure on the democratic forces to unite” to prevent a Sandinista victory would continue.

The Nicaraguan presidential elections as this paper is being written are described as too close to call. Where Daniel Ortega was ahead in polls taken before the Conservative resignations, the drop in support for the green (as the Conservatives are known) seems to have benefited Bolaños and he was ahead by one point (well within the margin of error) in a recent poll. The pact, according to some, would (by lowering the threshold to avoid a second round) make it possible for the FSLN to win the presidential election and to return to government. It could still happen, but it is looking much less likely.

Conclusions

Democracy is not in danger of collapsing in Nicaragua. But, the pact of August 1999 between the Sandinistas and the Liberals, which was made possible by the power of two *caudillos*, Arnoldo Aleman and Daniel Ortega, over their own parties, has contributed to the strengthening of that old strain of *caudillismo* within the country as a whole and thus to the weakening of democracy. Particularly disturbing were the measures within the pact that were added simply in order to have more high-salary positions, which the nation can ill afford, to distribute to supporters of each party. Some theorists believe that political parties were weakened in the United States when civil service removed patronage jobs from the domain of the parties. There appears to be some validity to that. But in Nicaragua, the term “the spoils of office” describes a situation that is truly spoiled and rotten, especially when the standard of living of the office holders is compared to that of 70% of the population that survives on less than \$2 per day.

Will the pact provide stability to Nicaragua? Will the main parties now be able to alternate in office through free and fair elections instead of through violent overthrow of the government as in the past? The Aleman – Ortega Pact is constantly compared to the pacts of the Somoza years. But there is a big difference. The Somoza era pacts were between one very strong political force

and one segment of a much weaker political force which was willing to be used by the stronger for a specific political purpose in return for certain limited favors. The Aleman–Ortega pact was between roughly equal leaders, equal both in power and in vulnerability. As long as they stay equal or political forces of similar strength replace them, this bi-partisan regime will not lead to a collapse in democracy.

Alternation of the party in power is good for any nation. If the people are dissatisfied, they should feel that they are able to change their luck, as it were, by putting another political party in power by means of their sovereign vote. Intervention from outside the country in the form of threats, veiled or otherwise, about what will happen if the people vote a certain way, limits and corrupts democracy. The United States government, with a century and a half of intervening in the internal affairs of Nicaragua, seems unable to break the habit. Therefore, before we U.S. scholars criticize the self-serving intent and anti-democratic effects of the Liberal-Sandinista Pact, we must, as honest professionals, insist on democratic and respectful behavior toward Nicaragua on the part of our own officials. It is not permissible for U.S. officials to say (as Ambassador Garza recently did) that, in the 1980s, U.S. interests were not served in Nicaragua, when it is not the obligation of Nicaraguan officials to serve U.S. interests, but rather to serve the interests of the people of Nicaragua. It is by how well they have done that that they should be judged, and by their own citizens in free and fair elections, not by the government of the United States.

¹ Katherine Hoyt, “Aleman Holds Press Conference in DC,” Nicaragua Monitor (April 1996): 7.

² “Where has Liberalism Come?” envio (August 1999): 8.

³ David Close, “Arnoldo Aleman: Forward to the Past,” Nicaragua Monitor (April 1996): 6.

⁴ David R. Dye with Jack Spence and George Vickers, Patchwork Democracy: Nicaraguan Politics Ten Years After the Fall (Cambridge, MA: Hemisphere Initiatives, 2000), 12; Close, “Arnoldo Aleman,” 6.

⁵ Marcos Membreño, interview by Midge Quandt, Voices of Sandinismo in Post Election Nicaragua (Washington, DC: Nicaragua Network Education Fund, 1997), 66.

⁶ Victoria Gonzalez, “‘The Devil Took Her:’ Sex and the Nicaraguan Nation, 1855—1979,” (LASA 2000), p. 3.

⁷ Victor Hugo Tinoco, interview by Midge Quandt, Voices of Sandinismo in Post Election Nicaragua (Washington, DC: Nicaragua Network Education Fund, 1997), 76-78.

