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Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution

Matilde Zimmermann

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“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 In a groundbreaking and fast-paced narrative that draws on a rich archive of previously unpublished Fonseca writings, Matilde Zimmermann sheds new light on central themes in his ideology as well as on internal disputes, ideological shifts, and personalities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The first researcher ever to be allowed access to Fonseca’s unpublished writings (collected by the Institute for the Study of Sandinism in the early 1980s and now in the hands of the Nicaraguan Army), Zimmermann also obtained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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