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attractiveness to nonspecialist audiences (students, journalists, and policymakers). This does not detract, however, from the uniqueness of *Muslim Politics* and its significant contribution to scholarship.

**Revolution and the Multiclass Coalition in Nicaragua.** By Mark Everingham. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996. 218p. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Alfred G. Cuzán, *University of West Florida*

This book is a detailed examination of the probable motivations and actions taken by key Nicaraguan political players who in 1977–79 entered a cross-class alliance to overthrow the nearly fifty-year-old Somoza regime. The main focus is on the business and professional elites who, in what turned out to be a terrible miscalculation, threw their political and financial support behind a hard core of professional revolutionaries, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The central question of the book is “how and why did some economic elites become collaborators with the Sandinistas in toppling the Somoza dynasty” (p. 4).

This question is important because a number of authors (e.g., Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America*, 1992) argue that revolution against dictatorship is impossible without a multiclass coalition and that such alliances come into being only against dictatorships of the patrimonial or sultanistic type, in which the state is autonomous from the economic elites. Although Everingham agrees on the necessity of a cross-class coalition, he rejects the notion that it is “the behavior of the dictator which weakens its [sic] own political structures and facilitates revolutionary situations” (p. 29). Neither is he persuaded by a Marxist explanation that locates the cause of elite desertion in conflicts of interests between class factions. This is because “the struggle between the Somocista clique and some businessmen associated with two private banking groups was waged more on political grounds than over pure economic interests” (p. 40).

Everingham wades through a tangled web of business and familial relationships in Somoza’s Nicaragua, delineating the evolution over three decades of the country’s ownership structure. The thrust of the analysis is to show that Nicaragua’s economic elites, though benefiting from Somoza’s economic policies, were divided, politically weak, and frustrated about having to play second fiddle to the Somozas. It was this long-simmering resentment of political impotence, brought to a boil during conditions of political mobilization, Everingham argues, that motivated Nicaragua’s economic elites to cooperate with the Sandinistas in overthrowing the dictatorship.

Next, drawing on secondary sources and about two dozen interviews, Everingham recounts the familiar story of how the Somoza regime fell. It began with the 1972 earthquake, the political aftershocks of which undermined the very foundations of the dynasty. A series of events over less than five years, including the Sandinista seizure of hostages in 1974, the assassination of *La Prensa’s* publisher and editor, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, in 1978, and the ousting of the Carter administration and Nicaraguan moderates by the Sandinistas culminated in pitched battles in the country’s main cities, Somoza’s flight, the crumbling of the National Guard, and the installation of a regime dominated by Marxist-Leninists. All this is retold by Everingham in fine detail, albeit with important omissions, notably the roles played by the Catholic Church, on the one hand, and Fidel Castro, on the other.

Even though Everingham attempts to account for the

postrevolutionary falling out between the economic elites and the FSLN, and the latter’s 1990 electoral defeat, the Sandinista decade is sanitized. Of the Sandinistas’ enriching themselves while in office, their campaigns of repression against human rights activists, union organizers, and the Catholic Church, and their war against the Miskito Indians, Everingham says nothing. Moreover, the Bibliography is heavily weighted in favor of pro-Sandinista authors, both Nicaraguan and North American. Absent are Humberto Belli, Jaime Chamorro, Pablo Antonio Cuadra, Lino Hernández, Edgar Macías, and Jaime Morales, all participants in the events leading up to or flowing from the revolution.

Even more problematic is Everingham’s attempt to use El Salvador as a foil, “invoked to illuminate the structural features of the Nicaraguan upper class and corresponding elite relations that led to cooperation between capitalists and the FSLN, instead of a clash between an intransigent landed class and guerrillas acting on behalf of the peasantry, as in the case of El Salvador” (p. 8). Without much evidence, Everingham asserts that “dictatorship in El Salvador took the form of the bureaucracy acting on behalf of a unified landed class that had completely penetrated the state apparatus” (pp. 75–6). The military, too, is portrayed as subordinate to a politically hegemonic economic elite.

This interpretation of El Salvador is, at the very least, debatable. As early as the late 1940s, reformist and even radical factions emerged within the Salvadoran military, whose ideological center gravitated leftward in the next three decades, to a position somewhere between the economic elite and a new political player, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Dissident military officers contested the fraudulent 1972 and 1977 elections and vigorously protested the results. In 1980, following a coup by junior officers, a civilian-military junta expropriated large estates of the landed elite, a policy Everingham belittles because it was a scaled down version of an earlier proposal (p. 102).

Thus, Nicaragua and El Salvador differed not just in the structure of their economic elites, as Everingham claims, but in the structure of the state as well. In Nicaragua the elites were divided but the state unified; in El Salvador, the reverse was true. These differences complicate the comparison between the two cases, which needs to be taken into account.

All this said, Everingham’s book is helpful for understanding what drove Nicaragua’s economic elites to turn against a dictator with whom they could at least do business in favor of revolutionaries whose ideology and international alliances should have left little doubt that their ultimate objective, tactical concessions aside, was to do away with business altogether. Political behavior is not wholly reducible to cold calculation of economic or class interests. Particularly in revolutionary situations, political passion plays the principal role.

**Class and Conservative Parties: Argentina in Comparative Perspective.** By Edward Gibson. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 274p. \$48.50.

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Edward Gibson has written a most interesting book on conservatism in Argentina and, subsidiarily, in Latin America. In this author’s estimation, the work has three major objectives. First, develop concepts and ideas for a comparative study of conservative parties in Latin America (starting with Argentina as a case study), together with the relationships between them and democratic politics. In the Weberian tradition, Gibson defines conservative parties as those that