

Location And Intensity Of Spontaneity

Posted on September 19, 2019

Location Nicaragua: The revolution in Nicaragua saw a spontaneous uprising against the dictatorial rule of Somoza (a family that ruled Nicaragua from 1936 to 1979) (Foran, J, 2005). This revolution was of high significance in the history of Nicaragua. The spontaneous movement resulted in the ouster of the dynastical dictatorship of the Somoza family. The question arises as to what social factors brought the revolution in Nicaragua. During the decades of 1960 and 1970, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) was leading the movement of revolution, and the total number of FSLN members had hardly reached two hundred (200) until 1977, but more Five thousand (5,000) armed men and women entered Managua (the capital city of Nicaragua) in 1979 in the month of July. Also, thousands of people were active participants in its different organizations.

Tens of thousands had a spontaneous fight with Somoza, acknowledging the political authority of Sandinista. However, there were variations in the identities of those participants who fought at a different level (Foran, J,2005). According to the findings of Roxborough, assuming actual members of FSLN (on the basis of Carlos Vilas' work) about the social constitution of revolutionaries, the percentage of students was twenty-nine (31 per cent in leadership), twenty-two per cent were artisans (seventeen per cent were in the leadership), percentage of workers were sixteen (eighteen per cent were in the leadership), sixteen per cent were white collared (six per cent were in a leadership role), seven per cent were professionals(seventeen per cent were in a leadership role), five per cent were small businessmen (eight per cent in a leadership role) and only five per cent were from lower class (thirteen per cent in the leadership role). Farhi mentions that a large number of the FSLN army consisted of university dropouts.

Black insists that the foundation of the violent uprising was the distinction between the working class and the rural population, who were the migrants. Before the ouster of Somoza, the FSLN had control of most parts of Nicaragua except for the capital, but soon after the resignation of the President, the FSLN entered the capital and gave full control to the revolutionary movement. After the downfall of the Somoza regime, the country saw a lot of destruction. The intensity of that revolutionary movement was tremendous. The overall situation was miserable. Almost 0.6 million people were homeless, and 150,000 went into exile or became refugees from the population of only 2.8 million. Therefore, Nicaragua was facing a humanitarian crisis.

As a result, a state of emergency was declared. The properties and businesses of Somoza were confiscated. The previous courts were dismissed. The new rulers who took over also came up with the viewpoint that elections were not necessary for the country; the Catholic church heavily criticized this act. From 1978 to 1979, riots broke out, and it saw massive destruction. An eyewitness of these riots, an employee of CITIBANK, states that FSLN carried out the vast kidnapping operations; the Sandinistas captured the National Palace during the legislative session by taking 2000 people as

hostages. Strong revolt continued against the state, and in the process, the Sandinistas also got support from Panama and Venezuela. Also, Cuba provided arm and advisory support.

The Answer to Question # 2: Role of Leadership in Protest Movement

The role of the leadership in the protest movement against the Somoza government of Nicaragua is of high importance. The FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) was the composition of many opposition groups who were against the dictatorship of Somoza. FSLN's structure was based on the youth and the different groups of students that were part of Nicaragua's population in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1961, FSLN was founded. The founding members of FSLN were Carlos Fonseca, Tomas Borge, Silvia Mayorga and other notable personalities. Only Tomas Borge survived enough to witness the victory of Sandinista in 1979 when Somoza was thrown out of the government. This leadership worked continually to develop an effective strategy for the reforms of the country with the primary objective of overthrowing Somoza from the national regime. In the 1970's, the leadership of FSLN started a limited level of military operations in the country. The people from every walk of life in Nicaragua became part of the protest movement against the dictatorship. In 1974, a fighter group that was linked with FSLN took government officials hostages and that siege was carefully planned, which took place soon after the departure of the US ambassador from the party at night. The relatives of Somoza were also under the captivity of that fighter group, which was associated with FSLN.

