

# New World Agriculture and Ecology Group in Nicaragua: The Sandinista Years

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# SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE



# 1980-1990: The Nicaraguan Collaboration



Sandinistas march into Managua (1979)

# NWAG in Nicaragua (1980-1990)

- Organized a collaboration program through the office of external cooperation

# Nicaragua in 1980

- One of the poorest countries in Latin America
- Few universities and opportunities for higher education
- Blockade restricted materials, basic supplies, infrastructure
- Many professors left the country
- Students were teaching each other
- Intense revolutionary spirit
  - Alphabetization Campaign (illiteracy rate went from 50.3% to 12.9% in a few years)

# NWAG Program in Nicaragua

- Research and Education
- Infrastructure
- Solidarity

# Research and Education

NWAG sent students and professors to work in Nicaragua



- Universities (ISCA)
- CIDCA
- Ministry of Agriculture

- Our students
  - Intense discussion groups about science and the building of a revolutionary society.
  - Applied versus basic science





# 4 main approaches to Science in the global south (The Dialectical Biologist by Levins and Lewontin)

- Pragmatism – accept “science” and its agenda as progress
- Developmentalisms – looks at progress as occurring along a single axis from less to more.
  - Conservative
  - Radical
- Dialectical – recognize the contradictions between science as growth of human knowledge and science as class product

# Infrastructure

- Construction brigades to built a soils and water laboratory
- Got funds to built a Plant Pathology Laboratory and a Biological Control Laboratory



Construction of the Ben Linder Soil and Water Laboratory



# Solidarity

- Dealing with the US propaganda machine
- Collaborations with activist non-interventionists in the US (the cusclin newsletter published out of our apartment)

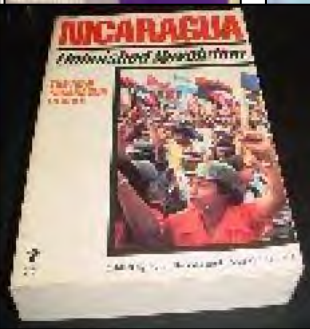
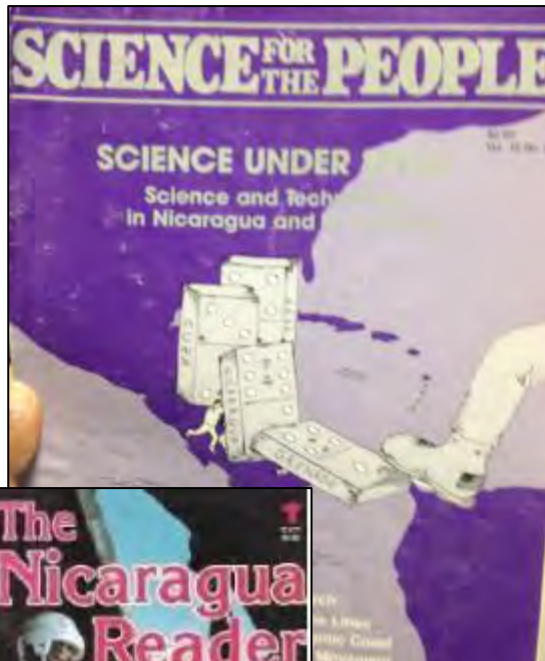
# Solidarity



NWAG marching in front of the US Embassy  
in Managua, Nicaragua



# Publishing articles and books and participating in demonstrations



NWAG members participating in a march in Washington DC to protest the US-backed Contra War against Nicaragua.

# NWAG in Nicaragua (1980-1990)

- Continue scientific discussion and political analyses about our role as scientists in revolutionary Nicaragua




In 1990 the Sandinistas were defeated and the project changed the character of the collaboration (1990-2007)

# Today

- Nicaraguan Academy of Science
- The mission of the Nicaraguan Academy of Sciences (ACN) is to encourage scientific education in order to achieve sustainable human development.

## COMMENT

**POLICY** How should the FDA regulate faecal matter for transplants? **p.200**     **ACQUAINTANCE** Two books dissect Fukushima and other nuclear disasters **p.202**     **OPERATIONAL** Exhibition celebrates the power of failure **p.204**     **REVIEW** The pros and cons of mandatory or incentivized peer review **p.205**



Lake Nicaragua is the largest drinking-water reservoir in Central America and is home to fish species key to evolutionary science.

### Nicaragua Canal could wreak environmental ruin

Plans for a 300-kilometre waterway joining the Pacific and Atlantic oceans need independent environmental assessment, urge **Axel Meyer** and **Jorge A. Huete-Pérez**.

**L**ast June, the Nicaraguan government granted a concession to a Hong Kong company to build a canal connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, through the Caribbean Sea. The HK Nicaragua Canal Development Investment Company (operating as HKND Group) signed a 50-year lease, renewable for another 50 years.

It plans to break ground in December after spending this year establishing a route and conducting feasibility studies. Included in the concession are the rights to build and operate industrial centres, airports, a rail system and oil pipelines, as well as land expropriation and the rights to natural resources found along the canal route.

The Nicaraguan government says that the US\$40-billion project will boost economic growth in the country — the second-poorest nation in the Americas — from 4.5% in 2013 to 14.6% in 2016. No economic or environmental feasibility studies have yet been revealed to the public. Nicaragua has not solicited its own environmental

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