⁸ The elections were marred by administrative errors, anomalies and accusations by the FSLN of fraud favoring the Liberal Alliance, but the Supreme Electoral Council declared them “free, fair and transparent” while noting “some problems with a few precincts.”

⁹ Liberals Plan for Power Until 2016,” Nicaragua Monitor, (June-July 1997), 4, (reprinted from envio, May 1997).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Dye, et al, Patchwork Democracy, 13.

¹² “Tensions Plague Liberal Alliance,” Nicaragua News Service (April 26—May 2, 1998), 4. Dye, et al, Patchwork Democracy, 13.

¹³ Equipo Nitlapan-envio, “Mitch: 100 Días Después,” Conyuntura—Nicaragua (Feb. 2000), 5. [José Cuadra, an outspoken foe of the Pact, was later murdered on his farm outside Matagalpa. Politics did not seem to be involved.]

¹⁴ “UNDP report confirms rising poverty levels,” Nicaragua News Service, (September 6-12, 1998), 2.

¹⁵ Dye, et al, Patchwork, 19.

¹⁶ “Aleman seeks to curb Comptroller’s authority,” Nicaragua News Service, (August 30-September 5, 1998), 2.

¹⁷ “Comptroller to investigate Aleman,” Nicaragua News Service (January 17-23, 1999), 2,3.

¹⁸ “Aleman threatens Comptroller,” Nicaragua News Service (February 7-13, 1999), 2.

-
- ¹⁹ “Presidente acorralado,” El Nuevo Diario (February 26, 1999); “Fortuna es inverosímil,” El Nuevo Diario (February 27, 1999).
- ²⁰ “Aleman threatens journalists,” Nicaragua News Service (March 14-20, 1999), 3.
- ²¹ Nitlapan-envio team, “Is the Game All Sewn Up? Questions and Contradictions,” envio (September 1999), 7.
- ²² “Survey labels Aleman’s administration ‘the most corrupt ever,’” Nicaragua News Service (April 11-17, 1999), 2; “Donors concerned about government transparency,” Nicaragua News Service (March 21-27, 1999), 4-5.
- ²³ Interview with Agustin Jarquin, “Bipartidismo y Dictadura,” Confidencial, (November 14-20, 1999).
- ²⁴ “Sweden pulls out of Nueva Segovia over PLC abuse of funds,” Nicaragua News Service (December 5-11, 1999), 4-5.
- ²⁵ “Comptroller General freed; Calls for referendum on Pact,” Nicaragua News Service (December 20-26, 1999), 1.
- ²⁶ Interview by the author, cited in Katherine Hoyt, The Many Faces of Sandinista Democracy, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997), 158.
- ²⁷ Cited in Hoyt, 175.
- ²⁸ The author thanks Judy Butler and Michele Costa for the first formulations of this concept.
- ²⁹ Two Congress delegates told the author this. Neither would reveal the name of the member of the National Directorate involved.
- ³⁰ Manuel Espinoza Rivera, “Debate interno garantiza unidad: Una bancada sólida y comprometida,” Visión Sandinista (November 1997), 2-3.
- ³¹ Manuel Espinoza Rivera, “El congreso de mayo y sus expectativas: Oportunidad histórica para cambiar y vencer,” Visión Sandinista (December 1997), 4-5.
- ³² Ibid, 5.
- ³³ Lisa Zimmerman, “FSLN Congress Re-Elects Ortega,” Nicaragua Monitor (June 1998), 1.
- ³⁴ Midge Quandt, “Interview with Henry Petrie,” The Crisis in the FSLN and the Future of the Left in Nicaragua, Occasional Paper (Washington: Nicaragua Network, 1998), 13.
- ³⁵ Quandt, “Interview with Alejandro Bendaña,” The Crisis in the FSLN, 7.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 8.
- ³⁷ “Ortega answers questions about alleged political pact,” Nicaragua News Service (August 23-29, 1998) 1.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ “Daniel Ortega to take legislative seat,” Nicaragua News Service (January 17-24, 1999), 1.
- ⁴⁰ “The Interbank Bankruptcy Opens a Pandora’s Box,” envio (September 2000), 5.
- ⁴¹ Gareth Richards and José Luis Rocha, “The Banco de Café Scandal: A Cure that Nearly Killed the Patient,” envio (November-December 2000), 51-53.
- ⁴² Lisa Zimmerman, “NLM Discusses Future Solidarity,” Nicaragua Monitor (July 1999), 1, 10.
- ⁴³ “Government to dialogue with FSLN,” Nicaragua News Service (July 12-18, 1998), 3.
- ⁴⁴ “FSLN—PLC Pact,” Nicaragua News Service (August 16-22, 1998), 1-2.
- ⁴⁵ “Sandinistas and Liberals reach agreement on electoral reforms,” Nicaragua News Service (September 27-October 3, 1998), 1.
- ⁴⁶ “Humberto Ortega allegedly involved in PLC-FSLN pact negotiations,” Nicaragua News Service (October 18-24, 1998), 4.
- ⁴⁷ “Dialogue continues between Liberals and FSLN,” Nicaragua News Service (October 25-November 1, 1998), 3.
- ⁴⁸ “Tensions in FSLN over Negotiations with Government,” Nicaragua News Service (January 31-February 6, 1999), 4.
- ⁴⁹ “Ortega denies internal conflicts in FSLN,” Nicaragua News Service (February 7-13, 1999), 1.
- ⁵⁰ “Government—FSLN negotiations resume,” Nicaragua News Service (June 6-12, 1999), 2.
- ⁵¹ “Sandinista—Liberal ‘Pact’ negotiations continue amidst critique,” Nicaragua News Service (June 21-27, 1999), 1-2.
- ⁵² Carlos Fernando Chamorro, “Pacto está ‘cocinado,’” Confidencial (August 8-14, 1999).
- ⁵³ “First Impacts of a Devils’ Pact,” envio (August 1999), 3.
- ⁵⁴ “Pactos consumados,” El Nuevo Diario (August 18, 1999).
- ⁵⁵ “Sin sorpresas en Asamblea Sandinista,” El Nuevo Diario (August 30, 1999).