Under this siege, a minister was killed. That fighter group was the guerrilla fighter. The next year, the same guerrilla fighters successfully got 14 Sandinista prisoners released from the jail, and with them, they flew to Cuba. One of the released prisoners was named Daniel Ortega, who later became the president of Nicaragua. The group actively worked for an increase in wages for the National Guard. Somoza reacted more violently to the activities of FSLN under its leadership. The leadership of FSLN became hugely popular in the 1970s in Nicaragua, and the population at large joined hands with FSLN against Somoza. They wanted to bring change to the government, and they were entirely in agreement with the policies of this protest movement. Initially, the leadership was not violent during the 1960s when it was founded, but later, it engaged militants and other violent groups as they knew that a bloody revolution was the only way to dislodge Somoza. In 1978, its militant operations increased against the suppression as they adopted all the violent means to achieve their objectives.

The leadership of FSLN had 31 per cent students, seventeen per cent artisans, the percentage of eighteen per cent workers, six per cent white collared professionals were in a leadership role, seventeen per cent of professionals were in a leadership role, eight per cent of small people in business were in a leadership role, thirteen of lower-class individuals were in a leadership role. They all worked in collaboration with each other, and these groups of different classes entered the capital in 1979 and overthrew Somoza. Finally, the role of leadership became more active from 1960 to 1979 because there was an injustice in the society. The undemocratic values of dictatorship prompted

many people in the community to revolt against Somoza. The leadership role of FSLN was dominant in the protest movement against the government of Nicaragua.

The answer to Q3: How the protest movement moved beyond the level of Spontaneity

The protest movement moved beyond the level of spontaneity because there was social injustice, people were deprived of their fundamental right, one family doesn't have the right to rule the country for decades. The rule of Somoza brought misery to the people, people from every walk of life wanted the change in regime. The dictatorial government deprived people of their fundamental rights. This movement had to go beyond the level of spontaneity because almost the whole population were against Somoza dynastical rule. In 1970, FSLN adopted offensive strategies, they also were in favor of general strike. Other groups, such as Christian communities and youth clubs, became active participants in the protest movements as they all were firm believers in political freedom and the right to self-determination. Paolo Aleman, an activist who belonged to the working class during the 70s, summarizes how his inclusion in the Christian movement enabled him to understand the real dynamics of Nicaragua's politics, and he also came across the situation of unjust distribution of resources there was a huge gap among the different classes of the country. His deep involvement in the movement gave him a clear picture of the ills of society. This sense of realization led him to the revolutionary campaign that saw the ouster of Somoza's regime.

In that Christian movement, members were given religious and revolutionary training. The different groups of professionals were of the same view; they knew their country was suffering and change was needed. The diverse group of people with the same agenda turned the protest movement into a revolutionary movement. The then regime assassinated the leader of the Democratic Union of Liberation. That murder enraged a large number of the population; they had a sense of isolation from the system. In February 1979, FSLN formed the National Patriotic Front, united upon a twenty-two-point statement with three fundamental principles of Social progress with justice, Free and fair democracy and national sovereignty. The desire to establish peace and freedom in the country was a common factor among all the classes of Nicaragua (Negri, A., 2004). They all agreed that dictatorship is injurious to society and is a killer of institutions at large (Lenin et al.). Everyone pushed himself in the struggle or movement that was beyond the level of spontaneity, and that is why it turned into the revolutionary movement.

Sandinistas integrated pro nationalism, pro-democracy and social justice believer groups, also they channelized the aggressive students, religious groups, working classes, people from upper and lower classes and even the peasant strikers. In this way, Nicaragua had the representation of all the groups and factions of society, and they also got support from countries like Panama and Venezuela. With the collective force and one agenda, the protest movement that went beyond the level of spontaneity weakened the Somoza regime in the 70s (Foran, J, 2005). At the start of the year 1979, crisis

worsened for Somoza's government, their ouster was writing on the wall. In July 1979, thousands of protestors and fighters who represented every class of society entered Managua (the capital city of Nicaragua) and achieved their goal of overthrowing Somoza's 43 years of dictatorial regime. This is how the protest movement went beyond the level of spontaneity.

References

Foran, J. (2005). *Taking power: On the origins of third world revolutions*. Cambridge University Press.

Lenin, V. I., & Chretien, T. (2015). *State and revolution*. Haymarket Books.

Lenin, V. I., & Utechin, S. V. (1963). What is to be Done?.

Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1998). *The communist manifesto* (pp. 389-408). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Negri, A. (2004). Multitude: war and democracy in the age of empire. *Multitudes*, (4), 107-117.