Mujeres of the Nicaraguan Revolution: Politicization, Radicalization, and Gender Consciousness

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As a self-described "library rat," Gioconda Belli, a Nicaraguan writer and poet who was deeply involved in the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), read the world classics, but was oddly unacquainted with Latin American literature. Her fateful encounter with the early members of the FSLN, a radical group named after Augusto César Sandino, martyr of the Nicaraguan uprising against Somoza's oppressive family regime, introduced her to Nicaraguan literature; she then became more familiar with the culture of her own people. Belli describes this as a "pretty schizophrenic" experience, having felt "like [she had] been hit over the head with a rock." Her newfound political leanings and experiences were entirely outside of her marriage; Belli's husband threatened her, and even barred her from going to the university, *La Asunción*, because he believed it would turn her into a rebel. In the early stages of the revolution and the formation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, it was taboo for a woman to become involved in politics—and to read political literature. Belli would lock herself inside her bathroom, having hidden the FSLN's documents in her ceiling behind the easily removable square plasterboards. She had to read "them without [her] husband knowing" because he "wasn't about to let [her] get

involved."[1] Belli, like other women involved in the early stages of the movement, had to strategically hide her journey into politicization. As women's demands in areas such as reproductive health, sexual liberation, and education became a topic of political discussion, Nicaraguan society—through the FSLN—permitted women to become publically radicalized and more open about their gender consciousness.

Without the greater involvement of women, the Sandinista revolution was weak. For that reason it is important to understand gender relations in Nicaragua and how they affected women. This article takes a bottom-up approach to uncover the triumphs and defeats of women within the FSLN and the post-Sandinista victory throughout the mid-1970s, to the Sandinista revolutionary triumph and into the 1990s. The ten published oral histories used here offer insight as to how women felt as a part of the revolution, and show how women recognized some of their failures in retrospect. Gioconda Belli serves as a central figure because she was one of the few women who held a high-ranking position within the organization.[2] Her testimony demonstrates what women could achieve within the FSLN, but also illustrates the structural limitations women faced inside the movement. These sources make it possible to focus on the intricate gender relations between the women of the revolution and their male counterparts. Before the revolution, the relationship between women and men was very traditional in the sense that men held most—if not all—of the power in society. The politicization of women eventually challenged this power structure, and women gained autonomy through their activism. Many of the shifts in power between women and men were not always apparent, because women's agency was nuanced and this agency usually occurred in positions within the FSLN that were commonly considered "women's work." This article is divided into four sections and argues that women's use of traditional gender roles and relations allowed women to join the FSLN and become politicized, but this particular use of traditional gender roles and

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[1] Gioconda Belli, interview, Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters Revisited: Feminism in Nicaragua* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 172.

[2] Ibid., 170.

relations ultimately limited women's rights and opportunities in Sandinista Nicaragua. While women were able to reach social autonomy, they were unable to achieve political autonomy after the 1979 Sandinista triumph.

The first part of this article explains traditional gender hierarchies in Nicaragua throughout the revolutionary struggle. It is important to understand how machismo manifested itself in Nicaragua in order to understand why women's politicization and involvement in the revolution were truly significant. The second section addresses how women became politicized and why women ultimately joined the FSLN. This emphasizes various factors that drove women to fight, and focuses on the issues that affected women the most: employment, reproductive health, and domestic violence. Next is a description of women's participation in the FSLN, and ultimately the faction, AMNLAE, and how women came to join this group. The final section focuses on post-revolution Nicaragua and tracking women's political presence after the triumph. Women criticized the Sandinista organization, especially in areas where women felt the movement fell short in granting them liberation and greater political representation.

Scholarship on Nicaraguan women sheds light on the social and political systems in which women operated, and the issues and struggles women organized against. Prominent Nicaraguan historians argue that their government was committed to supporting women in politics after the Sandinista revolutionary triumph in 1979, while other Central American revolutionary movements excluded women from politics.[3] Women's interests ranged from domestic issues, women's health, education, media representation and legal reform to specific struggles women faced in rural and urban areas. Women's involvement in the Sandinista National Liberation Front was one of their concerns.[4] Above all, the scholarship offers insight into the social and cultural realities of Nicaraguan women's lives—from pre-politicization in the early 1970s to their struggles throughout the 1980s leading up to Nicaragua's presidential election in 1990.

