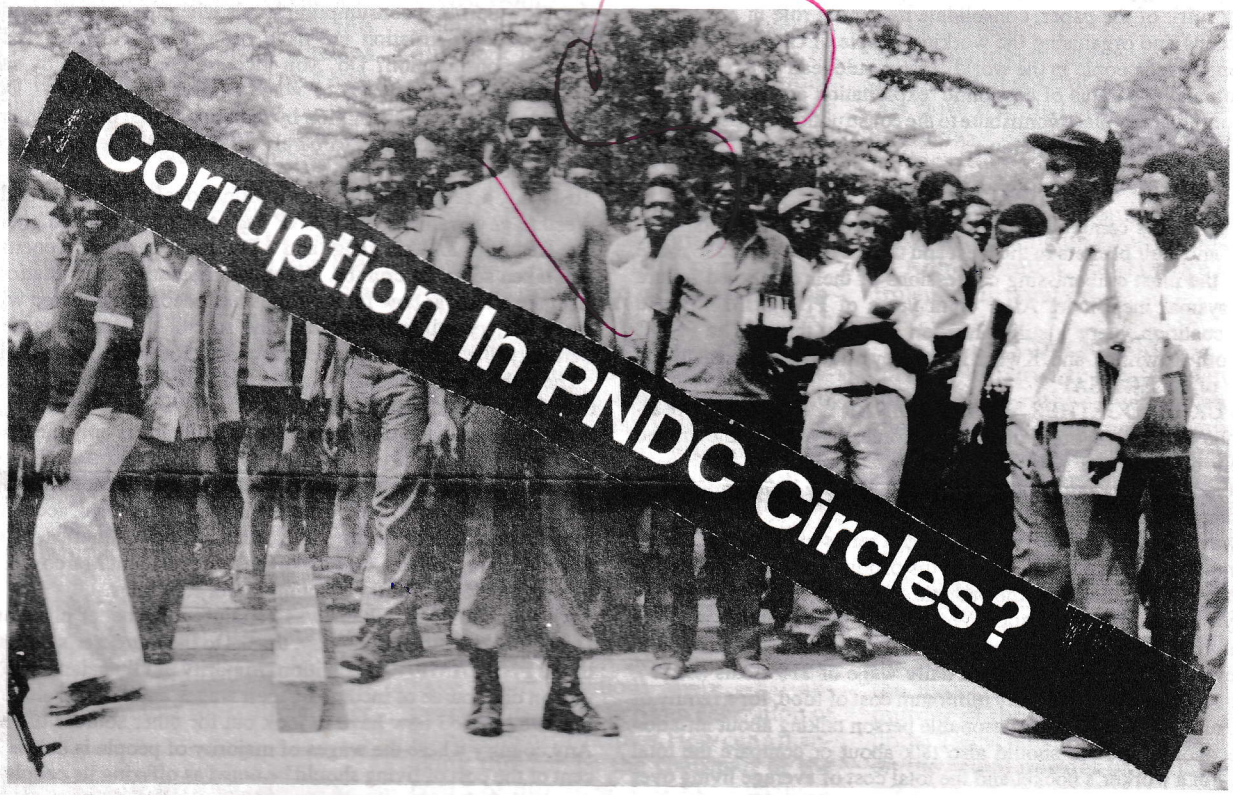
PERSONAL

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Corruption In PNDC Circles?

More Skeletons in Rawlings Cupboard p. 3*

Students Call For Free Press p.4*

Quarshiga Affair p5*

Dictatorship In Crisis p.11*

Benin: The IMF Saves Dictator p.8*

South Africa: Which Way Forward? p. 6*

Interview : President Sam Nujoma of Namibia p 14*

CBS/3/1042

The secret of life is to have no fear-Nkrumah

NICARAGUA: THE RETURN OF GRINGO IMPERIALISM

Ever since William Walker, an American adventurer staggered into Nicaragua in 1856 and proclaimed himself President of that country, the Whitehouse has always sort to rule Nicaraguans by proxy. Even in the Somoza's 40 years dynasty, successive US administrations did everything to maintain the dreaded dictators in power. And on 19 July 1979 when the Sandinistas through a popular insurrection overthrew Anastasio Somoza Washington's first reaction was warm. The Carter administration offered $75 million in aid. But as the FSLN began implementing far reaching democratic reforms and forging strong links with revolutionary governments in Cuba, Grenada, the East European countries, Washington responded by rallying support in the capitalist world to isolate Nicaragua both politically and economically.

