

of action, without political freedom, without freedom of commerce, without freedom of movement, and without a legal judicial framework to guarantee individual rights and property.

In the American Continent there is no regime more barbaric and sanguinary, no regime that violates human rights in a manner more constant and permanent, than the Sandinista regime. It is time for all the organizations entrusted with watching over human rights (like the OAS Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, Amnesty International, the Red Cross International Committee) to investigate and clarify this new genocide, to put a stop to these aberrations, and to force the Sandinistas to cease deceiving them. It is shameful that these crimes are being committed and not a single voice cries out to protest against them.

The unjust confiscations must be terminated; the imprisonments, the tortures and murders, the bombing of Miskito vil-

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lages, the attacks against the church and her ministers, all of which are being committed with the passive acquiescence of the international institutions, the complicity of many pseudo-religious and political associations, and the accessory silence of some news agencies.

This last genocide has given me the opportunity to explain to the world, and particularly to the Nicaraguan people, some little-known aspects of the change in "status" of the Zona Franca refugees. It has permitted me to demarcate responsibilities. Also to request that those institutions entrusted with watching over human rights, help curb the murders of political prisoners in Nicaraguan jails. Moreover, it has allowed me to publicly name the Sandinista commanders who are actually responsible for that bloody deceit practiced on the Red Cross. When more time is available, I will furnish further details and expand my review of these events, as a contribution to our History.

NICARAGUA



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Eyewitness testimony from the president of the Red Cross*

THE GENOCIDES CONTINUE IN NICARAGUA

By Ismael Reyes

A few days ago, I read a news report in an influential American newspaper concerning many former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard, jailed at the Model Prison in Tipitapa, who had been murdered by the Sandinista commanders.

This is not the first time that this happens. It has been fully verified that on a previous occasion the Sandinistas took prisoners from the jail and murdered them, and such crime produced no reaction in most of the news media nor amongst the organizations entrusted with watching over human rights. It would seem that, in general, the press closes its eyes to the violations committed by communist regimes, and opens them only to magnify and denounce those that occur in the leftist or rightist democratic regimes.

When a terrorist kills ten human beings, it doesn't seem to bother or worry anyone. On the contrary, he is said to be a hero, a patriot; but to execute a terrorist is something very grave, a crime. To murder hundreds of Miskito Indians or hundreds of former Somocistas is not as important as killing a dog, for in the latter case we hear the protest of the Humane Society. And with this "revolutionary" ethics we go on distorting reality, we keep on changing and altering moral values, not because of lack of insight or intelligence, but because it has become quite fashionable to criticize anything democratic and to defend all that is colored red and anything

that has the odor of the radical, totalitarian Left.

Nobody protested when Commander Tomas Borge and his advisor, Dr. Rodrigo Reyes-Portocarrero, current Secretary-Minister of the Ruling Junta, failed to fulfill the pledge they had made to Mr. Ulrich Bedert, chief delegate from the Red Cross International Committee. They had pledged that they would respect the refugees at the Zona Franca and provide them with safe conducts. Instead, they changed their status to that of prisoners of war, and then proceeded to prosecute them in those absurd and illegal tribunals called "Special Courts" and to condemn them to extended jail sentences for years on end.

It was in 1979, in the early days of the Sandinista government. Commander Tomas Borge, with his usual relish for the theatrical, placed a number of dead bodies around the refugee camps at the Zona Franca and staged a show before a large group of foreign correspondents convened for the occasion. He accused the refugees of slipping out at night to murder Sandinistas, and justified with that "show" the act of changing their status.

Nobody protested for this historic crime, for this deception to a respectable institution like the Red Cross, performed by Commander Tomas Borge and Dr. Rodrigo Reyes-Portocarrero. I here publicly name them and accuse them before History as the ones truly responsible for this criminal act.

