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## ***Touristic Discourse and U.S.-Nicaraguan Relations 1936 - 1964***

### ***Introduction***

This paper examines representations of Nicaragua in touristic advertising of the 1940s, 50s and 60s against the backdrop of U.S.-Nicaraguan and U.S.-Latin American relations. This period of Nicaraguan history is marked by the dictatorial rule of the Somoza dynasty and its close ties to the U.S. government. During this time an image of Nicaragua as a land of prosperity, stability and progress was projected towards the U.S. in order to attract North American tourists and investors. But the crafting of this positive image clashed with the historical realities of Nicaragua's development and its relation to the U.S. How were issues of underdevelopment, dictatorial rule and international tensions negotiated through touristic advertising?

The idea to look at tourism discourse in the context of U.S.-Latin American relations was inspired by Karl Marx's concept of commodity fetishism. According to Marx, when an object turns into a commodity it acquires a new dimension, "abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties." An object turns into a commodity when it is sold and therefore inserted into the market, obtaining exchange value on top of use value. A commodity is no longer attached to its producer, and thus the labor that went into making it becomes covert. Because commodities do not bear traces of the work that went into

producing them, they appear to have a “life of their own.”<sup>1</sup> A television bought in a store in the U.S. is detached from its context; nothing suggests that the object was produced and assembled in different places, by a number of individuals. This mysterious aspect of the commodity, the notion that it is inhabited by a context we do not know, is what Marx refers to when he compares the commodity to a fetish.<sup>2</sup>

Because touristic advertising (and advertising in general) is meant to *attract* the consumer, it can strongly contribute to the fetishization of the commodity, if its context of production is deemed undesirable. In its effort to attract the tourist by highlighting some aspects of a country, touristic advertising creates a discourse in which other aspects are suppressed. Touristic discourse creates a fetish, in which every detail is the product of negotiation between attractive and unattractive elements of a historical context. Thus, touristic advertising is only the visible, or “official” part of an actively selective discourse, that can reveal much about the “unofficial” through its omission of the undesirable.

At the 1965 Central American Conference on Tourism, former president of Mexico Miguel Alemán, whose administration turned the city of Acapulco into a world-renowned tourist destination, explained to his audience that

The more tourists consume national products and the more they export them, the more effort should be put into the conservation of these products that are characteristically national, since their value springs precisely from these national characteristics.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Berlin: Kiepnheuer, 1952), Vol. I, Ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Fetish is used in the sense of “an inanimate object worshiped for its supposed magical powers or because it is considered to be inhabited by a spirit.” Oxford Dictionary.

<sup>3</sup> Miguel Alemán, “Conciencia Turística,” *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 10: 59 (August 1965), p. 6-7, my translation.

Thus, those aspects of national culture that are interesting for the tourist are those aspects that deserve the most attention from the government. From a U.S-Latin American relations perspective this idea interesting because it suggests that what is “typically” national in Nicaragua is co-defined by North Americans. One of the questions this paper asks is how and why some elements of national culture are *not* selected to become “national characteristics of Nicaragua.” In the case of Somoza’s Nicaragua the construction of a national vision that was attractive to tourists required the omission of “unsavory” aspects of national life that were particularly visible elements of the dictatorship, such as political oppression.

### ***Historical background***

Nicaraguan history at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by U.S. intervention in local politics and economy. Between 1909 and 1933 U.S. troops occupied Nicaragua, which was in a state of constant turmoil as a result of the violent conflicts between Liberals and Conservatives. U.S. military and political intervention, such as the removal of President Zelaya in 1909, was geared towards preventing Nicaragua from negotiating with foreign powers to build an interoceanic canal to cross the isthmus. The U.S. administration also controlled Nicaraguan finances (Dawson agreements (1911), Knox- Castrillo Treaty, Bryan-Chamorro Treaty (1916)) and turned Nicaragua into a U.S. protectorate. Political instability persisted despite U.S. military intervention and financial supervision. The State Department demanded the replacement of the Nicaraguan police

and army by a non-partisan National Guard. Nicaraguan elections were supervised by U.S. officials in 1928, 1930 and 1932, the year in which the U.S. Marines left the country.<sup>4</sup>

The Liberal Augusto César Sandino, who formed his own army to fight for Nicaraguan sovereignty, led the strongest opposition to U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua. After the withdrawal of U.S. Marines in 1933, the National Guard continued fighting Sandino and his 3000 man strong Ejército Defensor de la Soberanía Nacional de Nicaragua (EDSN). Despite peace negotiations, the conflict between the EDSN and the National Guard persisted until Sandino's assassination was ordered by the U.S. backed commander-in-chief of the Guard, Anastasio Somoza García in 1934, who was to become Nicaragua's president in 1937.<sup>5</sup>

The first decades of the twentieth century were marked by U.S. supervision of Nicaraguan financial affairs. Dollar Diplomacy facilitated loans in exchange for the control of banks, the National Railway, the government's budget and customs duties. By the end of the 1920s financial stability had been achieved through the control of debt. However, this also meant a stagnation of growth. Almost one third of government spending was concentrated on the formation of the Guardia Nacional (1926), while expenditure on public works was very low. The 1929 depression led to an economic crisis, which was caused by Nicaragua's dependency on the export of products, which lost value during the depression.<sup>6</sup> This pattern of dependency on the export economy and U.S. aid and political support would

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<sup>4</sup> Victor Bulmer-Thomas, "Nicaragua since 1930," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol. VII: Latin America since 1930: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*. Ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 317-323.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 325-331.

<sup>6</sup> Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 123-175.

be continued under the rule of Anastasio Somoza García (1937 – 1956) and his two sons, Luis Somoza Debayle (1957 – 1967) and Anastasio (Tachito) Somoza Debayle (1967 – 1979).

