

PERSPECTIVES

The struggle may be heroic, yet the results not perfect

demic to most of Latin America. Nicaragua's is probably the first revolutionary government in history to abolish capital punishment. Both regimes clearly have deep popular support. But at the same time, they're both countries, Cuba particularly, where authority flows from the top down, not from the bottom up. The Sandinistas have treated Nicaragua's Miskito population badly—a mistake they now acknowledge. Cuba has few civil liberties in our sense of the term, has political prisoners in jail and won't even let Amnesty International send in a survey team. Both governments have serious flaws. Why pretend that they don't?

I don't mean to sound sanctimonious. There's no country anywhere that fully

and guilt-relieving about having some distant country to romanticize, particularly if it has a history of being oppressed by the West. There is always part of the American left that wants to see some Third World country bathed in this rosy glow. For a time it was China. During the Vietnam war it was North Vietnam. At other times it has been Tanzania or Mozambique. Somewhere, *somewhere*, there must be a perfect socialist society where justice reigns, everybody is happy and everything works. Alas, seldom is it so. In all these countries there is much to admire, but in the end China and Vietnam went to war against each other; Tanzania is sunk in economic doldrums that cannot be entirely blamed on the rest of the world. Happily, none of these places has ended up as badly as the Soviet Union, which was the target of so much of that rosy glow vision in the '30s.

The problem with rosy-glowism is threefold. First: no country anywhere, ever, for any reason, should be exempt from being judged according to the basic international standards of human rights. Second: North American leftists who appear to have blind spots in this regard weaken their own credibility. And right now the anti-intervention movement in the U.S. needs all the strength and credibility it can muster. And third: any time people project their own vision of Utopia onto a particular country, in the long run the vision usually doesn't accord with reality, and this leads to disillusionment. In this way, illusions about Stalinism led to a great weakening of the American and European left as the truth about the gulags unmistakably emerged. The best way not to have disillusioned leftists is not to have illusioned ones to begin with. Any progressive politics worth its salt must rest on a clear-eyed and unceasing passion for justice, and not on the fantasy that there is anywhere on earth where that has already been achieved. ■

Adam Hochschild is a contributing editor of *Mother Jones* magazine. This essay first appeared in *Peace & Democracy News*, the newsletter of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West.

It isn't necessary to blind oneself to the faults of revolutionaries in order to support their revolutions.

combines great social justice and maximum civil liberties. And you can't expect that combination to arise quickly in nations whose history is centuries of Spanish colonialism, U.S. economic imperialism, slavery and the Catholic Church. Given that heritage, Cuba and Nicaragua have done extraordinarily well. If Ronald Reagan were to stay off their backs, they might do still better.

Why, though, do some North Americans jump on anybody who criticizes Nicaragua in the slightest, and ignore a degree of authoritarianism in Cuba that would appall them if they found it in this country? This tendency is a familiar one, I'm afraid; there is something seductive

or two occasions they have used arms against each other as well as against government troops. It is hard to predict with certainty the exact nature of a revolutionary regime likely to emerge.

In the countries of this hemisphere where revolutions have triumphed—Nicaragua and Cuba—most people are vastly better off now than before. Despite vicious U.S. harassment, these nations have made huge advances in attacking malnutrition, unemployment, disease, illiteracy and the official corruption en-

By Adam Hochschild

LATELY I'VE FOUND THAT I've grown allergic to the word "heroic." As in: "We must support the heroic people of Nicaragua in their struggle against U.S. imperialism."

Don't get me wrong. I think the rebels in El Salvador are heroic. And I think the covert U.S. war against Nicaragua is criminal. But the rhetoric bothers me, because it indicates that portions of the left in this country are currently making the same mistake many people did during the war in Vietnam. If what we're doing is 100 percent evil, the unspoken logic runs, then the other side must be 100 percent good.

Yes, the U.S. interventions in Central America are 100 percent wrong; there is no justification whatever for our attempts to crush the Sandinistas on the one hand and to prop up a corrupt and brutal government in El Salvador on the other. Every North American of conscience ought to be working to stop that intervention. But the corollary of that statement is not that the Sandinistas or the Salvadoran rebels are without problems. Few regimes or movements anywhere are. And there is no useful purpose served—particularly the urgent one of stopping U.S. intervention—by pretending that they are.

