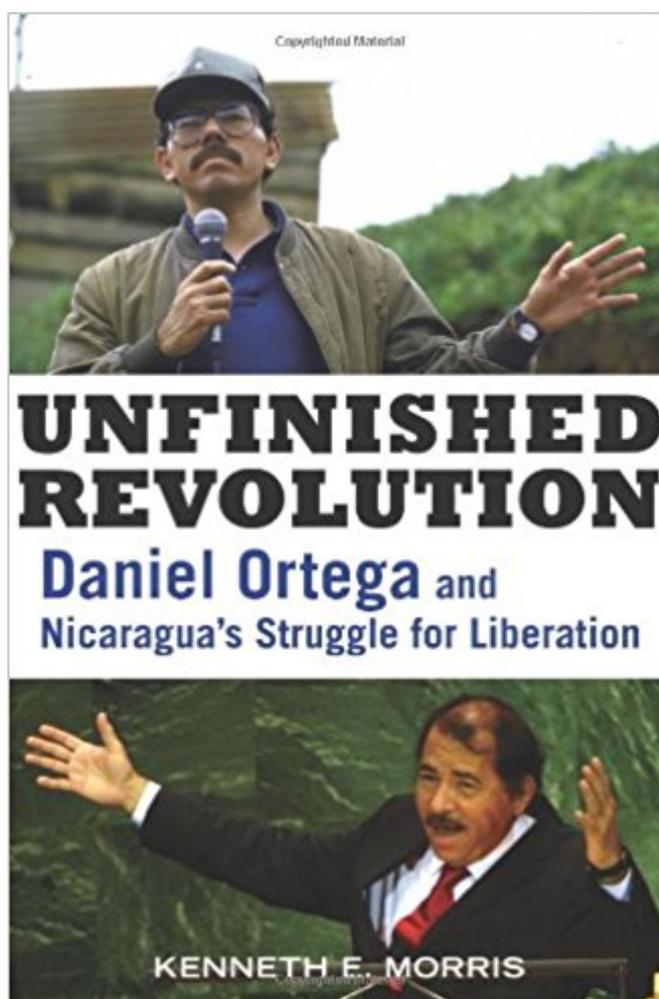


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Unfinished Revolution: Daniel Ortega And Nicaragua's Struggle For Liberation



Synopsis

Together with his brother Humberto, Daniel Ortega Saavedra masterminded the only victorious Latin American revolution since Fidel Castro's in Cuba. Following the triumphant 1979 Nicaraguan revolution, Ortega was named coordinator of the governing junta, and then in 1984 was elected president by a landslide in the country's first free presidential election. The future was full of promise. Yet the United States was soon training, equipping, and financing a counterrevolutionary force inside Nicaragua while sabotaging its crippled economy. The result was a decade-long civil war. By 1990, Nicaraguans dutifully voted Ortega out and the preferred candidate of the United States in. And Nicaraguans grew poorer and sicker. Then, in 2006, Daniel Ortega was reelected president. He was still defiantly left-wing and deeply committed to reclaiming the lost promise of the Revolution. Only time will tell if he succeeds, but he has positioned himself as an ally of Castro and Hugo Chávez, while life for many Nicaraguans is finally improving. Unfinished Revolution is the first full-length biography of Daniel Ortega in any language. Drawing from a wealth of untapped sources, it tells the story of Nicaragua's continuing struggle for liberation through the prism of the Revolution's most emblematic yet enigmatic hero.

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Customer Reviews

Ortega has been called many things - revolutionary, political leader, even child molester - but poet? According to Ortega, "In Nicaragua everybody is considered a poet until he proves to the contrary,"

and Morris's inclusion of the leader's poems go a long ways toward recasting the man that George W. Bush called "an animal at a garden party." Yet Morris also reminds us of Ortega the killer, chronicling his crimes and prison life, where he acquired traits for clandestine action and matured as a revolutionary strategist. Freed in 1976, Ortega soon led a bloody but successful revolution, overthrowing the government and bringing the Sandinistas to power, but ultimately finding the state "remote, inefficient, and a little clueless" and out of money. "McDonald's customers were asked to return their paper cups to be washed and reused - if water supply was available." Ortega has spent a lifetime dedicated to improving the lives of Nicaragua's poor and remains, in Morris's view, innocent of the aggrandizement so prevalent in third world countries. But for all of Morris's accurate reporting, the book lacks enough color and depth to cast Ortega as a character - whether admirable or otherwise. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Kenneth E. Morris is the author of two previous political biographies: Jimmy Carter, American Moralist and Bonhoeffer's Ethic of Discipleship. He has taught at a number of colleges and universities.