### ***Precursors of the Nicaraguan Tourism Industry: 1936 – 1939***

The historiography of tourism in Latin America is relatively young. Most of the books on this subject have been published in the past two decades and recently have focused on two topics: sex tourism (especially in the Caribbean)<sup>7</sup> and ethnic tourism (especially in regions with large indigenous populations such as Guatemala).<sup>8</sup> Other fields that are becoming increasingly important are Tourism and economic development, and the rise of Eco-Tourism as a form of sustainable exploitation of natural resources.<sup>9</sup>

Few studies have explored the importance of tourism against the backdrop of U.S.-Latin American relations<sup>10</sup> or looked at these relations in the context of Central America. In the case of Nicaragua, the history of the national tourism industry before the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 remains extremely fragmented.<sup>11</sup> While there are secondary sources

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<sup>7</sup> See Kamala Kempadoo (ed.), *Sun, Sex and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do With It? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* (Durham: Duke UPress, 2004); Amalia Cabezas, *Economies of Desire: Sex Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic* (Philadelphia: Temple UPress, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> See Pierre Van Den Berghe, *The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.)

<sup>9</sup> See Timothy Duval, *Tourism in the Caribbean: Trends, Development, Prospects*, (London: Routledge, 2004); Octavio Getino, *Turismo: Entre el ocio y el neg-ocio. Identidad cultural y desarrollo económico en América Latina y el Mercosur* (Buenos Aires: Ciccus, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> An important and recent exception is Dennis Merrill's *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> A very brief but informative history of the Nicaraguan Tourism industry has been sketched by Mario Arce Solórzano, Catalina Ruiz and Jimmy Membreño in *Nicaragua, un destino turístico*.

dealing with travel accounts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (E.G. Squier, etc.) and with “political tourism” after the Sandinista Revolution,<sup>12</sup> the period of the regime of the Somoza dynasty has received little coverage. The lack of material on the specific topic of Nicaraguan tourism can be attributed to the fact that Nicaragua was not an important tourist destination in Latin America for North Americans, as were Mexico or Cuba. The 1967 World Encyclopedia of Travel notes that “though the potential of visitor interest in Nicaragua is substantial, much of it is underdeveloped and present facilities for doing and seeing things of interest are scattered and inadequate.”<sup>13</sup> Although from the 1940s on it became easier to get to Nicaragua using the Pan American Highway, the lack of visitors can be attributed to the internal underdevelopment of the industry. This study will not focus on the actual industry of tourism as the organization and operation of vacations. Rather, it will concentrate on government efforts to create such an industry and to attract North Americans to visit Nicaragua.

The first formal attempt at building a tourism industry in Nicaragua was the creation of the National Tourism Board (Junta Nacional de Turismo, JNT), a branch of the Ministry of Public Works (Secretaría de Fomento y Obras Públicas), in July 1936. This was only shortly after Anastasio Somoza, then director of the National Guard, had gained complete military control of the country and had ousted President Sacasa through a series

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*Breve Historia del Turismo y Eco-Turismo Nicaragüense 1936 – 2003* (Managua: Centro de Investigaciones Turísticas Nicaragüenses, 2004), 81 - 210. The authors base their history of Nicaraguan tourism on primary sources, mainly legal documents and newspaper articles. Their treatment of the period between 1936 and 1979 (pp. 81-110) is patchy, but provides a valuable base for the government perspective of tourism in Nicaragua.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Paul Hollander, *Political Hospitality and Tourism: Cuba and Nicaragua* (Washington: Cuban American National Foundation, 1986).

<sup>13</sup> “Nicaragua,” in: *World Encyclopedia of Travel*, Vol. I, ed. Nelson Doubleday and C. Earl Cooley (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1967).

of extra-constitutional maneuvers, convincing Congress to nominate his friend Carlos Brenes Jarquín as interim president.

Decree 287, which mandated the formation of the JNT stated that it was “a necessity” that the government as well as private enterprises provided their facilities for all travelers and tourists, in order to promote the “natural beauties” of Nicaragua, its “monuments, cities, and anything that could be historically, politically, artistically and archeologically interesting.”<sup>14</sup> Three months after its creation, the JNT published its regulations in the official government newspaper, stating its main goals, which included the development of infrastructure necessary for tourism, the establishment of a fully staffed central office of tourism, the cooperation with hotels, the expansion and maintenance of roads, the cooperation with international fairs and expositions in which Nicaragua could be presented, the organization of “celebrations and spectacles” to attract tourists, and the release of information packages locally and internationally.<sup>15</sup>

The promotion of Nicaragua as a tourist destination by the government occurred during a time of unrest and instability. Only two years had passed since Sandino’s assassination, in which Somoza had been involved, and the political situation since had been marked by the struggle for power between President Sacasa and Somoza, culminating in Sacasa’s resignation. In addition, Nicaragua was experiencing a devastating economic crisis caused by the fall in coffee prices resulting from the Great Depression. Why, then, during such times of turmoil, was so much emphasis put on the promotion of tourism?

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<sup>15</sup> Arce Solórzano, *Nicaragua, un destino turístico*, 85-89.

Perhaps promoting the idea that Nicaragua was progressing was meant to counter the sense of political, economic and social instability. Decree 287 stated that “es beneficioso para el Estado que los países hermanos de América, como los de otros continentes tengan una idea de la condición cultural y *adelanto material* en que se encuentra Nicaragua (my emphasis).”<sup>16</sup> The vision that is being projected is one of material and cultural progress. The promotion of tourism could thus be interpreted as an attempt to restore Nicaragua’s reputation nationally and internationally by showing its development towards becoming a modernized country.

Once Somoza García was officially in power, the promotion of ideas of progress continued to be an important tool of legitimization, as government publications of the time show. A pamphlet published by the Ministerio de Fomento y Obras Públicas in 1938 titled *Nicaragua Vial* consists of a series of photographs showing the expansion of the road network, considered “de gran trascendencia para el país.”<sup>17</sup> The pamphlet emphasized the betterment of the road system in comparison with previous governments and attributed the betterment and growth of public works directly to Somoza García.<sup>18</sup> *Nicaragua Vial* also promoted tourism to a certain extent. Aside from presenting the success of the government in the advancement of the road system, the pamphlet includes pictures and describes the roads in a way resembling the tone of a touristic brochure. The Asososca road, for example, is described as “una de las más encantadoras rutas” with “un aspecto encantador y romántico al bajar la histórica Cuesta del Plomo.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cited in Arce Solórzano, *Nicaragua: Un destino turístico*, 86.