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[3] Helen Collinson, *Women and Revolution in Nicaragua* (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1990), 1.

[4] Ibid., Contents page.

Historians also provide insight into women's reality by taking a feminist and gendered approach in their scholarship to emphasize the achievements and shortcomings in Sandinista Nicaragua while recognizing that Nicaragua is "a network of power relations" that cannot be ignored.[5] Through this lens, it is possible to distinguish between actual achievements and the shallow, perceived achievements in women's social and political advancement. Women in Sandinista Nicaragua regularly confronted the back-and-forth between real political gains and setbacks, and many interviews with Nicaraguan women reveal this same sentiment. These personal interviews help illuminate the issues women faced during the revolution, and explain how women constructed their own feminist agenda when most of their concerns were seen as secondary in the male dominated revolution and post-revolution government.[6]

The FSLN gave women a space where they could organize themselves that related specifically to women and women's liberation, known as the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women[7] (AMNLAE), named after the first woman to die in combat against the Somoza National Guard.[8] Women's revolutionary mobilization within the Association concentrated on aspects of nutrition, health, and education. Sandinista women were in charge of running *comedores infantiles*, as detailed by AMNLAE in their periodical newsletter

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[5] Cynthia Chavez Metoyer, *Women and the State in Post-Sandinista Nicaragua* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000), 8-9, 11.

[6] Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters Revisited: Feminism in Nicaragua* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), ix-x. Margaret Randall spent twenty-three years living in Latin America and lived in Nicaragua from 1979 to 1984, and then returned again in 1991. She spent much of her time in Nicaragua conducting oral interviews of women involved in the revolution.

[7] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza and Unión de Fotógrafos de Nicaragua, *Mujer en Nicaragua* (1984), 13. After witnessing a Somoza state-sanctioned student massacre on July 23, 1959, Luisa Amanda Espinoza joined the Sandinista movement at fourteen years old. She died a martyr on April 3, 1970, and paved the way for women's greater involvement in the movement.

[8] Collinson, 137.

SOMOS.[9] The *comedores* fed working children in hopes of "preventing them from falling into delinquency, to help children who are street vendors, shoe shiners, and children who are obligated to work to help their family."[10] Managing *comedores* was a political position for women and became a symbol of their revolutionary effort. Women of the revolution also taught other women and their communities about reproductive and women's health issues. AMNLAE, for example, created graphics and circulated magazines to educate men and women about reproductive health. In these magazines, the women of AMNLAE created a space of resistance as a response to "the violence against children and women, especially rape," which was the most prominent topic of Nicaraguan women's liberation.[11] Moreover, the women of AMNLAE took on the responsibility of educating the illiterate masses of Nicaragua; they believed that their revolution needed to "improve the educational situation of [their] people…and adjust [their] educational system."[12] In 1980, the FSLN launched a literacy campaign aimed to teach illiterate Nicaraguans to read and write.[13] Mercedita Talavera, in an unpublished interview by Stephanie Williamson, described the effort: "We worked from sunrise to sunset, classes for kids in the morning and for adults in the afternoon and evening, and even at weekends we'd do things like decorate the room we used for classes…and we'd plan little activities. And we worked alongside the campesinos in the fields."[14] Like Talavera, many Sandinista

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[9] *SOMOS* focused on issues concerning the state, the revolution, and womanhood. This periodical was also used as a method to inform women outside of the FSLN about political issues and also served as a form of politicization.

[10] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "En Disiamba Una Respuesta Popular: Comedor Infantil," *SOMOS* II (1983), 8.

[11] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "Análisis Informativo," *Quincenario* 2 (1988), 2.

[12] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "Si No Hay Revolución No Se Puede Cambiar La Educación," *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolución*, (n.d.), 29.

[13] Collinson, 124.

