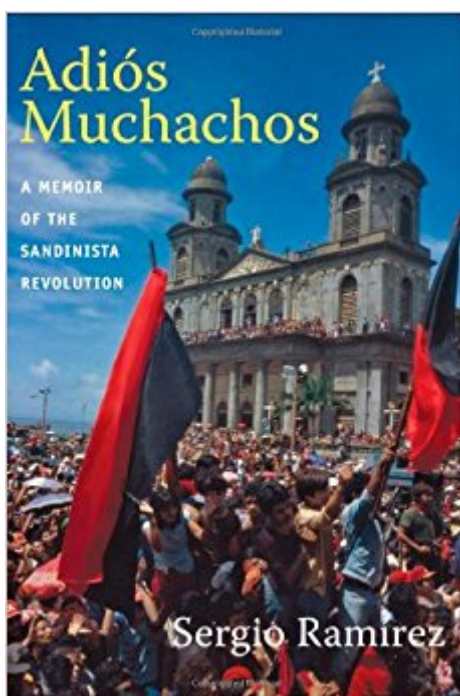


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Adiós Muchachos: A Memoir Of The Sandinista Revolution (American Encounters/Global Interactions)



Synopsis

Adi's Muchachos is a candid insider's account of the leftist Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. During the 1970s, Sergio Ramírez led prominent intellectuals, priests, and business leaders to support the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), against Anastasio Somoza's dictatorship. After the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza regime in 1979, Ramírez served as vice-president under Daniel Ortega from 1985 until 1990, when the FSLN lost power in a national election. Disillusioned by his former comrades' increasing intolerance of dissent and resistance to democratization, Ramírez defected from the Sandinistas in 1995 and founded the Sandinista Renovation Movement. In *Adi's Muchachos*, he describes the utopian aspirations for liberation and reform that motivated the Sandinista revolution against the Somoza regime, as well as the triumphs and shortcomings of the movement's leadership as it struggled to turn an insurrection into a government, reconstruct a country beset by poverty and internal conflict, and defend the revolution against the Contras, an armed counterinsurgency supported by the United States. *Adi's Muchachos* was first published in 1999. Based on a later edition, this translation includes Ramírez's thoughts on more recent developments, including the re-election of Daniel Ortega as president in 2006.

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Customer Reviews

In this poignant memoir, Ramírez extols the idealism of the youthful Sandinistas, too many of

whom fell as martyrs in their bloody battles against the tyrannical Somoza dynasty. At the same time, he recognizes the many errors the inexperienced revolutionaries committed once in power. Ram rez paints vivid portraits of those Latin American leaders who assisted the Sandinistas.  

Richard Feinberg, *Foreign Affairs*  The English translation of Sergio Ram rez  s 1999 memoir allows the reader a fascinating entr  e into the life and work of one of Central America  s most compelling personages and leading writers. This excellent translation of the former revolutionary junta member and vice president of Nicaragua  s 1998 book offers a fine introduction, filled with indispensable insights into the romance and tragedy of the revolution.  

Jeffrey L. Gould, *The Americas*  This is an analytically astute if, to say the least, idiosyncratically organized account of the Sandinista Revolution (both and before and after the fall of Anastasio Somoza Debayle). For those who consider the author one of the most thoughtful commentators on his country  s political life, the book is a treasure, and well worth close examination by scholars interested in Latin American political history in general and the history of revolutionary change in particular.  

Andrew J. Kirkendall, *Human Rights Review*  Beyond being a valid and interesting source, Ram rez is also an accomplished writer, whose literary skill shines through in every detail of the memoir. . . . In short, a lot can be learned from this book that transcends history and present day affairs. Adi s Muchachos provides the reader with inside knowledge of revolutions, global politics, and human aspirations. And perhaps the best gift this book offers is the opportunity to learn while enjoying a great read.  

Contemporary Sociology  Adi s Muchachos is an extraordinary memoir of the origins, triumphs, and ultimate decline of the Sandinista Revolution. It is written by Sergio Ram rez, one of Nicaragua  s and Central America  s leading literary figures and an influential politician and statesman during the crucial decades he discusses, the 1970s through the 1990s. Few memoirs of the Sandinista period treat the movement  s ultimate defeat from a critical perspective, and fewer still have been written by one of that period  s leading political actors, let alone crafted in such an engrossing fashion, with such an eye for intimate political and cultural detail.  

Gilbert M. Joseph, co-editor of *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America  s Long Cold War*  Writers who become revolutionaries are a rare breed, and in our age, few compare to Sergio Ram rez. In this lovely, lyrical, but ultimately heartbreaking, book, he gives an insider  s view of how radicalism succeeds and fails. His account is thrilling, poignant, and frightening, decorated with vivid profiles of tyrants, bullies, and idealistic heroes. Ram rez has long since broken with the increasingly repressive Sandinistas; their loss is literature  s gain.  

