

## *Introduction*

ALEJANDRO BENDAÑA CALLED ME the day before I was supposed to leave Nicaragua. He was inviting me to come by his Managua home to browse through some boxes with documents he had found. I had been in touch with Bendaña previously because I wanted to find out more about his work for the Nicaraguan foreign service after 19 July 1979, when the young revolutionaries of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN) toppled the anticommunist dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza Debayle, ushering in a decade of revolutionary change and regional upheaval. Tired, worried about bags that were still unpacked, and having already resigned myself to the impossibility of tracking down Nicaragua's foreign ministry archives, I hesitated for a moment. Then, I fortunately decided to make the journey to Bendaña's house, where he showed me the documents that are now at the heart of this book. Together with the other materials I had already collected, they helped me to understand why Bendaña believed that Nicaragua's political future was ultimately decided in the international arena. "Western public opinion was absolutely crucial to one small nation that was trying to defend its sovereignty, because we weren't going to win a major military conflict with the U.S. and wanted to avert it," Bendaña reflected in an interview he gave in July 1996. Indeed, he continued, despite the enormous human costs of the Nicaraguan civil war, the "real battle" over Nicaragua in the late 1970s and 1980s took place "in public opinion and in Congress, and with the Europeans."<sup>1</sup>

Like Bendaña, former participants in Nicaragua's revolutionary project often mention the international interventions, global trends, and transnational actors that transformed their country's history at the tail end of the Cold War. The Sandinista triumph over the Somoza regime on 19 July 1979

captured the imaginations of people around the globe. Thousands of sympathizers flocked to Nicaragua to experience firsthand how the revolution unfolded, and to help it fulfill its promises of radical social change, people's democracy, and national liberation. In the Americas and Europe, activists organized music festivals, staged protests, and sold posters to propagate the Sandinista cause, denounce its enemies, and raise funds for the FSLN's domestic programs. Famous intellectuals like Salman Rushdie, Régis Debray, Margaret Randall, Gabriel García Márquez, and Graham Greene praised and romanticized the young and ambitious Sandinistas. Foreign governments' reactions to the revolution largely depended on their outlook on the Cold War. Their responses either sought to support, restrain, or destroy the newly minted regime, all with significant consequences for how Nicaragua's revolutionary trajectory developed on the ground. Meanwhile, Sandinista diplomats navigated the shifting international landscape of the late Cold War, implementing an innovative foreign policy strategy that was designed to ensure the revolution's survival in the face of growing hostility from the anticommunist camp. This dense web of contacts between Nicaragua and the outside world unraveled when the FSLN lost the elections held on 25 February 1990, effectively ending the country's revolutionary experiment and its place in the international limelight.

But why did the revolution have such a massive global impact? And why did transnational actors and foreign policies have such immediate consequences for how the revolution developed on the ground? None of this was inevitable, automatic, or even logical, considering Nicaragua's lack of valuable resources to export, its small size, and its location in what had historically been considered the "back yard" of the United States. The answer to both these questions, I argue, can be found in the Sandinistas' unique, ambitious, yet pragmatic diplomatic campaign, which blended grassroots organizing with traditional foreign policy. Indeed, the Sandinistas' revolutionary diplomacy was not just concerned with managing relations between states. Like Cuban attempts in earlier decades, the FSLN sought to construct a new international order that would benefit the countries of the Global South: a "revolutionary world" in which the Nicaraguan Revolution could triumph, survive, and ultimately thrive.<sup>2</sup> This radical objective required a different and much more creative set of diplomatic relationships and practices than those employed by nonrevolutionary states. Inspired by examples from Vietnam, Cuba, and Algeria, the FSLN's revolutionary diplomacy targeted government leaders and diplomats, but also musicians, feminists, guerrillas,

teachers, journalists, priests, peace activists, town councillors, and human rights campaigners from around the world. Recognizing that public perceptions and non-state actors mattered for the revolution's future, the Sandinistas combined state-level diplomacy with a unique mix of culture, propaganda, and personal relationships. The Sandinistas' efforts resulted in a transnational network of solidarity activists who carried out crucial tasks for the FSLN's foreign policy, albeit with varying levels of success and enthusiasm.