* Translation by the Nicaraguan Information Center, Inc. Original Spanish version: "Continuan los Genocidios en Nicaragua," by Ismael Reyes, Diario Las Americas, Miami, Florida, November 11, 1983. Don Ismael Reyes-Icabalceta has been the prominent leader of the Nicaraguan Red Cross for many years. He was president of the institution throughout the civil war that brought the Sandinistas to power in 1979. He continued at the helm in Managua until Sandinista mobs took possession of the Red Cross facilities and forced him out in August, 1982.

I had had severe and violent discussions with the delegates from the Red Cross International Committee, trying to convince them that we should urgently remove all the refugees from the Zona Franca and transfer them to embassies, which I had already done with more than a thousand refugees. I was afraid that the Sandinistas would not keep their word, especially in view of the threats advanced by Tomas Borge and several Internationalists against the Somocista military personnel.

I asked the RCIC to provide tents in order to shelter the refugees on embassy grounds, since the buildings were already full in all the embassies even after having converted several private homes into annex embassy facilities.

Unfortunately, due to the prepotency and arrogance of the RCIC delegates when they deal with national Red Cross societies, I could not convince them to share my apprehensions. On the contrary, they removed over a hundred refugees that were sheltered in our headquarters and transferred them to the Zona Franca.

The chief delegate of the Red Cross International Committee did not protest for that outrage perpetrated by Borge, although I insistently begged him to protest. He told me that Geneva specifically instructed him not to do it. Geneva considered that the government had a legal right to change the status of the refugees, and that any protest would hurt the RCIC and would hinder its mission of visiting political prisoners in the jails of the country.

My voice was the only one raised against the decision by Commander Borge. I publicly denounced it "as a bitter draught to swallow for the Nicaraguan Red Cross that had served the people so well during the insurrection."

--We had served and had taken under our care all the hospitals in the country.
--We had fed over 850,000 persons each week.

--We had sheltered over 100,000 refugees in nearly a hundred centers, and had furnished them clothing, medical care and food.

--We had rescued the wounded, most of them Sandinistas, from the barricades, and turned our headquarters into a hospital where we treated and protected them.

--We had organized an airlift, with international help, to attend the needs of the population.

--We had rescued Sandinista partisans who had sought asylum in embassies and who

had been detained by National Guardsmen on their way to the airport.

--Every day, we formed convoys to transport to the airport, and protect, those who were leaving the country in search of safety.

--We visited the Sandinista leaders in the embassies where they had sought asylum, etc.

The New York Times published my picture, with my countenance disfigured by anger as I protested against this outrage that showed from the beginning the lack of sincerity of the Sandinista commanders, their disregard for their own pledges, and their baseness as human beings.

Since I was the one who protested, the people thought that the Sandinistas had snatched the Zona Franca refugees from the Nicaraguan Red Cross, and not from the Red Cross International Committee.

I protested against the change in status of the Zona Franca refugees because the RCIC did not protest. It kept silent, as usual. I protested because for me the Red Cross is one, and I felt the immense pain of the failure as if it were my own. I protested because of the bloody scorn towards a respected international institution and because, being a Nicaraguan, I understood what a thousand fellow Nicaraguans abandoned to their doom were then suffering and were yet to suffer at the hands of pitiless Sandinistas.

It was a perverse, diabolical, premeditated plan, prepared by Dr. Rodrigo Reyes-Portocarrero, who sold his own conscience to Tomas Borge for a pot of pottage.

I know very well that the RCIC would have gained nothing by protesting; but it was their duty to protest. Since the RCIC didn't do it, I had to safeguard the prestige of our institution. To keep silent would have meant to accept this shameful Sandinista action, to justify the Sandinista government as they safely and calmly broke their own promises in order to snatch the refugees from us, send them to jail, and murder them.

The Red Cross does not have a military or coercive force to impose its will over any government; but the Red Cross is a moral force, and, because of that, it had to exert it by protesting, otherwise it would lose its moral authority.

The Sandinista government attempted to justify the last murder of prisoners in the same way as it attempted to justify the previous one, by alleging that there had been mutiny and insurrection. We all know

that this is not true. The inmates were protesting against ill treatment and tortures, and, according to reliable sources, from 38 to 40 prisoners were murdered.