Ronald Reagan's election to the whitehouse saw an intensification of the strategy to destroy the economy from within by placing Nicaragua under siege from without. He immediately organised the old Somoza's National Guards and a few disgruntled elements to disrupt the harvesting and replanting of coffee Nicaragua's export earner. These mercenaries inflected extensive damage throughout the country. Today the contra war has claimed almost 40,000 lives in Nicaragua and there is not a single family which does not count a dead defender of the Revolution.

Under the able leadership of the Sandinistas, the contra's were defeated in 1987 and Washington had to change its strategy, cajoled the various opposition groups to form an alliance and sponsored them against the FSLN With the strong American dollar even the Communist (Trotskyits), Socialist, the Contras and the neo-fascist did not find it difficult making a deal. They came together (14 of them in all) to form the National Opposition Union under the leadership of Mrs Violetta Chamorro. The Bush administration supplied them with cars, computers, offices etc and through the National Endearment for Democracy fund $7million as "election support" (actually to buy votes) and another $6million to fund an anti-Sandinista radio broadcast from Costa Rica.

With such sound economic might it is not surprising that the UNO won the 25 February elections under the leadership of Violetta de Chamorro. The husband



Ortega

of the frail, silver-haired 60 year old President elect of Nicaragua was shot dead by the very National Guards (now contras) she is now representing. Ironically she was even a member of the 5 strong Committee including Daniel Ortega that was recognised by **Organisation of American States (OAS)** in Washington in June 1979. The Sandinista *comperero* was carefully chosen by Washington not only because she lost her husband in the struggle (you remember Cory Aquino) but because her political novelty will go a long way to make running Nicaragua from the whitehouse much easier.

The electoral defeat of the Sandinistas should be seen as a temporary set back for the left and a political lesson that should be taken seriously. The defeat of the of the Sandinistas was clearly the result of the economic blockade imposed by the US and the national patriotic war which claimed about 40,000 lives. The Nicaraguan people had become war weary by the time of the elections. In 1988 Nicaragua had the highest annual rate of inflation in Latin American history - 35,000 per cent. By 1989 62.5 per cent of GNP was spent on defence.

The capitalist enemies were enraged in Nicaragua but their power as a class was never broken. Even at such a crucial election, some of the FSLN candidates were capitalist farmers who had little sympathy for the original aims of the Sandinistas. The final and deadly blow to the FSLN govt was the decision of the USSR to cut economic aid to Nicaragua. The Soviet government was no longer prepared to fund *unproductive revolutions* thousands of miles away from its borders thus making Nicaragua the first casualty of Perestroika. This act gave Washington the impetuous to assume its role as the world policeman. It is the Senate Republican leader Robert Role who summed up Washington's goal in Latin America: "As I see it its two down Panama and Nicaragua and one to go - Cuba."

What happened in Nicaragua is a temporary setback for the left. But it will not be long for the people to come to realise that the UNO is no alternative. At least the *Campaneros* lead by Daniel Ortega will be leaving power more or less in the same financial shape. History will absolve the Sandinistas!!!

Mensah Opoku

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"It is not the duty of the army to rule or govern, because it has no political mandate and its duty is not to seek a political mandate. The army only operates under the madate of the civil government. If the national interest compels the armed forces to intervene, then immediately after the intervention the army must hand over to a new civil government elected by the people and enjoying the people's mandate under a constitution accepted by them. If the army does not do this then the position of the army becomes dubious and anomalous and involves a betrayal of the people and the national interest.™

Kwame Nkrumah

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