<sup>17</sup> *Nicaragua Vial*, (Managua: Ministerio de Fomento y Obras Públicas, 1938), 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

The first attempt to promote Nicaragua as a tourist destination was also an attempt to create an image of Nicaragua independent from the reality of the country. In this fetishization, Somoza is credited for the infrastructural advancement that would supposedly make Nicaragua a modern country. Due to the weakening of the agro-export economy by the Depression, Somoza developed important new industries and public works, such as the above-mentioned expansion of the road network. However, this process of industrialization and modernization was not only meant to substitute the damaged export economy, it strategically served the personal interests of Somoza and U. S. investors. Since the beginning of his presidency, Somoza began accumulating wealth as a business and landowner. The Somozas bought many of the new import substitution industries and regularly acquired new real estate properties. Often the newly built roads were to provide better access to Somoza's own property.<sup>20</sup> Somoza not only accumulated wealth, but also power buying out his opponents and repressing political freedoms. For example, press censorship was practiced through threats from the National Guard and a network of informants, called *orejas* (ears). In addition, the 1939 constitution granted even more powers to the National Guard, which was under Somoza's direction, and extended the presidential term from four to six years.<sup>21</sup>

### ***U.S. – Nicaraguan Relations and the Touristic Discourse 1940 - 1956***

By the end of the 1930s, Somoza's non-democratic government had caused a negative impression in Washington. In 1940 President Roosevelt invited Somoza to the

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<sup>20</sup> Eduardo Crawley, *Nicaragua in Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 98 -100.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

White House. Although the Roosevelt disapproved of the dictatorship,<sup>22</sup> Somoza used Washington's invitation to show just the opposite, that the U.S. fully backed his government. Managua's main avenue was renamed Avenida Roosevelt and a monument was dedicated to the American president. Somoza also showed his political allegiance to the U.S. by declaring war to the Axis Powers. However, tensions between Nicaragua and the U.S. only grew in the period leading up to the 1947 elections. Somoza's lifting of the ban on reelections led to a wave of riots and demonstrations, which were violently repressed by the National Guard. In 1945, the Truman administration threatened to break off diplomatic relations as well as to freeze financial aid if Somoza did not desist from running for president. Although Somoza resigned from his candidacy, he seized power in a coup d'état after the new president Argüello was elected. Although the Truman administration did not recognize Somoza's presidency, he tried to gain sympathy from the U.S. by including a number of anti-communist provisions in the new constitution, as well as offering to set up U.S. military bases in Nicaraguan territory.

In the face of this problematic relationship with the U.S., the question arises of how both governments negotiated these conflicts publicly. Touristic publications of the time had to support an official discourse that dealt with these issues in a diplomatic manner that carefully presented both countries in a positive or "neutral" light. After World War II, the Travel Division of the Pan American Union, the bureau of the Organization of American States, began publishing pamphlets and brochures informing the American public on

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<sup>22</sup> Exemplified by the infamous comment allegedly made by Secretary of State Cordell Hull in a conversation with FDR that Somoza "sure is [a son of a bitch], but he is our son of a bitch!" Quoted in Crawley, *Nicaragua in Perspective*, 99.

different Latin American tourist destinations. As OAS publications, the pamphlets were widely diffused<sup>23</sup> sources of hegemonic representations of Nicaragua.

One of these pamphlets, published in 1945, was dedicated entirely to the capital, Managua. The city is presented as a vibrant center of modernization. The pamphlet is clearly written for tourists, recommending excursions and beach resorts, but it also describes Managua's evolution from a small village to modern capital. It mentions a number of factories, including "the only milk pasteurization plant as well as the only whiskey distillery in the republic."<sup>24</sup> There is also mention of a new juvenile library, which is visited by "as many as 600 children a month."<sup>25</sup> All of this evokes an image of Managua as a city of progress, in which rural backwardness has been overcome by industrialization, technology and education. Perhaps more interesting than what the pamphlet mentions, is what it omits. Ten of the fifteen pages in the pamphlet are dedicated to Managua's past since the arrival of the Conquistadores. There is no mention of recent political events or Somoza, but great emphasis on Rubén Darío and his significance for Nicaraguan culture. More importantly, Darío is presented as a "genius admired throughout the Spanish speaking world."<sup>26</sup> As in the case of Darío, those elements of Nicaraguan culture and history are highlighted which acquire their significance in relation to a cosmopolitan context. Through this mechanism, Nicaragua it is presented as a country that is up to par with modern industrial nations. Not only does Managua count with all kinds of industry and

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<sup>23</sup> By 1962, the Technical Unit on Tourism and former Travel Division of the OAS was printing over one million pamphlets and leaflets about Latin America, mostly in English and Spanish, but also in Portuguese, French, German and Japanese. *Octavo Congreso Interamericano de Turismo: Acta Final* (Union Panamericana, 1962), 75.

<sup>24</sup> Pan American Union, *Managua* (Washington: Organization of American States, 1945), 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

variety of consumer products, but also with “large hotels, equipped with swimming pools and other luxuries,” a “great new cathedral,”<sup>27</sup> “social clubs,” a “fine military academy,” “attractive suburbs.”<sup>28</sup> All of these are things that are also status symbols in the U.S. and thus show Managua’s potential to become a “world city.”