*Nicaragua Must Survive* tells the story of the FSLN's revolutionary diplomacy, the people who gave it substance and meaning, and how it helped to shape Nicaragua's domestic history. Twenty years after Fidel Castro and his band of guerrillas triumphed in Cuba, and six years after the violent overthrow of Latin America's first democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, in Chile, the victory of the Nicaraguan revolutionaries over the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979 remains an understudied moment of profound change in Cold War Latin America. In Central America, the revolution served as fresh inspiration for the armed Left and it further radicalized the anticommunist Right, resulting in genocidal violence in Guatemala and a brutal civil war in El Salvador.<sup>3</sup> Beyond the isthmus, the FSLN triumph encouraged conflicting state and non-state intervention from Cuba, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, the United States and others, with foreign powers either seeking to fight Cold War battles or offering negotiated diplomatic solutions purporting to transcend Cold War binaries. More than an anomaly or afterthought in Latin America's Cold War, as general overviews of this period tend to portray the civil wars of the 1980s, the *Revolución Popular Sandinista* ensured that Central America became the principal arena in which local, regional, and international actors determined whether, when, and how Latin America's Cold War struggles could be ended.<sup>4</sup>

The Sandinistas were pivotal in determining how this ideological battle unfolded. Even before they came to power, the FSLN managed to mobilize a transnational pro-Sandinista network dedicated to the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship. Employing the language of human rights, anti-imperialism, and social justice, Sandinista ambassadors and their non-state allies convinced politicians in the Americas and Europe that Nicaragua mattered, that Somoza had to go, and that the FSLN represented a legitimate alternative. After the revolution's triumph on 19 July 1979, Sandinista revolutionary diplomacy was crucial in raising funds for ambitious domestic programs such as the literacy crusade, health care initiatives, and cultural projects. For a moment after their victory, though, the Sandinistas considered

abandoning—or at the very least reducing—their connections with the transnational solidarity movement in favor of a more traditional foreign policy. After all, they had achieved their primary objective of taking charge of the Nicaraguan state.

However, the 4 November 1980 U.S. electoral victory of the Republican Ronald Reagan, who made no secret of his hostility to the Sandinistas, changed their minds. The Reagan administration, convinced that interference from Cuba and the Soviet Union was responsible for the Sandinista victory and the revolutionary wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, employed various tactics to “roll back” communism in Central America. Throughout most of the 1980s, U.S. officials worked to weaken the Nicaraguan economy, isolate the country diplomatically, and provide Nicaraguan insurgents—also known as *Contras* (after *contrarrevolucionarios*, or counterrevolutionaries)—with money, military training, and weapons. The human costs of the U.S.-funded Contra war were enormous; around fifty thousand people died, a hundred thousand were wounded, and many more were displaced.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. government did not work alone, collaborating with allies from around the world to achieve its Cold War objectives, including the Argentine and Chilean military dictatorships and a range of anticommunist private organizations and individuals.<sup>6</sup> To protect the revolution from attacks by a much more powerful opponent, the Sandinistas took the battle to the international arena once more, successfully mobilizing public opinion, governments, and non-state actors to support the Nicaraguan Revolution’s survival.

Intriguingly, considering Reagan’s Cold War rhetoric, the primary targets of the FSLN’s revolutionary diplomacy were not the ideological enemies of the United States, such as Cuba, the Soviet Union, or even the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). While these countries mattered for the revolution’s survival, *Nicaragua Must Survive* contends that Western Europe was at the heart of the Sandinistas’ revolutionary diplomacy. From the late 1970s until their electoral loss in February 1990, Sandinistas and pro-FSLN solidarity activists encouraged Western European governments to become involved in Central American affairs. The Sandinistas’ policy toward Western Europe was specifically designed to weaken the resolve and limit the possibilities of the United States and its allies for defeating the Nicaraguan Revolution. Specifically, by pushing Western Europeans to launch an alternative diplomatic campaign toward Central America and—ideally—channel developmental aid to Nicaragua, the FSLN sought to shift the inter-American balance of power in their favor. Western European involvement, the

Sandinistas pragmatically calculated, would counter the infamous 1823 Monroe Doctrine that envisaged U.S. dominance over the Western Hemisphere, and which, Nicaraguan revolutionaries believed, still determined U.S. foreign policy and perceptions of Central America.<sup>7</sup> Western European involvement, even if not directly supportive of the revolutionaries, would undermine the United States' regional hegemony. Moreover, it would provide the FSLN with a significant propaganda victory. After all, the Western Europeans were generally seen as the United States' close—but perhaps more restrained—Cold War allies and their independent involvement in Central America would be a blow to the Reagan administration's global credibility. The Sandinistas' outreach to Western Europe hence serves as an important example of how the FSLN's revolutionary diplomacy creatively constructed opportunities to benefit the revolution's survival and reshape international affairs.