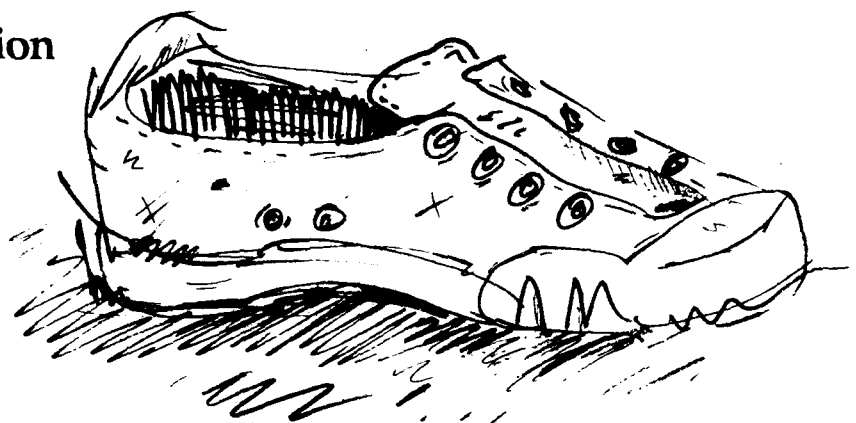
I hope the rebels in El Salvador win. They include many people deeply committed to bringing justice to their country—some of whom have paid for that commitment with their lives. They offer far more hope to a long-suffering people than the death squad thugs running the country now. But the rebels are a coalition of five heavily armed groups ranging from Catholics to Maoists. On one

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LIFE IN THE U.S.

HAWAII

It's somebody else's paradise

By Winona La Duke

Volcanoes border the entire Pacific Ocean, and Hawaii sits in the middle, 3,000 miles from anything. Although the U.S. puts Hawaii in a small box beside California's Catalina Island and Alaska, it is really a separate and struggling geopolitical entity.

Hawaii is the last frontier of an era of U.S. expansion, given statehood in 1959, 18 years after Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II. Today on all eight of the Hawaiian islands, the people and the land are simply trying to survive in what has become someone else's paradise.

Hawaii is the darkest state in the union—less than 18 percent of the population is Caucasian. Hawaii is also the most militarized state and is the "brain" of the Pentagon's Pacific Command. And it serves as headquarters for military activities that control more than half the earth's surface, from the west coast of North America to the east coast of Africa and from the Antarctic to the Arctic. From his headquarters at Camp Smith, near Pearl Harbor, the Commander in Chief-Pacific (CINCPAC) directs all components of the U.S. armed forces in an integrated command. CINCPAC also directs separate, unified commands in Japan and Korea.

There are more than 100 military installations in the Hawaiian islands, with fully 10 percent of the state and 25 percent of Oahu under direct federal control.

Hawaii is the loading and re-loading base for all of the Pacific. In Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii's largest industrial enterprise, fuel rods are replaced in the Navy's nuclear powered submarines. In 1972 Oahu alone was the storage site for some 3,200 nuclear weapons. Representing the second largest source of income for the state, the 50,000 military personnel based on the islands help contribute a whopping 35 percent of direct revenues.

Sometimes Kaho'olawe does not even appear on airline maps of the Hawaiian islands. It is the only National Historic Monument utilized year-round as a bombing range by the Defense Department.

Kaho'olawe is Hawaii in microcosm. For centuries, it has been a monastery for Hawaiian religion, the sacred departing place for traditional voyages to Tahiti, 3,000 miles away. In 1941, it was taken by the Defense Department. The people—farmers and ranchers—were moved out and the military moved in.

For 43 years now, the island has been a bombing target for an expanding variety of imaginative military exercises. The latest exercise is the RIMPAC maneuver for all Pacific-rim countries. Coordinated by the Seventh Fleet, the maneuvers are extensive, both in terms of exercises and personnel. At last count some 22,000 combat personnel, 225 planes and 41 warships from participating countries were involved, all of them using Kaho'



Tourists learn to surf on Waikiki Beach, one of the most developed resort areas on the islands.

olawe as ground zero.

Since its inception in 1974, Protect Kaho'olawe Ohana ("Ohana" means "family") has led an escalating struggle to reclaim the island. By 1976 the island was the site of litigation over its cultural significance to native Hawaiians. After the Navy began a court-ordered archeological survey, at least 544 separate religious sites were discovered on the island. The Ohana contends that at least four times as many sites are there, many within the bombing range.

By 1981, the Ohana had signed a consent decree with the Navy, an 18-point agreement providing increased access to the island and

gradual demilitarization. This year the Ohana brought the 3,000th visitor to the island.

"...I was kissing people I didn't even know. Then I saw how many tourists started coming to our coast. I quit. I was afraid we were going to get evicted again...."

—Georgette Myers, native Hawaiian, formerly an airline employee

One of the biggest problems with Hawaii is that it is a series of islands. That is why people love Hawaii, and that is also why they can't stay. There simply isn't enough room for everyone and everything. But money talks, and one of the biggest mouths in Hawaii is the tourist industry or, as its proponents call it, the "happiness industry." Haunani Kay Trask is a professor of American studies at the University of Hawaii and one of the most vocal native Hawaiian nationalists. Of particular concern to Trask is the tourist industry, responsible for an estimated 30 percent of Hawaiian labor force employment and (directly and indirectly) 52 percent of the state's gross product.