In its fetishization of Managua, the pamphlet creates a city devoid of political conflict, but also of people: The city seems to be solely populated by objects. All social activity is either relegated to the past or stereotyped, as in the vague description of country club guests, who “enjoy the passive but sociable savoring of life induced alike by a warm climate and the inheritance of a Latin civilization.”<sup>29</sup> The most tourist-oriented brochure of the Travel Division of the Pan American Union is *Visit Nicaragua*. The cover shows a mestizo woman dressed in traditional garb holding a basket containing pineapples. The caption reads “Not the least of Nicaragua’s attractions are her pretty señoritas and luscious fruit.”<sup>30</sup> Nicaragua is portrayed as an exotic place where North Americans can spend their vacations. The travel brochure gives “a sketch of the past,” in which Nicaragua’s history is told until 1933. Interestingly, the Somoza dictatorship is completely left out, as are the Nicaraguan people, with the notable exception of the señorita on the cover and Rubén Darío. Instead, the brochure focuses on practical matters such as transportation, sight seeing, sports and entertainment, shopping, native foods and what to wear.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> The Pan American Union pamphlets clearly fetishize Nicaragua in terms of race and gender, usually either relegating its mestizo and indigenous population to the past or highlighting it as exotic. Unfortunately, this topic goes beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>31</sup> Pan American Union, *Visit Nicaragua* (Washington: Organization of American States, 1957).

Another series of pamphlets, titled *Nicaragua* and published in different editions between 1950 and 1956 with minor changes, provided information on the whole country. These pamphlets are much more detailed than the Managua brochure in that they include sections on “the land and the people,” history, principal cities, national economy, transportation and communications, labor and social welfare, public health, culture (education, literature, art, music and dance). While the historical sections are still predominant, significant portions of these pamphlets are also dedicated to the present. The positive contemporary portrayal of Nicaragua as a “democratic nation” in the pamphlets is indicative of the supportive position the U.S. now had towards Nicaragua.

By the end of the 1940s, Somoza had regained support from the Truman administration as well as from the OAS by denouncing and militarily countering an allegedly communist rebellion in neighboring Costa Rica. U.S. – Nicaraguan relations were further strengthened by the common denominator of anti-communism when the National Guard played an important role in supporting the C.I.A. led coup d’etat of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1951. During this beginning stage of the Cold War, anti-communism not only provided an excuse for Somoza’s repressive regime ideologically, it also meant the political and financial support of the U.S.

The historical sections of the pamphlets downplay the role of the U.S. in shaping Nicaragua’s financial and political system, and euphemize the long presence of the U.S. in Nicaragua as mere “assistance.”<sup>32</sup> The section on “Constitution and Government” stresses the democratic foundation of the constitution (“sovereignty of the people,” “President

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<sup>32</sup> Pan American Union, *Nicaragua* (Washington: Organization of American States, 1950), 8.

elected by popular vote”) and its similarity to the United States,<sup>33</sup> but makes not mention of how politics are actually acted out under the Somoza García government. A paragraph is added to the historical section of the 1956 edition, which affirms that “for the past two decades, Nicaragua has been following a peaceful and orderly path to prosperity under the leadership of General Anastasio Somoza, who was first elected president in 1937.”<sup>34</sup> This positive portrayal of Somoza coincides with U.S. foreign policy’s emphasis on stability in Latin America at the time. “Political stability” in the form of right wing military dictatorships in the region was preferred over more democratic forms of government, which allegedly allowed room for revolutionary sentiments and actions. This preference of “stability” over democracy was also visible in the role of the OAS during this time, which primarily acted as an anti-communist alliance during the U.S. intervention in Guatemala and also when Somoza intervened in Costa Rica.<sup>35</sup> The Somoza administration acted in accordance with the OAS’s role in its support of Arbenz’s overthrow and was rewarded by recognition. Although “only” a tourist pamphlet, the Nicaragua brochure, as an OAS document, shows this recognition by portraying Nicaragua in a positive, democratic light, and by emphasizing its social, political and economic stability.

### ***The Nicaraguan Labor Movement and Touristic Publications of the 1950s***

The section “Labor, Public Health and Social Welfare” in the Pan American Union pamphlets on Nicaragua says that the 1945 Nicaraguan labor code “provides for unions, for individual and collective labor contracts, and grants the right of association to all employer

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> Pan American Union, *Nicaragua* (Washington: Organization of American States, 1956), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Jerome Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy* (Ohio: Ohio State U Press, 1967), 3-18.

and employee organizations founded on the purpose of advancing their occupational, social and moral interests." According to the code, "workers may exercise [the right to strike]" as long as they are not government employees.<sup>36</sup> The pamphlet also reads that "employers are required to bear the cost of occupational accidents, diseases, etc. of employees, to take preventive measures of sanitation and accident, to provide lodgings for workers who live more than two miles from a village, and to open schools for the workers' children."<sup>37</sup> The pamphlet does not provide information on the actual validity of the Labor Code and leaves out the complex political relation between Somoza and the Nicaraguan labor movement, in which the Labor Code played an important role.

Somoza's investment in public works, such as the expansion of the highway system, which included the Pan American Highway, had led to a rapid growth of the working class. In addition, the cotton boom of the 1950s led to major socioeconomic changes. Somoza's economic reforms in the 1950s pushed large numbers of peasants off their farms, when the elites took over these areas to cultivate cotton in response to the international demand. Despite economic growth, the government's policies prevented this growth to benefit poorer Nicaraguans. The expansion of new export products in the Pacific Coast region drove peasants to less fertile lands or towards the cities, especially Managua. Many peasants became landless agricultural workers.<sup>38</sup> The growing discontent among rural and urban workers led to the formation of unions, through which the laborers not only demanded better working conditions but also began addressing issues of social justice.

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<sup>36</sup> Pan American Union, *Nicaragua*, 1950, 12-13.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, "Nicaragua since 1930," 344.