Even so, the Sandinista Revolution was not immune to, and would ultimately be consumed by, wider changes in the international system. In the early years of the revolution, the FSLN and its allies managed to use the charged atmosphere of the late Cold War to their advantage by claiming that *la guerra fría* had nothing to do with what was happening in Nicaragua. This was an appealing argument to Western European activists and politicians who were frustrated by Reagan's dangerous obsession with fighting communism. It was precisely because Western European governments believed that the European Community (EC)—in collaboration with Latin American states—could prevent Central America from turning into a Cold War hotspot that they decided to become involved in the region in the first place. Moreover, at a time when millions of peace activists demonstrated against the placement of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missiles on Western European soil, the FSLN's claims that Reagan was a dangerous leader fell onto fertile ground. Yet, in the late 1980s, with Cold War tensions in decline and the Soviet Union retreating from the Global South, these once powerful ideas lost their urgency, and the Sandinistas were unable to come up with an effective response beyond making further concessions to their ideological enemies. To be sure, the FSLN's electoral loss in February 1990 was as much a domestic as an international event, but the refusal of Western Europeans to prop up Nicaragua's faltering economy and the decline in public sympathy for the Sandinista cause undoubtedly played a part in convincing Nicaraguans to vote for the U.S.-backed opposition. As Western Europe turned its gaze away from Central America, the inter-American balance

was—albeit not fully restored in favor of the United States—no longer as beneficial to the Sandinista revolutionaries as it had been in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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Through the history of the Sandinistas' revolutionary diplomacy, *Nicaragua Must Survive* aims to make four significant contributions. First, it traces the ability of a small revolutionary movement, and later a government, to use the international environment to its own advantage. What opportunities did the Sandinistas have—or create for themselves—as they faced an opponent that was significantly more powerful in terms of resources, size, and military strength? Similar to the David and Goliath narrative that the FSLN presented to international audiences in the 1980s, diplomatic historians studying Nicaragua's relations with the United States often portray the Sandinistas as relatively powerless victims of the Reagan administration's aggressive and illegal campaign against the revolution.<sup>8</sup> Yet, despite the fact that U.S. foreign policy toward Nicaragua was well-funded, Reagan never succeeded in achieving his primary objective of removing the Sandinistas from power. To be sure, as one would expect, the United States had a significant degree of influence over how the Central American civil wars unfolded, and the Nicaraguan Revolution was significantly debilitated because of U.S. anti-communist policy. Nevertheless, it was only during the presidency of George H. W. Bush, a Republican who was more reluctant than Reagan to pursue the military option against Nicaragua, that the FSLN was *voted* out of office.

To make sense of the FSLN's ability to use the international environment for the revolution's survival, it is worth first briefly reflecting on the concept of power in international relations. As the Sandinistas' diplomacy shows, power is more than obtaining "the outcomes you want through threats, violence, and coercion."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, as Tom Long demonstrated in a recent study on international relations in the Western Hemisphere, Latin American countries had "autonomy and influence" over the United States despite their relative lack of "military and economic resources."<sup>10</sup> That is because smaller states are forced to rely on different—but not necessarily less influential—sources of power to pursue their goals. They use and create "margins for maneuver" for themselves in the international arena by adopting creative and sometimes unconventional strategies.<sup>11</sup> Using multilateralism, public diplomacy, and transnational relationships, governments can "co-opt . . . rather

than coerce” people to work toward intended outcomes.<sup>12</sup> For this so-called “soft power” strategy to work, though, governments need to project a positive image of themselves to international audiences, for instance through cultural expression, relationships with non-state groups, and cultivating appealing narratives.<sup>13</sup> If they do so effectively, seemingly weaker states can achieve their objectives and build an international environment that works in their favor, even though they—like all governments—do not always manage to shape outcomes.

