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DEMOCRACY IS THE ISSUE IN NICARAGUA

The people of Nicaragua, after overthrowing the Somoza tyranny, are again being forced to struggle for their freedom and their dignity. Their struggle, like that in neighboring El Salvador, has been waged against extremes both of the Right and the Left. Today they need and deserve the help of all who share the democratic faith.

The Sandinista rulers of Nicaragua are now seeking to impose a totalitarian system upon their people. They will not be deterred simply by humanitarian pleas, diplomatic appeals or economic pressures. If the Sandinistas succeed, the Nicaraguan people will suffer greatly, and democracy throughout the Americas will face an unprecedented threat.

But the Nicaraguan democratic resistance movement can alter this dangerous course of events. Its leaders—figures such as Arturo Cruz, Adolfo Calero, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo—proved their dedication to democracy in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. They seek negotiations for an honorable peace with the Sandinistas through the good offices of the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops. But the Sandinistas still refuse to negotiate with their own people. So the resistance leaders are now asking for our help.

There are many issues in the present debate over U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, but the basic issue is this: will we stand beside the Nicaraguan democratic resistance in its struggle against totalitarianism? Or will we declare that this movement is a lost cause, and offer only to help its supporters adjust to lives as victims, refugees and exiles?

We the undersigned—Democrats, Republicans and Independents, liberals and conservatives, trade unionists, businessmen, professionals, religious workers and intellectuals—believe that our government and our people must now send an unmistakable message to Managua, Moscow and Havana: the American people support the struggle for democracy in Nicaragua. We may differ over what form our assistance should take, but we are firmly united in the conviction that our aid is a moral and strategic obligation.

We urge you to join us by making your views known to the President, your Congressmen and your community. Help us build a movement of support throughout the United States for those in Nicaragua who, at great risk, are standing up for democracy. Please send a generous contribution so this message can be reprinted in other publications, so speakers can be sent out to present our case, so radio and television messages can be broadcast, and so our leaders (and the Sandinistas) will hear the voice of democratic America.

Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA)

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To: Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA)
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☐ Yes, you may add my name as a supporter of the above statement in support of the Nicaraguan democratic resistance movement

I enclose my contribution of \$_____ Make checks payable to PRODEMCA.
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☐ Send me a full text of the proposal for peace and democracy of the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

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PRODEMCA: The Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA) is a non-partisan citizens' organization working to build public support for solving problems of conflict and development in Central America by strengthening the processes of democracy. We believe that democracy is proving—as, for example, in El Salvador—to be a practical alternative to extremism of the Left and the Right in this important region. Both the values and the interests of the United States compel us to support those of our neighbors who have undertaken the difficult but promising effort to establish democratic institutions and practices of their own.

FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA
(PRODEMCA)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The friends of democracy are gaining strength in Central America, and they need and want our help.

Many in our country have too long believed that the only choice for the people of Central America is between traditional, authoritarian systems and a violent, repressive new revolutionary order. But during recent years it has become clear that there is a powerful desire for democracy among the peoples of this region. This aspiration is increasingly reflected in their institutions.

In El Salvador, huge numbers of citizens turned out in four elections since 1982. They elected Jose Napoleon Duarte as the country's new President — a President who has vowed to protect the rights of his people, and has taken important steps to do so.

Democracy has taken a firm hold in Honduras. As in El Salvador, the military increasingly accepts the principle of civilian government and has worked to strengthen the processes of civilian, democratic rule. Even Guatemala, which has had some harsh military regimes, has made substantial progress toward democracy. And Costa Rica has for many years been among the few fully democratic societies outside of the industrialized world.

But many threats still cloud the prospect of progress. Poverty, illiteracy and disease are still widespread, and for some time to come will create a desperation that is easily exploited by violent and extreme forces. In some countries, remnants of the old order use violent and unjust means to try to retain their power. Even more dangerous is the threat from the totalitarian left in Central America which, with Soviet and Cuban support, is now tightening its hold on Nicaragua, carrying out guerrilla and terrorist attacks in other countries of the region, and building unprecedented military forces.

We believe that the citizens of the United States have a profound moral and strategic stake in the victory of democracy in Central America. We believe that either democracy will succeed or the region will sink back into repression and violence. If the hope for democracy is extinguished, the result will be more brutality and repression than the region has yet known. This in turn will threaten the security and the values of all Americans.

How can we best respond to these dangers? Among us there may be differing views over how our social and economic assistance to the region should be employed — but we all agree that significant amounts of aid are needed. There may be differences over the ways in which U.S. military assistance should be implemented — but we agree that unless the security of these societies is defended, social and economic assistance is futile.