-
- ⁵⁶ “Amendments to Constitution ready to be introduced in National Assembly,” Nicaragua News Service (November 14-21, 1999), 3,4.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ “Legalizan dictadura,” La Tribuna (December 10, 1999).
- ⁵⁹ “Amendments to Constitution Pass Second Vote in National Assembly,” Nicaragua News Service (January 17-23, 2000), 1-2.
- ⁶⁰ “New Electoral Law Based on Liberal/Sandinista Pact Passed by Assembly,” Nicaragua News Service (January 17-23, 2000), 2.
- ⁶¹ “Sandinista Neighborhood Leaders Repudiate Pact: Casco Resigns,” Nicaragua News Service (March 20- 26, 2000), 4.
- ⁶² “Accusations of ‘Dictatorship,’ 1; ‘Is the Game All Sewn Up?’ 3.
- ⁶³ Cited in Nitlapan-envio team, “After Stockholm and Before the Pact,” envio (June 1999), 10.
- ⁶⁴ “Miami Liberals ‘Shafted’ by Aleman,” Nicaragua News Service (February 14-20, 2000), 6.
- ⁶⁵ “First Impact of a Devil’s Pact,” 9-10.
- ⁶⁶ “Pacto enterró la democracia,” El Nuevo Diario (August 19, 1999).
- ⁶⁷ Vilma Nuñez de Escorcía, “The Deep Crisis of Sandinismo,” Against the Current (July-August, 2000), 26.
- ⁶⁸ “Comunicado de la Dirección Nacional del Frente Sandinista emitido el 24 de septiembre de 1999,” e-mail from Cristianos Nicaragüenses por los Pobres, September 30, 1999.
- ⁶⁹ William Grigsby, “Una medida repressive e incoherente: La crisis del Frente por pactar con Aleman,” from the radio program “Sin Fronteras” of September 24, 1999, transcribed by Popul Na, e-mail.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Henry Ruiz, “The FSLN Has Lost the Strong Ethical Basis that Motivated Us,” envio (May 2000), 17.
- ⁷² “Consideraciones del CENIDH sobre el proyecto de reforma parcial a la constitution política acordado por el PLC y la dirigencia del FSLN,” photocopy, 1.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 4.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 9, 12.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 11.
- ⁷⁸ Bayardo Gonzalez, “Forum for Discussion: The Y2Pact,” Nicaragua Monitor (January-February 2000), 2-3.
- ⁷⁹ “Anti-Pact Movement Gains Momentum, Referendum Sought,” Nicaragua News Service (July 5- 12, 1999), 2-3.
- ⁸⁰ “‘Doña Violeta’ is First to Sign Referendum,” Nicaragua News Service (January 10-16, 2000), 3.
- ⁸¹ Carlos Fernando Chamorro, “Opinión dividida sobre ‘bondades’ del pacto,” Confidencial (October 10-16, 1999).
- ⁸² Nitlapan-*envio* Team, “The Pact’s First Offspring,” envio (March 2000), 7.
- ⁸³ “Nicaragua’s Internal Revenue Director Resigns Following Corruption Charges,” Nicaragua News Service (June 5-11, 2000), 1.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ “Comptroller Challenges Aleman Over Wealth,” Nicaragua News Service (April 16-22, 2000), 5.
- ⁸⁶ “Aleman Hoist by His Own Heliports?” Nicaragua News Service (April 23-29, 2001), 3.
- ⁸⁷ “First Legal Challenge to Pact,” Nicaragua News Service (March 13-19, 2000), 4.
- ⁸⁸ “Cardinal Declares New Electoral Law Unjust,” Nicaragua News Service (July 31-August 6, 2000), 3-4.
- ⁸⁹ “Twenty-six Parties Wiped Off Political Map,” Nicaragua News Service (August 28-September 3, 2000), 2-3.
- ⁹⁰ “Pact Leaders Try to Block Alvarado and Cuadra,” Nicaragua News Service (October 2-8, 2000), 2-3.
- ⁹¹ Interview with Mariano Fiallos, “Ley Electoral partidizó CSE y cerró participación,” Confidencial (December 3-9, 2000).
- ⁹² Dye, et al, 23.
- ⁹³ Nitlapán-*envio* Team, “Do They Want the Elections or Don’t They?” envio (April 2000), 12.
- ⁹⁴ Midge Quandt, “Nicaragua: The Promise of the New Politics and of Civil Society,” introduction and epilogue, Occasional Paper, Nicaragua Network (July 2000).
- ⁹⁵ “Month in Review,” Nicaragua Monitor (August 2000), 8.