[14] Mercedita Talavera, unpublished interviewed by Stephanie Wlliamson, 1987, Collinson, 124.

women joined literacy campaigns in the rural areas of Nicaragua to fight illiteracy. Although FSLN women were active in many different spaces and their political activism reached all levels, education and healthcare were among the most popular areas of involvement.

In Nicaragua, machismo influenced women to join the Sandinista movement and become politicized in efforts to transform their patriarchal society. One must understand Nicaraguan machismo in order to recognize why women pushed for liberation. Helen Collinson argues that virility had considerable influence on man's perception of machismo. Virility is the idea that a man must father as many children as possible, with as many women as possible, in order to prove his manliness to other men.[15] Men's societal pressure to express their virility resulted in a lack of monogamy. Many women criticized men for this practice and suspected that men did not want "as many babies as God sends" and used that excuse because "they just [did] not want to use condoms."[16] Otilia Casco Cruz, a health worker from northern Nicaragua, believed that "men have children with as many women as they can fool," and these men usually did not take responsibility for their actions, thus creating a large number of single mothers.[17] Male sexual promiscuity was an accepted norm in Nicaragua. Gioconda Belli observed that "it was accepted that a [male] comrade would have an affair, and then another, and another."[18] Monogamy during this time was threatened, especially because of men's migrant work and employment patterns. Many men worked in the seasonal agricultural sector and would wander into towns getting "a woman pregnant, then mov[ing] on

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[15] Collinson, 9.

[16] Carole Isaacs and Julia Lesage, "Nicaraguan Women Fighting for Peace," *Voices from Nicaragua: A U.S. Based Journal of Culture in Reconstruction* 1 (1983), 42. The journal did not specify the name of the woman who the quote is taken from.

[17] Otilia Casco Cruz, interview, Adriana Angel and Fiona Macintosh, *The Tiger's Milk: Women of Nicaragua* (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1987), 103.

[18] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 175.

somewhere else and [getting] another woman pregnant," as reported by psychologist Vilma Castillo.[19]

The rampant and widely accepted machismo of Nicaraguan society subjected women to traditional roles as caregivers, mothers, and wives. These gender roles prompted politicized women to fight for a fundamental "transformation of traditional habits and practices" in healthcare, and to use the slogan: "Health is No Longer a Privilege."[20] Women's traditional role as mothers and wives was perhaps central in their politicization. Tomás Borge, member of the FSLN and Minister of the Interior after the 1979 revolution, gave a speech in 1982 to commemorate the Nicaraguan women's movement. Borge stated in his speech, "Women—all women in general—were oppressed…and exploited both as workers and as women," which many women felt to be true.[21] Arlen Siu said about women, "regarding the role of wife, mother, she is limited to the living conditions imposed in her home, that offer only a restricted space."[22] Another Nicaraguan woman recalled: "Men don't like to wash clothes or do dishes. Usually you can just get them to sweep and make the bed. If they get to the point of babysitting, only a few rare souls among them will change diapers."[23] Women lived under the pressure of having to maintain a household and raise children, work, and appease their husbands by being a respectful wife. Maribel Otero, a Spanish woman living in Nicaragua interviewed by *Barricada*, described the average life of a Nicaraguan working-class woman: "She gets up at 4:30 a.m. and does housework until 6, then she leaves for her job, where she works from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a one hour lunch break. She gets

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[19] Vilma Castillo, unpublished interview, 1986, Collinson, 9.

[20] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolucion* (n.d.), 22.

[21] Tomás Borge, speech, *Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1983), 12.

[22] Arlen Siu, interview, Collinson, 11. This originally appeared in a *Barricada Internacional* article, "La Mujer y Su Liberación," 10 August, 1983.

[23] Isaacs and Lesage, 41. Magazine does not specify the speaker.

home at 6, and does more housework until 10 p.m."[24] Because of this, women became society's de facto unpaid caregivers under Somoza's government, since there was an absence of state provision for children, the elderly, and the sick or disabled.[25] Not only were women expected to work, they were expected to maintain a household and rear their children as well. This is the same exploitation that Tomás Borge referred to, and that many Nicaraguan women identified with.