Although the Labor Code was enacted in 1945, as the pamphlet states, it did not live up to workers' demands and was not officially enforced until the presidency of Luis Somoza. For example, the right to protest was limited, workers were not allowed to strike during planting and harvest. As Jeffrey Gould's research shows, the relationship between the labor movement and the Somoza regime was ambiguous at best. Somoza rose to power by appropriating a populist ideology that workers identified with. Initially, workers constituted his broadest base of support. However, as the labor movement developed, it split into a somocista and a leftist faction, which was allied with the Socialist party (PSN) and opposed Somoza's government. As Somoza further accumulated industrial property, his support of workers' rights began to interfere with his capitalist interests. The creation and enforcement of a labor code, which granted the freedom to strike and guaranteed a minimum wage, directly affected capitalists who owned factories. This, and his eventual political alliance with the Liberal elite, led to Somoza's distancing from the working class. The conflict between Somoza's capitalist interests and an interest in the working class' political support resulted in a mix of repressive and non-repressive reactions to a series of strikes in the mid forties. While some strikes were violently confronted by the National Guard and declared illegal, others were allowed. In 1947 the National Guard repressed most urban leftist-led strikes and also many rural unions.<sup>39</sup> Somoza had now definitely abandoned his populist rhetoric and turned to the right as a response to pressure from the elites and U.S. anti-communism. In the fifties, rural unions were repressed more often, as they hindered the oligarchy from expanding their land holdings. Unions were now virtually

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<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey Gould, "For an organized Nicaragua': Somoza and the Labor Movement, 1944 - 1948," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 19:2 (Nov. 1987), 370 - 387.

without political protection and hacendados could evict workers from privately and community-owned land (ejidos) to cultivate export cotton. This social injustice led to the formation of new rural unions, which Somoza and the National Guard alternated in co-opting and repressing for the rest of the decade.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the “peaceful and orderly path to prosperity” mentioned in the pamphlet was in fact a rocky road of social upheavals and political repression at the end of which prosperity was indeed achieved – for the Somoza family, foreign investors and the landowning elite.

### ***Attracting Investment: Touristic Publications, Advertising, Anti-Communism and the Alliance for Progress 1956 – 1963***

The pamphlets published by the Pan American Union fetishized Nicaragua in a way that misrepresented the non-democratic nature of the Somoza government and its ties to the labor movement. As an international institution representing U.S. and Latin American nations, the OAS discursively endorsed the governments it politically supported. In this discourse, the fact that many U.S. backed Latin American governments were dictatorships was suppressed.

At the same time, the pamphlets were directed towards a specific kind of tourist: one that was not only interested in the natural beauties of Nicaragua, but also in investing in that country. Thus, the pamphlets’ omission of Nicaragua’s labor movement could be interpreted as tactic to not deter businessmen from investing. Instead the pamphlet guarantees that “Nicaragua’s workers benefit from progressive social and labor

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<sup>40</sup> See Jeffrey Gould, *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

organization,” while “rules for strike and lock-out procedures are provided.”<sup>41</sup> Put in this way, the pamphlet assures the potential investor that measures have been taken to keep workers under control in the case of protest.

Most Pan American Union publications on Nicaragua include a long and detailed description of Nicaragua’s economy, including photographs. The pamphlets include information on Nicaragua’s agriculture, mining and textile industry, as well as on the financial situation of the country, which is described as a “sound framework for a continued boom.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, from 1949 to 1970 the Nicaraguan economy showed considerable growth and expansion. As in past decades, economic transformations were still dictated by the export sector, which added several new products, such as cotton, beef and sugar.<sup>43</sup> The boom in agro-exports was made possible by economic policies, which gave priority to this branch of agriculture. The devaluation of the córdoba in 1955 gave farmers price stability. Farmers also benefitted from the exploitation of workers, who had no minimum wage. Agro-exporters could get credit at very low interest rates. Nicaragua also exported manufactured products to the rest of Central America through the newly created Central American Common Market (1960) and attracted multinational capital with tax breaks. The cotton export boom led to a financial surplus of beneficiaries, who created two banks outside the control of the Somozas: BANAMER, founded by the Conservative Pellas family, and BANIC, linked to the Liberal party in Nicaragua.<sup>44</sup> The local economy was now controlled by these three groups, the Somoza family, the BANIC group and the

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<sup>41</sup> Pan American Union, *Nicaragua*, 1956, 23.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>43</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, "Nicaragua since 1930," 339-341.

<sup>44</sup> John A. Booth and Thomas A. Walker, *Understanding Central America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 61-68.

BANAMERICA group, which successfully monopolized export oriented production. However, as Jaime Wheelock Román has pointed out, all three groups still depended on foreign capital and the U.S. political and military aid and intervention.<sup>45</sup> Thus, constant efforts to attract investors were necessary for the maintenance of elite prosperity.

Between 1955 and 1972, the Nicaraguan government released a series of advertisements in the New York Times, which not only portrayed Nicaragua as beautiful place that was worth visiting, but also as a country of investment opportunities. The ads, which appeared throughout the terms of each successor of the Somoza dynasty, were large in size and included pictures and detailed information. The first series of ads, published from 1955 until Somoza's death the following year, was titled "A message from the President of Nicaragua...for good foreign trade and good foreign investments" and shows a large picture of Anastasio Somoza's profile.<sup>46</sup> The ad includes pictures of attractive sites in Nicaragua, such as Managua's cathedral, a "tropical scenery" in Granada, and the Port of San Carlos on the San Juan River. The text of the ad gives information about agriculture and the cattle industry, the improvement of highway conditions, the "good" condition of the Nicaraguan credit, the strength of the economy and the betterment of the education system. In short, as the Pan American Union pamphlets, it shows Nicaragua's advanced status on its way to modernity. More importantly, "Nicaragua welcomes foreign investors and provides them with many attractive guarantees. Included is the right to transfer profits to the investor's country of origin."<sup>47</sup> 1954, Somoza had passed two new laws that reflected

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<sup>45</sup> Jaime Wheelock Román, *Nicaragua: Imperialismo y Dictadura* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1980), 147.

