

A Letter from the Publisher

War and revolution are nothing new to Central America or to Bernard Diederich, a Latin hand for 29 years, TIME's Mexico City bureau chief for ten and our man in Managua for the final seven weeks of the bloody Nicaraguan revolt. Diederich, who last month turned over TIME's Managua watch to Correspondent Roberto Suro, has reported on Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba, the Dominican Republic civil war in 1965 and the 1969 "Soccer War" between El Salvador and Honduras. Says Diederich: "The Nicaraguan civil war, which saw the cold-blooded execution of one American journalist [ABC's Bill Stewart], surpassed them all in sheer danger."

Miami Correspondent Richard Woodbury, who joined Diederich for part of his tour, agrees. "The danger quotient was raised by the glaring absence of official information from either side," reports Woodbury. "To assess the fighting, we had to visit battle zones continually." Getting there was a perilous ordeal in itself, and indiscriminate bombing and shelling made it necessary to take refuge in the homes and backyards of friendly Nicaraguans. The scene at Managua's Inter-Continental Hotel, headquarters and domicile of the

foreign press corps, was similarly threatening. "Somoza flunkies were wandering around saying that newsmen should be taken out and shot," says Diederich. When the staff fled after the hotel had been designated a military target by Sandinistas in mid-June, Diederich and three other foreign journalists abandoned it for what they euphemistically called a "safe house" in the bomb-racked capital, returning the day the rebels' victory seemed assured.



Diederich with a Sandinista commander

Buenos Aires Correspondent George Russell, who had been reporting from the Sandinista headquarters-in-exile in Costa Rica, joined Diederich then but had some trouble adjusting to Inter-Continental Hotel hospitality. Said Russell: "My first night, I returned to my room to discover that it had been appropriated by three gun-toting *muchachos*, one of whom was sleeping in the bathtub. In solidarity with the people's hard-won victory, I decided to sleep on Diederich's couch."

With this week's issue, TIME becomes the first American newsmagazine to be sold in the People's Republic of China. Initially, copies are available at hard-currency shops in Peking, Canton and Shanghai.

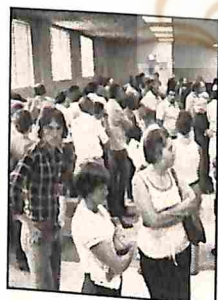
John C. Meyers

Cover: Photograph by John Zimmerman.

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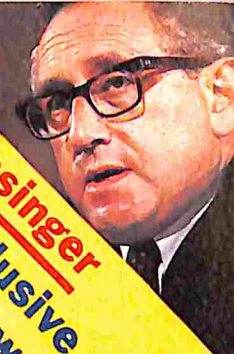
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