The intersection of issues particular to women, especially the issues of reproductive health and sexual liberation, eventually drove women to join the FSLN. AMNLAE's bi-weekly magazine, *Quincenario*, of reproductive health stated that "reproductive health is no longer an individual issue of women or of couples and it is starting to transform into a responsibility shared by society."[26] Reproductive health was a multifaceted issue that women felt needed to be addressed. The issue of reproductive health was important not only because of the issue of men needing to prove their virility by impregnating women, but also because women and young girls were constantly the victims of rape. In the magazine, *Voices from Nicaragua*, a woman explains makeshift seminars on reproductive health:

> In the seminars we teach women that they should not have an abortion and take away the right of a child to be born. They learn about family planning and birth control. Sometimes the woman does not want to have a child, she won't come here but will go to a woman who does abortions, who is called a "comadrona." Right now we want to re-train and re-educate the comadronas to become midwives and health workers. The comadronas could use their skills to improve our community and as sorely needed workers in health care.[27]

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[24] Maribel Otero, interview, "Women in Nicaragua: From Sunup to Sundown," *Barricada Internacional*, 17 July, 1986.
[25] Collinson, 15.
[26] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "Analisis informativo," *Quincenario* 1 (1988), 2.
[27] Isaacs and Lesage, 21. Magazine did not specify the speaker.

Birth control education was one of the topics of reproductive health that was more widely spoken about. Abortion was still taboo because of Catholic morality, and as Gioconda Belli stated: "We couldn't talk about abortion because that means fighting the Catholic Church."[28] This same Catholic morality and repression inspired women to push for sexual liberation. In an interview published in *El Nuevo Diario*, Auxiliadora Marenco supported women's liberation by declaring: "A woman should know her body, not only its functions and reproductive anatomy, but its pleasure as well. Many old beliefs still exist, including that which says her body is something given to another to enjoy."[29] The push for sexual liberation was a response to Nicaraguan machismo, but also spoke more to rape and the domestic abuse that women endured. Many women felt that the push for sexual liberation was a push for autonomy and agency over their own bodies. A quote from Susana Veraguas, an advocate for Nicaraguan women's sexual liberation, mentioned that women "tend to regard sex as just another burden to bear in marriage," and that women used the terms "my husband occupies me" and "abuses me once a month" to describe their sex lives. She also noted that "not one woman had heard the word [orgasm]" when they were talking about sex in a workshop about sexuality.[30] Joining the FSLN allowed women to change society's perspective of women's issues by making these issues public, rather than private. This also gave women a space in politics to bring these issues to the forefront.

Aside from issues of health, women also joined the FSLN for economic reasons. Women constituted a large portion of the workforce, and many times, their workplaces exploited women, or they had no rights at all. In their magazine, *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolución*, AMNLAE declared that "every person has the right to enjoy equal and satisfactory workplace conditions,"––AMNLAE was specifically calling for equality between women

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[28] Gioconda Belli interview, Randall, 180.

[29] Auxiliadora Marenco, interview published in *El Nuevo Diario* (October 10, 1987), Helen Collinson, *Women and Revolution in Nicaragua*, (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1990), 22.

[30] Susana Veraguas, quote taken from *Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua* (1983), Collinson, 21.

and men in the workplace.[31] The same magazine details that women were fighting for "equal pay for equal work" between sexes, for "safety and hygiene in the workplace," for the ability to gain promotions in one's area of work, and for vacation time off and reasonable work hours.[32] Although many women worked in factories and in agriculture, a lot of the available jobs for women were in the domestic sector. Maria Amanda's statement for *Voices from Nicaragua*, described the dangerous conditions in domestic work: "A maid was often expected to give herself sexually to the adolescent boys in the house so they wouldn't have to go to prostitutes. Isolated from her family and without protection, the woman faced a terrible dilemma—submit or lose her job."[33] Many workplace issues of discrimination based on gender, poor conditions and hours, and violent rape and sexual coercion resulted in women's politicization, and made many women feel the need to join the FSLN and AMNLAE to discuss and address the issues that plagued women at the time.