Building on the idea that public opinion, culture, and perceptions are powerful tools in international relations, *Nicaragua Must Survive* thus explains why the Sandinistas managed to build and maintain a revolutionary state over a significant amount of time. In the period leading up to Somoza’s fall in July 1979, the Sandinistas’ revolutionary diplomacy shared many similarities with—and was undoubtedly inspired by—the successful transnational strategies employed by the Vietnamese revolutionaries, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Algerian National Liberation Front.<sup>14</sup> The revolution’s triumph, as well as the shifting international landscape the Sandinistas encountered following their victory, necessitated a new global strategy. After all, implementing and defending the revolution’s promises came with a different set of foreign policy challenges than mounting an armed insurgency. For the FSLN, it required reaching out to Western Europe for financial aid, making concessions to avoid international isolation and, crucially, a transnational campaign to make the revolution appear attractive. Throughout much of the 1980s, to the frustration of U.S. officials, the FSLN and its allies presented international audiences with a powerful narrative of a young, romantic, and adventurous revolutionary project that was under attack by a powerful imperial state with a long history of bloody interventions, including in Vietnam, Chile, and, from 1983 onwards, Grenada.

Yet, as it turns out, narratives, perceptions, and ideas are complex and unpredictable. States can use them to their own advantage and sometimes do so effectively; ultimately, however, they are difficult to influence. Indeed, as Daniel Sargent argues, the “resources on which power depends are myriad, and they are specific to context.”<sup>15</sup> Forces more powerful than states, including nationalism, anti-imperialism, socialism, and globalization changed world politics and as they did so states, including superpowers, could do little more than improvise and adapt. The Reagan administration’s well-funded propaganda campaign failed to convince European audiences that the anti-communist Contras were, in fact, “freedom fighters,” serving as a powerful

demonstration of the limits of propaganda and, by extension, state power.<sup>16</sup> For the Sandinistas, the decline of Cold War tensions in the late 1980s meant that their revolutionary diplomacy no longer fell on fertile ground; the ideas on which their foreign policy depended were no longer as powerful as they once had been. And while the FSLN tried to adapt to the new global context, after more than a decade of economic hardship and civil war the revolutionaries were no longer up to the task.

The FSLN's reliance on international goodwill and sympathy brings us to the second contribution of this book, namely the study of solidarity activism and what it can tell us about North-South relations in the Cold War. There has been ample scholarship on the history of transnational movements, Third World activism, and left-wing student protest.<sup>17</sup> And while much of the literature remains focused on what was happening in Western Europe and the United States during the so-called "Global Sixties," recent studies by Aldo Marchesi, Jessica Stites Mor, Katie Marino, Heather Vrana, and others have expanded the geographic and temporal scope to the Global South and the late Cold War.<sup>18</sup> This integration of new actors and regions into histories of protest not only enriches the literature; it also sheds new light on the forces that drove processes of mobilization in Europe and the Americas. In West Germany, as Quinn Slobodian points out, "proximate interactions" with foreign students and other "members of the Third World" had a crucial influence on the politics of the emerging New Left.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, rather than spontaneous outbursts of Western European solidarity, many of the protest groups that denounced the human rights abuses of the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships in the 1970s and early 1980s were backed by Latin American exiles.<sup>20</sup>

For all its insistence on recognizing the agency of Third World actors, however, there is still a tendency in the literature to romanticize solidarity activism. In the Nicaraguan case, the emerging body of scholarship that details the activities of pro-FSLN groups in Western Europe and the Americas acknowledges the central role Sandinistas played in coordinating the transnational solidarity movement.<sup>21</sup> Yet little attention is paid to how fluctuating power dynamics, tensions, and hierarchies infused the relationships between European activists and revolutionary politicians. The collaboration between Sandinistas and international activists was not always as smooth as it appeared to be on the surface. Overall, solidarity activists were generally well-intentioned and genuine in their desire to contribute to the Nicaraguan Revolution's success, but, as Agnieszka Sobocinska reminds us, "good intentions can be misguided" if the needs of "recipient communities"



are not taken into sufficient account.<sup>22</sup> Solidarity activists, disillusioned with the lack of revolutionary progress in their own countries, projected their hopes, dreams, and political ambitions onto Nicaragua. More than contributing to the revolution, solidarity activists wanted to participate in it; they wanted to feel part of a project that was ultimately not their own.