Trask sees the tourist industry as a form of prostitution: "Tourism is not made to sell *haole* [white] culture. It's here because we are the native people of this *aina* [land]. It is our culture that tourists come to see. It is our land that tourists come to pollute. That is the secret. Without Hawaiians, without beautiful Hawaiian women dancing, there would be no tourism...." Trask continues, "It deforms the culture, so Hawaiians think that to dance the hula is to dance for tourists.... Hawaiians grow up thinking that our culture is a *haole* interpretation of culture...and if you smile real

nice, some *haole* is going to take you out."

Tourism has made some native Hawaiians feel like monkeys at a zoo. In January 1983, for example, the state bulldozed houses of people in Makua for a state park. Makua is the beach at the bottom of an alluvial valley on Oahu. On the mountain above the beach the military has a bombing range, where a satellite communications station was installed in the early '80s. To the Hawaiians, the idea of a state park at Makua is more than a little ironic. Not only did the state bulldoze houses and arrest people to put in this "recreation" site, but the Hawaiians who were forced out had to wade through live ammunition that washed up on the beach during 1982's Hurricane Iwa.

When the state destroyed the Makua houses last year, 12 families remained as squatters on their own land. "The state constantly rips off our land, then turns around and calls us 'squatters,'" says Mililani Trask, an attorney. In another case at Halo Mohalu, a Hansen's disease (leprosy) patient facility, the Department of Health razed the entire facility in September 1983, again to create a recreational area.

On the island of Molokai, the Kalaupapa peninsula has been the site of another leprosy colony for over a century. Patients were sent there as soon as the disease was identified, and most have lived their entire lives at Kalaupapa. Although the state Health Department has cut back the operating budget at Kalaupapa, tourism is booming in the settlement. Since leprosy is virtually eradicated, someone figured that visitors would be interested in touring the historic site. Donkey rides and helicopters to the peninsula are now available.

Shelly Mark, director of Ha-

waii's state Department of Planning and Economic Development for 12 years, explains the tourism predicament. "Ownership of the land has shifted to corporations off the islands. Rate of return on investment has become the most important thought. There is a conflict between the life of the land and sea versus the life of the corporate boardroom. Tourism drives up living and land costs for locals, but provides only low-paying, low quality jobs."

"...We can barely pay house rent and they build apartments. They only make more rooms when they can make farms. With inflation now, hard to buy tomatoes, carrots. Instead of building those kind buildings, let the Hawaiians farm. You cannot eat 'em, those buildings."

—Wai'anae Coast Hawaiian

Development has taken a heavy toll on Hawaiians and the land. Generations of living on islands have made them "accommodating—we had to learn to get along better." Haunani Kay Trask explains this phenomenon as colonization. "This is not America, this is a colony." The establishment of sugar and pineapple plantations marked the first wave of colonialism. The military and finally tourism mark the next waves of colonialism. "The transformation of the Hawaiian people and their land into servants of tourism is called 'commodification.' It means turning a cultural attribute or person into a commodity to make a profit.... Almost all of us in the Hawaiian movement have done the song and dance for the tourists, worked in the hotels. We have all been commodified," Trask insists.

In *Aloha Aina*, a newspaper of the Hawaiian movement, another Hawaiian puts it differently. "We have been denied access to our traditional means of survival by a colonization process that interrupts the pattern of learning to survive and substitutes learning to serve. Unknowingly, we pay a high price for our Western assimilation in terms of our future choices. The cost of a healthy capitalist economic system requires that we steal from our future to maintain our high standards of living. When a fishpond is dredged and filled for resort development and construction jobs, we destroy a generations-old resource as a sacrifice for short-term jobs and luxury developments. When our agricultural areas are left without water so that golf courses can be kept green and scenic, we lose the opportunity to subsist on our lands."

Since the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani by Samuel Dole (the fruit magnate) in 1890, foreigners have always staked their claims. Making Hawaii U.S. territory brought the Pacific Command and the integration of the Hawaiian plantation state into a worldwide agricultural network. Finally, with statehood, Hawaii's most recent invader is the visitors' industry, marketing happiness. Each generation in Hawaii has seen new imports from the mainland.

The result is outside control. The Robinson family claims ownership of one of the islands (Ni'ihau), Dole "owns" Lanai, the Defense Department claims Kaho'olawe and the military "owns" 10 percent of the remaining islands.

"We have seen it all," says Mililani Trask, who has been active in numerous commissions, legal cases and other ventures for

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Thomas Neblin