Many politicized women joined the FSLN in considerable numbers, and the FSLN accepted these women and gave them a space to discuss issues that specifically pertained to them through the eventual creation of AMNLAE.[34] The predecessor to AMNLAE, the Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRONAC), catered to bourgeoisie women, and its main goal was to overthrow Somoza's regime—there was no conversation about women's position in the post-revolutionary society.[35] In 1979, the women of the FSLN decided that they needed an organization that would allow them to speak of their desired social position and eventual liberation. Women created

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[31] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "Derechos Económicos," *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolución*, (n.d.), 9.

[32] Ibid., 9.

[33] Maria Amanda statement, Isaacs and Lesage, 31.

[34] Collinson, 139.

[35] Ibid., 140. The FSLN first created AMPRONAC in 1977 as a space where women could work toward liberation, but it also served as a vehicle to recruit more women in the struggle against Somoza's government.

AM NLAE, or the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women, with clear objectives:

> 1. Defending the Popular Sandinista Revolution to guarantee a political space for the emancipation of women.
> 2. To promote the political and ideological advancement of the Nicaraguan woman in order to have a more conscious and cultivated participation in politics.
> 3. To combat the manifestations of institutional inequalities and discrimination in general toward women, especially in the organizations that are fighting for revolutionary transformation of the Sandinista State and the revolutionary education of the masses.
> 4. To promote and stimulate the cultural and technical advancement of women with the objective of widening and qualifying our participation in economic and social activities, overcoming sub-employment and traditional women's professions toward other professions that are usually reserved for men.
> 5. To make domestic work a respected profession, making it a profession that is socially recognized, with an emphasis in creating services for childcare for the working-woman.[36]

These objectives explicitly laid out why women felt the need to join the revolutionary movement, and why many of them became politicized. In her interview, Gioconda Belli shared a sentiment that made it clear why women needed their own political space: "I never felt like we were treated equally. I always had this sense that I was treated differently because I was a woman…I don't think we women fought for power the way men did."[37] The creation of this specific women's space made other women feel comfortable joining the revolutionary struggle.

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[36] Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, "Derechos Económicos," *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolución*, (n.d.): 9, "Nuestros Objetivos," *Una mujer donde esté debe hacer revolución,* (n.d.), 4.

[37] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 176.

Women who joined AMNLAE were proud participants, fighting for their country. *Voices from Nicaragua* published a poem by Vidaluz Menese, "Compañera," which exemplified many women's sentiments about the movement:

> Throw off your chains with firmness
> and their deafening fall
> will not make you tremble.
> You are going to the meeting
> with your infinite personal destiny.
> Make your name yours
> and plant it like a flag
> in conquered territory.
> Now nothing can stop you.
> Now you recognize your own path.
> Mistress of your road.
> Conscious of the portion of history
> that belongs to you, Compañera.[38]

Many women like Vadaluz Menese were empowered through their political participation and were thankful that they were given a space to express their concerns. In the same magazine section, a statement from an anonymous woman reads: "My greatest dream is to be an authentic revolutionary woman."[39] This shows that women yearned to be part of Nicaragua's political sphere, and appreciated AMNLAE for carving this space for them.

Women eventually gained new roles in the government of post-Revolution Nicaragua through politicization and joining the FSLN. Gioconda Belli mentioned that "women participated to an extraordinary degree" and that "there were a number of women who had positions of real responsibility."[40] Belli was fortunate enough to gain a position of power; she recalled: "The first thing [the FSLN] did was put me in charge of the television system."[41] Milú Vargas, in an interview critiqued the FSLN:

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[38] Vidaluz Meneses, "Compañera," Isaacs and Lesage, 45.
[39] Isaacs and Lesage, 45. The magazine did not specify the speaker.
[40] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 175.
[41] Ibid., 176.

> The Sandinista National Liberation Front is a sexist party. The failure to allow a woman onto the directorate is a reflection of the Party as a whole in this respect. The FSLN is a party that's been open to women's participation, and a great many women have risen to positions of importance in its ranks; the Party has taken official note of women's participation, but it's not yet party that recognizes the need for women's full representation at all levels.[42]

Vargas made an important note with her critique on the limits of the FSLN. It was impossible for women to become fully realized in post-revolution Nicaragua if the political party that was supposed to represent improvement and change in society did not work to incorporate every single person who constituted the Nicaraguan population, especially women.