There have been no escape attempts from the Model Prison. It was from a jail in northern Nicaragua from which recently escaped Hugo Aguilar Amador, Rodolfo Joya, Roberto Vivas Gonzalez, Jorge Chamorro Perez, Rodolfo Ampie Quiroz and Juan Pablo Pichardo.

For the Nicaraguan people and for me, there is no difference at all between the Red Cross International Committee and the Nicaraguan Red Cross, for we make no distinction among the different societies that form the Red Cross League. If any difference exists, it is in regards to ideals and individual persons. Individuals who labor in order to serve the people, and individuals who labor in order to serve their own selves. Individuals who risk their lives voluntarily, without pay, and individuals who do it for a salary.

Annoyed by my protest, the Sandinistas tried to discredit and destroy me by planting a rumor among the prisoners that I had given in to Tomas Borge in exchange for money. As the prisoners had not been taken from me nor from the Nicaraguan Red Cross, and I was conscious of the danger that this horrible slander posed for my personal safety, I asked the delegates of the Committee to deny it. They didn't dare do it.

They are prepotent with the small ones, but humble and servile with those in power. They remained silent before Somoza when Somocista guards machine-gunned our Red Cross helpers, and they remained silent when the Sandinistas jailed the employees of our institution, condemned them to 30 years in prison for crimes they had not committed, and threw the mobs at them, beating and wounding them.

The Sandinistas sent a RCIC employee to prison, after charging him with being a Somocista criminal; but as they accused me instead of the RCIC, the Committee refused to assume its responsibility and would not deny the charges. I was told that Geneva considered that doing so would have blemished the good name of the International Committee. That is why I say that, for me, the biggest difference lies between those who cherish the Red Cross ideals and do their duty, and the Red Cross mercenaries whose only worry is to avoid problems in order to hold on to their salaries and to go on living like kings.

Nobody protested in defense of the So-

mocista refugees, because Somoza was a criminal, a murderer, a monster. On the other hand, the FSLN commanders can commit the most horrendous crimes without fear of punishment. Because they are not monsters; they are spotless spirits, angels, arch-angels.

Somoza, the monster, allowed me (as president of the Red Cross) to visit Sandinista leaders (Borge, Carrion, Nunez, Jaen) in the Model Prison and in the embassies where they had sought asylum (Cuadra, Colonel Kautz, Sergio Ramirez, D'Escoto, Atha).

Somoza, the criminal, allowed me to visit Carrion in jail whenever his parents requested me to do it. He allowed me to visit Borge in jail for medical attention by one of our doctors and for his relatives to see him, etc. He allowed me to visit Nunez and attend to his tuberculosis treatment in prison; to visit Jaen and keep him informed about his mother who carried on a hunger strike in our institution.

Somoza, the murderer, allowed Tomas Borge to call me on the phone at night from the Model Prison, asking for favors. He allowed me to visit Colonel Larios in prison after he had led an unsuccessful insurrection in the army, and he allowed me to transfer a group of relatives of the Sandinista prisoners from the Nunciatura to the Red Cross headquarters, to take care of them and provide them medical attention during their hunger strike.

The Sandinista government never allowed me to see Colonel Larios (former Minister of Defense in the Sandinista Regime) in the Model Prison, and they would shoot dead any warden who allowed a prisoner to make a phone call, for they consider it a crime and treason.

I am not defending Somoza. I am comparing two very grave evils that have different degrees of monstrosity.

These same criminals are the ones who tricked the Red Cross, who deceived the OAS, the Andean Pact nations, the International Community, the Church and the Nicaraguan people, the same who now are trying to make use of the Contadora Group and the United Nations in order to continue enslaving the Nicaraguan people. They can promise everything, but they will keep none of their promises. And yet, there are naive souls who believe them, for instance, those representatives of the American people who are democrats only in name, who want for us what they don't wish for themselves: to live without religious freedom, without freedom of speech, without freedom