

The Salvadoran guerrillas' training in Cuba was the heaviest of all the regional insurgencies since 1960 (pp. 4, 17).

The FMLN received massive outside military assistance for more than ten years.

The skeptical scholar in me noted that this claim peppers much of the text, with no scholarly support; much harder to ignore were the arguments and documentation in chapter 9. This is no set of easily rejected "white paper" statements, even though the authors never really justify their extreme assertion that approximately \$1 billion in outside military support reached the FMLN, roughly paralleling U.S. military aid to the government (pp. 6–7).

The authors' research may or may not have been careful; this reviewer, at least, lacks access to most of the documents they cite. They also have the annoying habit of citing sources without page references (to me a sign of sloppy scholarship). And I am disturbed by one such citation to Gabriel Zaid's well-known 1982 piece for *Dissent*, supposedly showing that Cubans backed the ERP and dropped the FPL (p. 16, n. 2). I could find no such passage in Zaid's text.

These reservations aside, this book is a must read for anyone wanting in-depth information on, and military analysis of, the Salvadoran insurgency. No matter how one responds to the authors' own political agenda and social analysis—especially their armed forces' boosterism and Cold War conservatism—no student of the Salvadoran civil war can justify ignoring this most important treatment of the very events that enthralled our field for more than a decade.

TIMOTHY P. WICKHAM-CROWLEY, Georgetown University

Democracy and Socialism in Sandinista Nicaragua. Edited by HARRY E. VANDEN and GARY PREVOST. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993. Photographs. Illustrations. Tables. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xii, 172 pp. Cloth. \$32.00.

Genuine democracy is possible under socialism, and the FSLN sought earnestly, though with limited success, to construct it in Nicaragua during the early 1980s. While some readers may find these propositions debatable, Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost argue for them convincingly in this book. Even those who remain unconvinced should find the book a useful overview of Sandinista politics.

The authors define genuine democracy as necessarily participatory; they contrast it to U.S.-style representative government and to the authoritarian "verticalism" common both to Nicaragua before 1979 and political models generated by Eastern European and Cuban socialism. Effective participation requires that the people understand and act on their own interests. On taking power in 1979, however, the FSLN, like many other leftist "vanguard parties" in similar situations, feared that the general population, sodden with capitalist vices, was ripe for manipulation by elite-backed demagogues. The party's stated strategy was to lead the people gradually toward consciousness and power; the party apparently did not imagine that at some point this might require the *comandantes* themselves to relinquish power.

The vehicle for participatory politics was to be the mass organization; for example, AMNLAE, the CDSs, UNAG, and the unions. If, early on, the FSLN apparently made a serious effort to organize a national political system that would encourage direct democracy through these organizations, by the middle of the decade, Vanden and Prevost argue, the party and the state were retreating from this commitment. Under the pressure of an economy collapsing from external attacks and internal mismanagement, the Sandinistas not only convened “bourgeois” elections, but increasingly succumbed to the temptation to convert mass organizations from vehicles for direct democracy to conduits for government policy and mechanisms to restrain popular protest. Cut off from direct communication, alienated by scant democracy in the FSLN itself, and feeling betrayed by a leadership many saw as distant from the desperate reality of their lives, the people turned the FSLN out of office in 1990. Did the party get the message? The leaders’ behavior since 1990 has sent mixed signals.

Integrated with its discussion of the rise and fall (and perhaps rise again) of participatory politics, *Democracy and Socialism* offers a short history of Sandinismo, a description of the structuring and restructuring of the party and party policy during the 1980s, and analyses of the 1984 and 1990 elections. A lot of material for about 170 pages. Unfortunately, the prose is occasionally pedestrian—the “toiling masses” repeatedly rear their sweaty heads—and the book’s structure is marred by the sort of repetition common to multiauthor efforts, which editing should have caught. Intended as a text for a history or political science course that would include revolutionary Nicaragua, *Democracy and Socialism* evinces a wide familiarity with the topic and deserves respect, even from those who disagree with it.

DAVID MCCREERY, Georgia State University

Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912. By ALINE HELG. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. Photographs. Illustrations. Maps. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xii, 361 pp. Cloth, \$45.00. Paper, \$16.95.

Cuba imported African slaves as late as the 1860s and was the last Spanish colony to abolish slavery, in 1886. The island’s independence wars elicited widespread black military mobilization, and the country witnessed the creation of the first black political party organized in the hemisphere. Yet the history of race during the postemancipation period has received little scholarly attention. If only for this reason, *Our Rightful Share* represents a major contribution to the growing field of Afro-Latin American studies and an indispensable reference for Cuban social, cultural, and political history during the republican period. Lucidly written, this book is based on truly exhaustive research that masterfully combines a large number of previously unused primary sources with the secondary literature.

Aline Helg’s book is important, however, for another reason: it explores in detail