<sup>46</sup> "A message from the President of Nicaragua," *New York Times* (Jan 5, 1955), 63.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

the mentioned “attractive guarantees:” the Law on Foreign Investments and the Law for the Protection of Industrial Development. Under these legal protections, foreign investors received tax reductions of up to 90% percent and were exempted from customs duties.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, there is an effort to create a cultural and political bond between Nicaragua and the U.S. by stressing their similarities. One of the political advantages being promoted is anti-communism. In Somoza’s introductory letter to the American public of the ad, it reads that “(B)ecause our aims of peace and prosperity are the same, our two nations stand solidly together in the fight against Soviet imperialism and expansion.” Not only is Nicaragua being promoted as an attractive destination for tourism and a stable and friendly economy for foreign investment, but also as a political ally. Anticipating the spirit of the Alliance for Progress, the ad guarantees that “Nicaragua has successfully prevented the spread of communism. The government believes that educating the people and promoting their economic well-being is far more effective than strong arm tactics.”<sup>49</sup> In reality, leftist rebel groups and unions were being violently repressed by the National Guard. As far as education and economic well being go, 80% of the rural population was illiterate and most of the economic growth Nicaragua experienced during the cotton boom never trickled down to the majority of the population.<sup>50</sup> After the assassination of Anastasio Somoza in 1956, his two sons took over the government. Luis Somoza Debayle became president through fraudulent elections and Anastasio (Tachito) became head of the National Guard. The assassination of Somoza García was used to justify a tightening of the dictatorial rule and a stage of siege was declared. A wave of political repression followed and opposition

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<sup>48</sup> *Nicaragua: Land of Lakes and Volcanoes*, (León: Instituto de Fomento Nacional, 1965).

<sup>49</sup> “A message from the President of Nicaragua,” *New York Times*.

<sup>50</sup> Crawley, *Nicaragua in Perspective*, 121.

leaders, such as the Conservative editor of the newspaper La Prensa, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, were imprisoned.<sup>51</sup> Luis Somoza's term was marked by even stronger ties to the U.S. The Cuban Revolution (1959) focused the U.S.'s war against communism even more on Latin America. This allowed Luis Somoza to take advantage of the Eisenhower administration's support of anti-communist regimes. The National Guard received further financial aid and military training from the U.S. and played an important role at the Bay of Pigs (1961). At the same time, Luis Somoza directed his anti-communist efforts inwards, as Nicaraguan rebel groups, most prominently the FSLN under the leadership of Carlos Fonseca, began emerging.

In 1961 President Kennedy launched the Alliance for Progress as an alternative to the strong arms tactic to fight the spread of communism. The AfP was meant to make revolutionary movements less attractive to the impoverished majority of Latin America through economic development. The 20 billion dollar program was meant to prevent communism while at the same time promoting U.S. values. In the spirit of modernization theory, "success in the Alliance for Progress would demonstrate that U.S. ideas about political organization were universally applicable and would naturally lead to economic growth."<sup>52</sup> In response to this turn in U.S. foreign policy, Luis Somoza launched a democratic reform in tune with the non-militaristic approach of the AfP. The ban on reelection was reinstated, political prisoners released, and the press censorship was relaxed. Moreover, the Somoza administration implemented a moderate agrarian reform

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<sup>51</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, "Nicaragua since 1930," 344.

<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey F. Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 6.

and promised to grant the rights for workers in the Labor Code.<sup>53</sup> Luis Somoza's ads in The New York Times heavily promoted his agrarian reform, stating that it "joins together in wise manner existing realities with the most advanced current and democratic doctrines of the modern world" coinciding with the "principles and spirit of the PUNTA DEL ESTE chart."<sup>54</sup> The ad is titled "Unprecedented Agrarian Reform Initiated by President Somoza in Nicaragua" and contains four columns of densely printed information, as well as a small photograph of Luis Somoza. The legitimization of the ad for the American public is thus provided by the umbrella of U.S. foreign policy in the shape of the AfP, and formally, by giving the information the objective appearance of a newspaper article.

Special emphasis is put on the non-revolutionary nature of the agrarian reform, on its effort to also promote development in the areas of health care and education, on the "Guarantees to Foreign Capital," and on the fact that the "Principle of Private Property is Not Violated."<sup>55</sup> In a country like Nicaragua, where a small elite owned the majority of the land and industry and where the Somoza family was the wealthiest and most corrupt in the country,<sup>56</sup> the concept of an agrarian reform in which the land is redistributed without violating the principle of private property becomes a contradiction. This contradiction is valid for the AfP in general, which pretended to promote development and the values of U.S. democracy while concentrating financial aid in the hands of dictators. As Paul Dosal

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<sup>53</sup> Crawley, *Nicaragua in Perspective*, 125.

<sup>54</sup> "Unprecedented Agrarian Reform Initiated by President Somoza in Nicaragua," *New York Times* (Jan 10, 1962), 81.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Wheelock Román, *Nicaragua: Imperialismo y Dictadura*.

has pointed out, the AfP did not challenge the economic domination of Nicaragua by the elite and it served to maintain and expand the somocista state.<sup>57</sup>

According to the Punta del Este agreement, the U.S. would provide financial aid under the condition that Latin American governments “agree to devote a steadily increasing share of their own resources to economic and social development, and to make the reform necessary to assure that all share fully the fruits of the alliance for Progress.”<sup>58</sup> However, this condition was not binding for Latin American governments, since the charter did not create rules to ensure AfP sponsored reforms that would benefit the majority of the population. Since the Somoza administration controlled the state apparatus in its entirety, it also decided who received U.S. aid and how much.

In a later New York Times ad featuring the development of Nicaragua under the AfP, health care, housing and education are presented as major priorities in Luis Somoza’s government. For example, the ad says that under Luis Somoza over 110,000 pupils were registered in schools in 1963, compared to 23,000 in 1928. However, around 70% of the rural population was still illiterate in 1963 and registration numbers were not necessarily synonymous with attendance numbers. Given the magnitude of development loans that Nicaragua received,<sup>59</sup> the achievements publicized by the Nicaraguan government are rather modest.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Paul Dosal, “Accelerating Dependent Development and Revolution: Nicaragua and the Alliance for Progress,” *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 38: 4 (Spring 1985), 80.

<sup>58</sup> “Declaration of the Peoples of America,” *Charter of Punta del Este*, cited in Dosal, “Accelerating Dependent Development,” 79.

<sup>59</sup> Between 1962 and 1966 Nicaragua received 117 million dollars in AfP aid. Alliance for Progress, *Profile of Progress of Social and Economic Development and Integration in Central America and Panama* (Agency for International Development, 1966), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Dosal, “Accelerating Dependent Development,” 93.