I found this book interesting and worthwhile. I'm not a fan of Mr Ortega in his performance as president in his last couple of terms but I came away with a more positive image after reading this book. A good read.

This book claims to be "sympathetic" to Ortega and his movement but in fact is hardly so. Mr. Morris writes in the style of Reader's Digest, I stopped reading half-way through.

I've visited Nicaragua twice in the past two years on mission trips and heard and saw the still open battle lines between those who spray paint Viva Daniel on the streets of Managua and those who fear the beginning of a dictatorial reign. This text gave enough history of pre-Ortega Nicaragua to have a context for revolution's roots while focusing on Ortega's upbringing and his personal life. The author paints a sympathetic portrait as much as he's able, until the facts of Ortega's personal character and his strong arm tactics in governing Nicaragua get in the way.

After a recent vacation in Nicaragua, I wanted to know more about Daniel Ortega's return to power there. Upon arrival in Managua the lack of high buildings after the earthquake in 1972 make all the more obvious the odd lighted, yellow "Trees of Life" which line the major thoroughfares as well as

scattered throughout the city. These odd (and expensive for a poor country) ornaments are about as high as the large (60-70 feet) concrete power poles near my home and are the inspiration of Rosario Murillo, Ortega's wife who is also referred to by some Nicas as a witch. Posters in hot pink pastels were in many places with her and Daniel's picture. One Nica confided that many thought she was crazy as well as a witch but they tolerate her New Age wackiness out of respect for Daniel. The same person also told me he never thought he would think Daniel Ortega's return to power would be a good thing but it has been for Nicaragua. I recalled the Sandinista Revolution in the 1970's and Reagan's ideological subversion of it in the 1980's which led to the Iran-Contra Scandal. Anyway to make along story short, Ortega's life is the story of the Sandinistas from its revolutionary origins against the U.S. supported Somoza dictatorship to its present day existence as leftist political party willing to make "pacts" with any faction no matter how corrupt. Ortega's struggles such as imprisonment by the Somoza regime, divisions within the revolutionary movement, rise and fall only to rise again to power and personal moral failings were eye opening. Nicaragua remains a poor and beautiful country but it seems the political system seduces all in its orbit to self serving graft. This little book documents the life of Daniel Ortega and illustrates the intractability of a system initiated and supported by U.S. policy that persists to this day.

A well done Nicaraguan political history, but it's essentially an opinion piece. An enjoyable and educational read if you can get past the writres infatuation with his subject.

I found this book to be a good overview of the political situation in Nicaragua. The author provides a brief history of the country prior to the revolution. He goes into more detail of the period since the revolution. I think he has done a reasonable job covering what is known about Ortega. Ortega's shortcomings and failures are presented as well as his positive characteristics and achievements. I would have liked more information on the military aspect, battles, troop strength, and foreign support for both sides in the conflict. That's just me though. Most readers probably don't care. I recommend this book to those with an interest in this subject.

I've been fascinated by Nicaragua since I first visited a decade ago so I was really looking forward to reading this first book-length treatment of the country's revolutionary leader turned dictator. There's plenty of detail about the man and the country's politics here, but I don't understand why the author (who apparently never interviewed his subject) is so sympathetic. He excuses corruption, megalomania, disregard for public opinion simply because everyone in Nicaragua does it. I'd argue

it's not enough to care about the poor; ideology aside, Ortega has blown a unique opportunity to get lasting results that would improve lives in this magical, heartbreaking country.

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