⁹⁶ “Jarquin’s Dilemma in His Own Words,” envio (August 2000) 6-7.

⁹⁷ “They’re Back: Sandinistas Win Big in Municipal Elections,” Nicaragua Monitor (November-December 2000), 3, 8.

⁹⁸ Envio Editorial Team, “Nicaragua’s Municipal Elections: The Good, the Bad and the Uncertain,” envio (November-December 2000), 9.

⁹⁹ General Humberto Ortega Saavedra, “Unidad para Sumar; Sumar para Vencer,” (December 2000), photocopy.

¹⁰⁰ “They’re Back,” 8.

¹⁰¹ Humberto Ortega, “Unidad...”

¹⁰² “FSLN Dissidents’ Candidacies Quashed,” Nicaragua News Service (December 11-17, 2000).

¹⁰³ “Disputa por el Segundo lugar en las consulta sandinista,” El Nuevo Diario (January 23, 2001).

¹⁰⁴ “Month in Review,” Nicaragua Monitor (February 2001), 7.

¹⁰⁵ “U.S. Threatens Nicaraguan Voters,” Nicaragua Monitor (June 2001), 1, 7.

¹⁰⁶ “Nicaraguan Elections: Conservative Candidates Resign after US Pressure,” Nicaragua Monitor (July-August 2001), 4.

¹⁰⁷ “Conservatives Choose Replacement Candidate,” Nicaragua News Service (July 23-29, 2001), 3;

“Conservatives Choose Woman as Vice-Presidential Candidate,” Nicaragua News Service (July 30-August 5, 2001), 3.