Stephen Kinzer, author of *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua*  In this poignant memoir, Ram rez extols the idealism of the youthful

Sandinistas, too many of whom fell as martyrs in their bloody battles against the tyrannical Somoza dynasty. At the same time, he recognizes the many errors the inexperienced revolutionaries committed once in power. Ram  rez paints vivid portraits of those Latin American leaders who assisted the Sandinistas.   (Richard Feinberg Foreign Affairs)  The English translation of Sergio Ram  rez  s 1999 memoir allows the reader a fascinating entr  e into the life and work of one of Central America  s most compelling personages and leading writers. This excellent translation of the former revolutionary junta member and vice president of Nicaragua  s 1998 book offers a fine introduction, filled with indispensable insights into the romance and tragedy of the revolution.   (Jeffrey L. Gould The Americas)  This is an analytically astute if, to say the least, idiosyncratically organized account of the Sandinista Revolution (both and before and after the fall of Anastasio Somoza Debayle). For those who consider the author one of the most thoughtful commentators on his country  s political life, the book is a treasure, and well worth close examination by scholars interested in Latin American political history in general and the history of revolutionary change in particular.   (Andrew J. Kirkendall Human Rights Review)  Beyond being a valid and interesting source, Ram  rez is also an accomplished writer, whose literary skill shines through in every detail of the memoir. . . . In short, a lot can be learned from this book that transcends history and present day affairs. Adi  s Muchachos provides the reader with inside knowledge of revolutions, global politics, and human aspirations. And perhaps the best gift this book offers is the opportunity to learn while enjoying a great read.   (Contemporary Sociology)  Given his extensive direct experience of the events that captured the world  s imagination for more than a decade and his impressive talents as a writer, Sergio Ram  rez is the perfect person to tell this story.   (Steven F. White Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas)

Sergio Ramirez is one of a number of key participants in the revolution that toppled Nicaraguan strongman Anastasio Somoza to have become disillusioned and to have written memoirs critical of the Sandinista regime under the leadership of Daniel Ortega. Adios Muchachos was published in Spanish in 1999, on the 20th anniversary of the revolution, and this English edition appeared in 2012. If there are any who still think of the 1980s struggle to create a new and just society in Nicaragua as a morality play pitting good against evil--saintly revolutionaries fighting for the poor up against vicious thugs, backed by the Reagan administration, bent on destroying the revolution--this memoir might yet serve to complicate the picture. Certainly, Ramirez does not gloss over the contradictions and failures that seem to have left the majority of Nicaraguans with little to show for the glorious struggle that once promised to create a society in which even the poorest would

flourish. Along with Haiti and Honduras, Nicaragua is still one of the most impoverished nations in Latin America. From the beginning, the insurgents were split into hostile factions, ranging from rigid Marxist-Leninists wary of the compromises that would doom the class struggle to those more open to forging alliances between different interest groups. The Catholic Church was split between those for whom the Gospel was a call to radical political struggle and those for whom it offered critical perspective on all parties. And, for all its success in mobilizing to bring literacy to the country's remotest areas, the revolutionary regime proved woefully tone-deaf to the culture of the country's rural and indigenous peoples. Ramirez broke with the original Sandinistas over the question of democracy. He explains the failure of the original Ortega decade in moral terms, as if the idealistic, even saintly, visionaries of 1979 had simply lost their ethical compass, surrendering to greed and self-interest, an explanation that seems to take too little account of just how hard it is to make a successful revolution. I think the author would have been better served by a more demanding editor, one who would have challenged the author not only to clarify his many obscure statements and to give up his empty rhetorical flights but also to probe more deeply the question of how, in making the just society, one strikes a balance between the discipline that will get the job done and the tolerance that will bring the people on board.

The author is biased and inspired by his ideology. He in my opinion, lacks a sense of realism and justifies his wrongdoings with ideologies. He tries to glorify and excuse himself constantly in his writings as if he were some type of saint. At the end, he not only screwed Nicaragua but his own Sandinista party. I think he is just a dreamer poet with lack of common sense. Sergio Ramirez is full of baloney, as if he didn't know who the people in his Sandinista party were until the end.... Otherwise, it was an entertaining book full of "revolution romanticism" and not much else...

I read this book in Spanish, and am now purchasing it in English for my husband. I was surprised that it received only a 3 star average on the reviews, so decided to read them. When I saw that the 1 star review came from a student who only read the first chapter, I was saddened, and felt the need to add another 5-star one. Ramirez is a wonderful author, and this book is no exception. He tells the story of those early years of the revolution without trying to sugar-coat an often unsuccessful effort in which he was an important player. Highly recommended.

Though this book details the very beginnings of the revolution against the Dictator Somoza, the importance of the book is the detailed account of how the FSLN emerged early in the revolution,

gaining power and attempting to turn the country into a socialist-communist nation. Ramirez details the many errors: a secret police as dreaded as Somoza's; evacuation of the innocent Miskito indians from their homeland to concentration camp-like facilities; the establishment of Cuban-inspired neighborhood watch committees; confiscation of land, that was not passed on to the poor farmers, but became the property of the government as cooperatives; war against the Catholic church; stifling agricultural production through imposition of price controls and control of agrarian products for those who retained farms as well as the cooperatives; conscription for the army; arming of the El Salvador insurrectionists; and finally, mis-reading their countrymen's tolerance to changes that were made which were foreign to their cultural identity. The book is probably the most complete and accurate account of what happened in Nicaragua between the late 1970's and early 1990's, written by a man who was there - the former Vice President of Nicaragua.

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