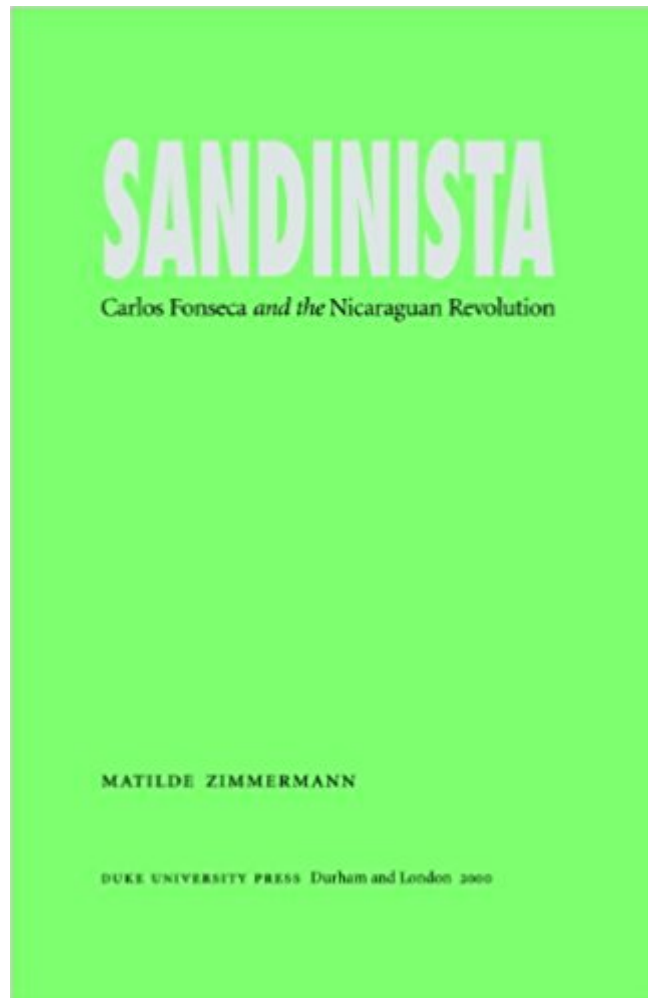




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Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca And The Nicaraguan Revolution



Synopsis

“A must-read for anyone interested in Nicaragua—or in the overall issue of social change.”—Margaret Randall, author of *SANDINO’S DAUGHTERS* and *SANDINO’S DAUGHTERS REVISITED*

Sandinista is the first English-language biography of Carlos Fonseca Amador, the legendary leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua (the FSLN) and the most important and influential figure of the post-1959 revolutionary generation in Latin America. Fonseca, killed in battle in 1976, was the undisputed intellectual and strategic leader of the FSLN. In a groundbreaking and fast-paced narrative that draws on a rich archive of previously unpublished Fonseca writings, Matilde Zimmermann sheds new light on central themes in his ideology as well as on internal disputes, ideological shifts, and personalities of the FSLN. The first researcher ever to be allowed access to Fonseca’s unpublished writings (collected by the Institute for the Study of Sandinism in the early 1980s and now in the hands of the Nicaraguan Army), Zimmermann also obtained personal interviews with Fonseca’s friends, family members, fellow combatants, and political enemies. Unlike previous scholars, Zimmermann sees the Cuban revolution as the crucial turning point in Fonseca’s political evolution. Furthermore, while others have argued that he rejected Marxism in favor of a more pragmatic nationalism, Zimmermann shows how Fonseca’s political writings remained committed to both socialist revolution and national liberation from U.S. imperialism and followed the ideas of both Che Guevara and the earlier Nicaraguan leader Augusto César Sandino. She further argues that his philosophy embracing the experiences of the nation’s workers and peasants was central to the FSLN’s initial platform and charismatic appeal.

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Customer Reviews

I am ashamed to say how little I knew about the Nicaraguan Revolution, but this book opened my eyes and now I am reading two more books. It was an excellent book and made me angry all over again for American Imperialism. It just never stops, now we are constantly trying to control events in the Mid-East.

Having lived through the early years of the revolution in Nicaragua, although just a child I got a first hand view of some of the struggles and dangers of the revolution. Because I was only a child I was not able to fully grasp the grand scheme of things and now as an adult I decided to begin reading about the revolution in Nicaragua and stumbled upon this book. The book gives a clear, no nonsense account of Carlos Fonseca. Who he was, how he was raised and what he stood for over the course of his life. A clear chronological order of events into his life is presented as well as the struggles the young rag tag band of rebels went through. If you want to read an unbiased account into the revolution in Nicaragua and the role Carlos Fonseca played as leader of the FSLN then read this book. For me it shed light on some of the missing pieces about the revolution, the struggle and the ultimate outcome of the FSLN after the death of Fonseca. Good reading.

Having been interested in Latin American politics for a while it was an easy sell for me but is incredibly well written and researched, a very personal and in depth look at Carlos Fonseca's life and worth the read if you want to know a little bit more about where Nicaragua is at and why.

A clear and comprehensible account of Fonseca and the FSLN in Nicaragua. A very good read.

I'm just getting around to reviewing books I read quite a while ago, but all of them are still worth reading (except those I review because they're not). This one definitely is, for anyone interested in the Nicaraguan Revolution. Carlos Fonseca was a central leader of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Movement) from the time he helped found it in July 1961 until his murder by the Somoza dictatorship in November 1976. This book is hated by the current leadership of the Sandinistas, precisely because it tells the truth about their revolutionary origins, which they would like to forget. If Fonseca had lived, it's likely that there would still be a revolutionary government in power in Nicaragua. But in Cuba, this book is appreciated, and has been published in Spanish. It has also been published in Spanish on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, where despite all the mistakes the revolution made at the beginning, the autonomy plan has been a big success. Full disclosure: I know Matilde, and when she, along with her husband Arnold Weissberg were on the Managua bureau of *The Militant*, I followed their articles, as I did all that paper's coverage. Carlos Now the Dawn's No Fond Illusion (English and Spanish Edition) is also still worth reading about Fonseca. Sandinistas Speak: Speeches, Writings, and Interviews with Leaders of Nicaragua's Revolution is on my list of books to read on the revolution; speeches by Sandinista leaders from 1979-81, plus it also includes "The Historic program of the FSLN" from 1969, and "Nicaragua: Zero Hour" written by Carlos Fonseca and first published in Cuba that same year. Follow that up with the speeches and documents in Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution, which has some wonderful material, as well as some from the period of the revolution's decline. And then I suggest reading New International no. 9: The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution, the only serious analysis of the decline and end of the revolution. The Sandinistas were voted out of power, but not the revolution, which had ceased to exist for at least a year before the elections.

I've spent the better part of the year studying the Nicaraguan Revolution and this is the most detailed and accurate account I've found so far. Coincidentally and luckily, it is also the first book I read on the subject. While there is certainly value in reading the accounts of Borge, Cabezas, Ortega, Belli, etc., Zimmerman sifts through much of the harder-to-find information and provides a game-changing analysis of the FSLN that refutes the Frente's current attempts to portray its origins as social democratic rather than Marxist-Leninist, its inspiration as Scandinavia rather than Cuba. Carlos Fonseca was one of the great revolutionaries in Latin American history and it is unfortunate that his contributions have been largely ignored outside his home country. Zimmerman's work is instrumental for English-speakers in understanding not only Fonseca's reconciliation of Sandino and Marx, but also the development of the FSLN both under his leadership and after. I also recommend

"Obra Fundamental," a collection of Fonseca's works soon to be released on .

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