At the same time, U.S. aid came with restrictions that often benefitted the U.S. economy more than it did Latin American economies. In Nicaragua, materials and equipment for infrastructural development projects financed by the AfP had to be purchased in the U.S. Thus, in many industrial development projects, AfP capital never left the U.S.<sup>61</sup>

Luis Somoza publicized his agrarian reform through the New York Times ad in attempt to show the effectiveness of the AfP. In doing so, the revolutionary alternative for change that was embraced by leftist groups who saw the AfP as another instrument of imperialist domination becomes invisible, and so do the repressive measures used against these groups. At the same time, the ad legitimizes U.S. foreign policy, “proving” that the import of modernization is possible and will lead to development. From a U.S. government perspective, the AfP was also promoted as effective in a series of pamphlets published by the OAS and diffused through the American embassies in Central America. The pamphlets were published in cooperation with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to publicize the success of the AfP and the Central American Common Market. The 32-page booklet contains information on the economic and social integration of the Central American countries and their advancements in education, public health, housing, electric power and transportation, and agriculture and rural development. Photographs of industrial and rural workers, teachers and children, and people being treated in brand new hospitals illustrate the progress of the AfP development programs. One photograph shows the interior of a large supermarket stacked with a wide variety of goods. The caption reads:

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 83.

This supermarket in Managua exemplifies emergence [sic] of supermarkets and shopping centers in Central America. "Operation Market," a six-country Alianza project, encourages a shift in distribution methods to bring more food and merchandise at lower prices into the hands of consumers and also teaches young men modern marketing.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, there are no consumers in the photograph. Most of the people depicted wear uniforms; they either work for the supermarket or work for someone who is a consumer, like a dark skinned nanny carrying a light skinned infant. In a way, the pictures are metaphoric for the nature of progress under the AfP. While creating low-income jobs, the real benefits go to the consuming elites, the state and the multinational corporations that invest in Central America.

### ***An Example of Non-governmental U.S. Representations of Nicaragua: LIFE***

Both the Nicaraguan and U.S. government promoted the image of Nicaragua as a prospering and democratic nation. But how credible was this vision from a non-governmental perspective? In the 1960s newspapers and magazines regularly published articles on Central America and Nicaragua. To which degree, if at all, was the government-constructed image of Nicaragua publicly reproduced?

The LIFE World Library published a volume on Central America in 1964, which amply discusses the Somoza dynasty. The author, Harold Lavine, is remarkably ambiguous in his language. While the Somozas are clearly identified as dictators, the tone in which they are described oscillates between irony and justification. Referring to Somoza García, Lavine writes that

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<sup>62</sup> Alliance for Progress, *Profile of Progress*, 5.

actually, as dictators go, Tacho was a tower of benevolence. He rarely killed his opponents; he preferred to put them in jail until they repented their sins. Occasionally to help them repent more quickly, his police used a little torture, but still it could not be said that Tacho was a fiend.

Tacho had a style of his own; contemporary Central American political leaders are required to present a more civilized veneer. They live in a new world, one in which they have to cope with a business and professional class... they have to cope also with Communists and Castroites.<sup>63</sup>

Lavine justifies Somoza García's dictatorial rule with his anti-communism. Similarly, the National Guard under Tachito is described as an efficient military organ, which is to some extent corrupt, but has succeeded in suppressing "no fewer than 75 rebellions and border crossings by armed exiles."<sup>64</sup> Generally, the volume recognizes the anti-democratic character of many Central American governments. Lavine highlights the power of the oligarchy and correctly identifies Rene Schick, who became president of Nicaragua in 1963, as a "hand-picked candidate backed by the Somozas." At the same time, the author seems to suggest that positive changes are being set in motion by a new focus on development (read Alliance for Progress). These changes are also seen as generational, as "the U.S. and European educated sons and daughters of the wealthy have not only become well travelled and well read, like their forefathers, but also, unlike them believers in progressive concepts of social justice."<sup>65</sup> A series of photographs under this caption show the San Salvador Polo Club, followed by pictures of "young matrons perform[ing] volunteer charity work among the children of the poor." The sons and daughters of the elite would indeed soon become more interested in "progressive concepts of social justice." Ironically, the arena for this

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<sup>63</sup> Harold Lavine, *LIFE World Library: Central America* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1964), 118

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 110.

would not be charity or the development programs of the AfP, but the revolutionary wave that swept Nicaragua and El Salvador years later.

***Tourism as an Instrument for Development: The Alliance for Progress and the Central American Conference on Tourism 1964***

The Alliance for Progress was also important for the development of a “touristic conscience” in Central America and Nicaragua. In the 1960s the U.S. interest in Central America and Nicaragua as a travel destination grew. This can be attributed to the rising popularity of tourism as a form of leisure. Latin America became an even more popular tourist destination because of its proximity to the U.S. The construction of the Pan American Highway made Latin America, and especially Mexico and Central America, more accessible, geographically as well as financially. At the same time, Central American governments took the initiative to develop the touristic potential of the region. As in previous decades, the tourism planning and the advertising of Nicaragua as a tourist destination remained deeply interconnected with the idea of tourism as a medium for investment and development.

In 1964, the first Central American Conference on Tourism was held in Managua. The conference brought together experts in the field, such as Hernán Aróstegui, the director of the Bureau of Central American Touristic Integration, and Francisco J. Hernández, the director of the Travel Division of the Pan American Union, which was the same organ responsible for the publication of pamphlets advertising Nicaragua abroad.

Another guest speaker was Charles T. Casey, of the First National City Bank in New York. Casey shared his experience as the director of the travel agency of this bank,

providing first-hand information on the North American tourist market. He emphasized that North American tourists like comfortable vacations, with access to private showers and good service and food, and that shopping was very important for American women. Casey also recommended that Nicaraguan customs services get rid of tourist visas or any form of bureaucracy that could cause discomfort to the American tourist.<sup>66</sup> The banker's advice reflects Nicaragua's investment policy at the time, in the sense that development through investment had to be achieved at any price. In order to obtain U.S. aid and attract investors, the Somozas renounced Nicaragua's national sovereignty by opening up the country economically to U.S. companies and multinationals through financial incentives, thereby often harming local small-scale producers, workers, and even consumers.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Casey suggests the opening of Nicaragua's borders to travelers, whose economic value justifies the elimination of national regulations.