Women frequently critiqued the FSLN because there were distinct limits to the political autonomy and involvement they were awarded. Belli who was immersed in the inner circle of the FSLN had a difficult time becoming more than the "token woman:" "When it came time to electing the person in charge, of course, they elected a man. I really fought that then; I was furious. 'I've been doing this work,' I said, 'I'm as capable as anyone, if not more so!' Their response was simply that 'this is a sexist society.' Clear as could be."[43] Belli's experience was indicative of the mindset that many FSLN male participants held, especially the ones in high positions of power. And moreover, after the revolution, some of the laws that were meant to protect women were reversed and reflected the perpetuation of machismo in Nicaraguan society. As previously mentioned, women were oftentimes the victims of rape and domestic violence. In an article in the March 1993 edition of *Barricada Internaciónal*, Verónica Alemán reported: "One of the new articles forces women who are raped and become pregnant to have the child. As well the woman has no choice but to maintain a relationship with the aggressor, because he is obligated to assume his paternal responsibilities by

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[42] Milú Vargas, interview, Randall, 175.

[43] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 178.

paying child support."[44] This amendment to Nicaraguan laws explains how post-revolutionary Nicaragua treated women. They were not allowed to make a personal choice with their bodies, nor were they believed to be able to support themselves as single mothers, which many women in Nicaragua already did.

Various women chose to leave the FSLN and AMNLAE to create a space that was intended to focus on women's issues through the scope of feminism. Belli mentioned in her interview that women left the Sandinista party to create the Party of the Erotic Left (PIE), noting: "It was clear that the Sandinista women's movement operated more in line with male interests" and that "women had experienced a real loss of power" after the Sandinista triumph.[45] Collinson mentions that 'feminism' remained a dirty word in various aspects of the revolution because it was regarded as an anti-male doctrine.[46] Machismo still remained ingrained in Nicaraguan society even after women's mass involvement in the revolutionary process, which was unfortunately a setback for women.

Women's involvement in FSLN consisted of gendered jobs, which eventually proved harmful for women in post-Revolution Nicaragua. Belli recalled that women were "assigned 'womanly' tasks, like cooking for comrades, managing the safe houses, that sort of thing."[47] Women's politicization was centered on issues that greatly affected women, thus they were perceived as "woman issues" that were separate from the main trajectory of the male-centered Sandinista struggle. Many of the women fought against this, such as Juanita, who explained in an interview with *Voices from Nicaragua*: "We have to change both men and women—to change the person her/himself as well as the social structure,"[48] which many women understood. The women's liberation movement in Nicaragua ultimately fell short because there were not enough men, who held roles of power in the FSLN in pre and post-revolution, who sympathized with women's

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[44] Verónica Alemán, "Sexist law scorched," *Barricada Internaciónal* (March 1993), 19.
[45] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 179.
[46] Collinson, 137.
[47] Gioconda Belli, interview, Randall, 175.
[48] Juanita, interview, Isaacs and Lesage, 19.

liberation on a federal scale, nor did they push for greater women's political involvement.

Women's politicization and involvement in the Sandinista revolution had various important effects on Nicaragua. Issues that directly affected women were brought to the forefront through the FSLN and the AMNLAE. Both organizations helped make women's issues public, rather than private problems. This was especially helpful in literacy campaigns, healthcare improvements, *comedores infantiles*, and in the workplace. These advancements could have not been achieved without women sacrificing their time, and sometimes families and safety, in order to work toward a better Nicaragua. Women did experience discrimination in the FSLN because of their gender, but women worked around this and made sure to fight and be vocal about the issues concerning them. Ultimately, women were not able to reach the level of liberation they struggled for, but they did make a significant mark on Nicaragua. These women set the stage for other Cold War Latin American revolutionary movements and influenced women's politicization in many Latin American nations.