To be sure, the FSLN encouraged this sentiment and often managed to harness it for the revolution's benefit, inviting thousands of Western volunteers—or *brigadistas*—to Nicaragua for coffee-picking, construction projects, or fact-finding missions with high propagandistic value.<sup>23</sup> Yet, in other instances, activists' individual ambitions were directly at odds with the needs of the Nicaraguan people. Developmental aid, for instance, was a key priority for the Sandinistas, who struggled to raise the country's standard of living, but fundraising was simply not an appealing task to the Western activists, who preferred so-called "political" work over "humanitarian" campaigns. Efforts by the FSLN to centralize the solidarity movement to make it more effective and easier to coordinate were also actively resisted by activists, who opted instead for more intimate relationships in the form of so-called sister bonds with Nicaraguan cities, schools, and labor unions. Ultimately, as *Nicaragua Must Survive* demonstrates, these contests about what solidarity entails, how the movement should operate, and who was allowed to make decisions about its functioning, limited the effectiveness of transnational solidarity work and, as such, the ability of the FSLN to implement its revolutionary diplomacy.

The rise and decline of the pro-Sandinista solidarity movement also helps us understand the process through which solidarity activism became increasingly deradicalized—at least on the surface—as the Cold War came to an end. First strategically, but later out of necessity, solidarity activists embraced the ostensibly universal language of human rights, development, democracy, and humanitarianism. This allowed activists to deflect accusations of political bias, as well as to mobilize financial and political support for the Nicaraguan Revolution from organizations across the political spectrum. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, these concepts were relatively fluid and open to contestation. Within human rights language, for instance, there was space for an explicit emphasis on social and economic rights. Democracy could refer to popular participation, neighborhood committees, and grassroots political initiatives. And development was not necessarily synonymous with capitalism and so-called free market economics. By appealing to universal and politically neutral values that appeared to transcend Cold War politics,

Western European solidarity activists transformed the Nicaraguan Revolution into a popular and relatively uncontroversial cause.

Yet, as Alyssa Bowen shows in relation to the Chile solidarity movement, the “politics of anti-politics” had unintended consequences for the Left.<sup>24</sup> It assisted the creation of a culture in Western Europe and the United States in which politics became somewhat of a dirty word: a culture with little space for concepts such as anti-imperialism, national liberation, and social justice. Moreover, in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher successfully promoted an articulation of human rights as “rooted in anti-communism, democracy promotion, and free-market fundamentalism.”<sup>25</sup> The triumph of neoliberal human rights over the politics of social justice had serious and devastating consequences for the solidarity groups, as Nicaragua simply did not fit the new model. Indeed, as the 1980s progressed and global disenchantment with state socialism in Eastern Europe grew, pro-FSLN activists struggled to answer critical questions about press freedom, human rights, and democracy in Nicaragua, resulting in intense debates about strategy and the future directions of the movement. In the run-up to the 1990 elections, solidarity groups in the Netherlands even considered breaking ties with the FSLN, and some switched to a more general policy of backing Nicaragua’s democratic *process* instead. Swept up by the “neoliberal maelstrom” that characterized the end of the Cold War, the solidarity movement thus lost much of its previous radicalism, which impacted its ability to support the increasingly isolated Nicaraguan revolutionaries.<sup>26</sup>

The Sandinistas’ interactions with the world beyond the Americas, as well as the Nicaraguan Revolution’s intimate connections to global processes of change, are central to this book’s third contribution. By including the voices of actors from outside the inter-American system, the book brings us closer to a more nuanced understanding of the *global* Cold War and Latin America’s place within it. This is a much-needed intervention, as scholars of contemporary Latin America have yet to incorporate the region fully into a global framework.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, as Tanya Harmer and Alberto Martín Álvarez lament, historians have “only really begun to scratch the surface when it comes to understanding Latin America’s relationship with the wider world in the twentieth century.”<sup>28</sup> In the case of Nicaragua, recent international histories of the country’s revolutionary decade, although no longer obsessed with debating the rights and wrongs of U.S. foreign policy, have not yet managed to break down the historiographical barrier that separates the Western Hemisphere from the rest of the world.<sup>29</sup> Important steps have been made

toward uncovering the inter-American dynamics of the Nicaraguan Revolution, but we still know very little about the revolution's global dimensions, repercussions, and reception.<sup>30</sup> The point of telling the story of the Sandinistas' outreach to Western Europe, then, is to examine how people, ideas, and events originating in Latin America traveled across borders and came to transform the character and dynamics of the global Cold War, and vice versa.