A recurring topic in the speeches of the Conference for Tourism was the Alliance for Progress and how it would serve as a model to turn tourism into a successful instrument of development. Kennedy served as a source of inspiration for some of the speeches, Hernández cites him as saying that "el turismo fomenta la paz."<sup>68</sup> In his opening speech, President Schick related tourism to civilization and modernity, since "descubrir ignorados mundos ha sido el resorte más poderoso para el progreso humano" (2). Schick also sees tourism as a cultural practice in which neighboring countries get to know each other and learn to

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<sup>66</sup> Charles T. Casey, "El desarrollo del turismo visto por un banquero," *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 10: 59 (Agosto 1965), 27.

<sup>67</sup> One case would be Nestle's introduction of powdered milk, a product of questionable safety and usefulness in a country where many people had no access to potable water. See Dosal, "Accelerating Dependent Development," 84-93.

<sup>68</sup> Francisco J. Hernández, "La América Central, la Carretera Interamericana y el turismo," *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 10:59 (Agosto 1965), 20.

invalidate stereotypes. At the same time, the financial worth of tourism as an industry is emphasized, as “millones de dólares vienen a vigorizar la industria y el comercio” (2). Interestingly, for Schick tourism is a medium to import modernity, comparing it to the time of nation building in Latin America, in which “the immigration of European settlers was encouraged to incite the indigenous population to adopt a better and more urban culture.”<sup>69</sup> This mentality corresponds with a U.S. based belief in modernization theory and with the Somoza’s obsession with all things North American.

Several goals were articulated at the conference, which would turn tourism into a major source of revenue for Central America. Some of the tasks of the newly created Counsel of Central American Tourism were the organization of hotel associations and travel agencies, the planning of schools to train hotel personnel, the strengthening of ties to international organizations and the organization of awareness campaigns to publicize the economic importance of tourism.<sup>70</sup> Since most of Nicaragua’s foreign visitors were North Americans, advertising was to be specifically geared towards the U.S. The most important goal set up at the conference was to increase the number of U.S. tourists in Central America from 25 000 in 1963 to over 200 000 by 1975. This would bring a profit of 136 million dollars to the Central American economies. To reach this goal, an expansion of the touristic infrastructure was necessary that required at least 50 million dollars in private

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<sup>69</sup> “En alguna medida, contribuimos a educar a quienes visitan nuestra patria, pero también recibimos enseñanza de nuestros huéspedes. No otra cosa preconizaron los padres de nuestras nacionalidades, cuando aconsejaban se trajeran a América colonos de Europa, cuyo ejemplo incitara las poblaciones autóctonas a adoptar mejores practicas de cultivo y modos más urbanos de convivencia.” Rene Schick, “El Gobierno y el Turismo,” *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 10:59 (Agosto 1965), 2.

<sup>70</sup> Hernán Aróstegui, “La Secretaría de integración turística Centroamericana,” *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 10:59 (Agosto 1965), 3.

investments.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the tourism industry became another sector where the Nicaraguan government provided attractive concessions to foreign investors, including tax breaks and cheap land. These concessions were only offered to investments of a value above 1 million dollars, discriminating many local small-scale investors interested in the tourism industry.<sup>72</sup>

In order to reach the goals set up at the Central American Conference for Tourism, Nicaragua promoted its friendly laws for foreign investments in a variety of ways. One Nicaraguan tourist guidebook, for example, was published in English and Spanish and included many ads that catered to North American readers.<sup>73</sup> The same guidebook included reprints in English of the Law of Foreign Investments and the Law for the Protection and Promotion of Industrial Development.<sup>74</sup> These same laws were also reprinted in a government pamphlet published by the Instituto de Fomento Nacional. The illustration on the cover of the pamphlet, entitled “Nicaragua: Land of Lakes and Volcanoes,” shows a dozen of arrows labeled “INVESTMENT” pointing towards the geographic silhouette of Nicaragua. Although a pamphlet for the promotion of investment in Nicaragua, it does not significantly differ from the touristic brochures published by the Pan American Union. The pamphlet provides information on the geography, language, religions, population, climate, and principal cities, with a special focus on the economy. Nicaragua is presented as an excellent place for investment, as it “offers to investors... incentive legislation, liberal investment law, industrial property protection, low taxes, confiscation prohibited, no

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>72</sup> Arce Solórzano, *Nicaragua: Un destino turístico*, 93.

<sup>73</sup> For example, the guide includes several ads for the American Cable and Radio System.

<sup>74</sup> Paco Gallegos, *Nicaragua: Tierra de Maravillas* (Managua: Cámara Nacional de Comercio e Industrias, 1964), 51 – 62.

discrimination to foreign capital, special grants and privileges.”<sup>75</sup> Moreover, as in the Pan American Union publications, Nicaragua was described as “democratic representative republic.”<sup>76</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Since its beginnings in the 1930s, government efforts to build a tourism industry in Nicaragua had two goals: to attract investors, and to use tourist advertising to legitimize the Somoza dictatorships by presenting Nicaragua as a modern, egalitarian and democratic country. As a joint effort of the Nicaraguan and U.S. governments, the touristic publications of the Pan American Union discursively smoothed over internal and external political conflicts, giving an impression of stability and order. At the same time, the problematic relation between Somoza and the labor movement was shown as one in which the state granted progressive rights to the working class.

The advertisements published in the New York Times by the Somozas emphasized commonalities with the U.S., especially anti-communism. Under Luis Somoza, the Alliance for Progress was presented as a successful program that was leading to the well-being of the majority of the Nicaraguan population and prevented the spread of communism. While the AfP achieved none of these goals, it is remarkable that the Luis Somoza and Rene Schick administrations supported the U.S. in publicizing the AfP as a success, even though it was doomed to failure from the beginning due to its support of dictators like the Somozas. Because the AfP development projects benefitted both U.S. corporations as well as the

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<sup>75</sup> *Nicaragua: Land of Lakes*, 27.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Nicaraguan elites, both governments contributed in portraying it as the ultimate program for sustainable development.

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