Perhaps one of the more surprising consequences of the Central American civil wars was their contribution to the revival of Western Europe as a global power acting independently from—although mostly in collaboration with—the United States on the world stage. To be sure, this process was already underway before the Sandinistas' revolutionary victory, but concerns that the Central American “pawn” could be used by the Soviet Union to weaken Western Europe's position in the “international game of chess” certainly helped to convince European leaders, particularly the West Germans, that they had to play a more active international role.<sup>31</sup> Concerned that Reagan's obsession with fighting Central American guerrillas would divert his attention away from the European theater, the EC member states set out to prevent further military escalation in Central America. Insisting that social and economic inequalities—and not Soviet and Cuban intervention—were driving the revolutionary struggles, the Europeans publicly dismissed Reagan's Cold War narrative. They also refused to exclude Nicaragua from regional aid packages to mitigate these inequalities, calculating that this would only make the Sandinistas more reliant on Cuba and the Eastern bloc. The European initiative was thus a clear rejection of the Reagan administration's methods of fighting the Cold War, but behind the scenes the transatlantic allies shared the goal of eroding the appeal of socialism.

This European initiative, analyzed for the first time in *Nicaragua Must Survive*, would not have taken place if it was not for the efforts of Latin Americans who developed the regional peace initiatives—first the Contadora and later the Esquipulas process—that the EC ended up supporting.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, as the 1980s progressed, Nicaraguan claims that Western Europe should play a more active role in Central America were increasingly backed up by a chorus of powerful voices from Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, and others. While not all these countries sympathized with—indeed, in some instances they even actively despised—the Nicaraguan revolutionaries, their leaders all agreed that it should no longer be up to the United States alone to determine the outcomes of Latin

America's political, social, and economic crises. Like the Sandinistas, these governments believed that Western European engagement could strengthen their multilateral diplomacy and prevent regional initiatives toward Central America from being blocked by the U.S. administration. And ultimately, as Mateo Jarquín points out, it was Latin America and not the United States that "won the wider war of ideas" regarding how to respond to the Central American crises.<sup>33</sup> Despite various attempts by the United States to exclude the Sandinistas from regional peace initiatives, the Esquipulas process—with European support and Nicaragua's participation—brought the Central American conflicts to a negotiated solution. The influence of Latin America on the global Cold War, then, should not be underestimated; not only did actors from the region shape European foreign policies, but the collaboration between the EC and various Latin American coalitions also highlights the multipolarity of the late Cold War, and how this formed a challenge to U.S. hegemony in Central America.

On a more personal level, the story of the Sandinistas' revolutionary diplomacy also helps us understand the various ways that individuals experienced the global Cold War. What was it like to live through and participate in the struggle over Nicaragua's ideological future? Who participated in this struggle? What can this teach us about the human dimension of the Cold War? Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph have argued that "the internationalization and politicization of everyday life" was at the heart of the Latin America's Cold War experience.<sup>34</sup> To an extent, the same can be said about the Cold War in Western Europe, even though Europeans obviously did not have to deal with the same levels of violence as many Latin Americans. Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan Revolution, and the ideological Cold War struggle that accompanied it, transformed individual lives, local politics, and grassroots activism, not just in the Americas but also in other areas of the world. As councillors in British town halls engaged in heated debates about the legitimacy of Sandinista rule, schoolchildren in the Netherlands listened to Nicaraguan music, and West German solidarity activists befriended Nicaraguan campesinos they otherwise would not have met, the ideas at the heart of the Cold War battle over the Sandinista Revolution were increasingly part of Western Europeans' everyday lives. It is only by situating the human dimension of the Sandinistas' global outreach into the "broader geopolitical and institutional narratives" of the twentieth century that we come to understand the intimate connections between the local, the transnational, and the global during the Cold War era.<sup>35</sup>