We all agree that the democratic forces of the region must be encouraged and assisted. For too long Americans have debated economic and military strategies while neglecting the political dimension of the problem.

It is not difficult to determine who is to be included among those democratic forces. They now include the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama, and the democratic political forces of Nicaragua. They include independent businessmen and their organizations, workers affiliated with free unions, the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups, professional and other private sector groups. They include the political parties that have participated in democratic elections and accepted the results. These are tested opponents of totalitarianism and oligarchy. And this list is only a beginning.

WHAT WE DO

We are joining the debate in the United States, which has too often been swayed by those who believe that the region is not ready for democracy, or that the United States cannot act constructively in the region.

We distribute facts and information about the democratic struggle in the region and in specific countries, through:

- Mail campaigns to build a grass-roots network throughout the United States to use our materials and speakers in local communities;
- Pamphlets, articles, educational materials, films,

- Press conferences and briefings on current developments and issues of timely interest and concern;
- Visits by Central American leaders to speak to public gatherings, the media, the Congress and government officials, organizations and religious groups, at the national and local level;
- Visits to Central America for first hand observation and study by U.S. citizens and leaders who talk and write about their experiences in their communities, organizations and the media;
- Special events — conferences, forum meetings, teach-ins;
- A Speakers' Bureau, making available informed spokesmen to organizations, churches, schools and universities;
- Special briefings for the media, organizations, Congressional representatives and staff, government officials, and national leaders.

Strong citizens' groups are a hallmark of our democracy. Our goal is to inform and mobilize the public so that our government will stand firm for the democratic ideal.

HOW WE OPERATE

Our Committee is composed of individuals from all sectors of American life, who represent no partisan special interests. We welcome the participation of Democrats, Republicans and independents, of liberals and conservatives.

All of our Council members and officers serve as individuals and not as representatives of any other organizations with which they may be affiliated. Our activities are financed by voluntary contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. We are incorporated in the District of Columbia as an educational non-profit organization. Contributions to the Committee are tax deductible under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

We are governed by the National Council at annual meetings. Between Council meetings the Executive Committee is responsible for the organization and has full power to act for the Council. Members of the Council are consulted informally by the staff and the Executive Committee about policies and programs.

We call upon people from all walks of life — business, labor, public affairs, education, the professions, religious groups — to join with us in this program, to contribute generously and to carry the message to your own friends, organizations and community.

Friends of the Democratic Center
In Central American (Prodemca)

729 15th Street, N.W.
Suite 950
Washington, D.C. 20005

☐

Send me more information

☐

I would like to help in my community

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The Miami News

A Cox Newspaper

Friday Afternoon, November 22, 1985

48 Pages

Kirkpatrick praises Central America struggle

ELLEN HAMPTON

Miami News Reporter

"Venceremos!"

The revolutionary battle cry — namesake of the leftist Salvadoran guerrillas' radio station and newspaper — sounded a little strange coming from former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeanne Kirkpatrick.

She said it with the same enthusiasm and grit as one of the *muchachos* from the mountains, and prefaced it with the same ringing invocations of freedom and liberty and justice. But she said it from the other side of the mountains to the other side of the struggle.

Kirkpatrick spoke yesterday at a Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA) reception, part of the Miami Conference on the Caribbean that winds up today at the downtown Hyatt Regency. Her audience included Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) leaders Adolfo Calero, Alfonso Callejas and Alfonso Robelo; former Cuban political prisoner Huber Matos and Cuban-American National Foundation chairman Jorge Mas Canosa, all of whom have wrestled personally with revolution.

"There are two revolutions abroad in Central America and in Latin America," Kirkpatrick said. "One is the revolution that relies on violence not only to seize power but to govern."

The other revolution, she said, struggles for the democracy that is PRODEMCA's aim.

Kirkpatrick mentioned a move last month by the Sandinistas to heighten an existing state of emergency by revoking certain civil rights.

"Nicaragua's leaders, I have been very amused to see, have coupled these harsh measures with a soft new style," Kirkpatrick said, noting that on Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's U.N. visit last month he replaced an army uniform worn on a previous trip with a business suit.

★ ★ ★

Nicaragua

Alfonso Robelo

Now the Sandinistas Have No Excuses

By leading the U.S. Congress to its vote to cut off aid to the democratic resistance in Nicaragua, a small band of liberals has assumed a grave moral obligation: the responsibility to persuade Nicaragua's rulers to demonstrate that only the Reagan administration's policies have kept them from fulfilling the democratic promise of the Nicaraguan revolution. Now that those policies clearly are no longer in effect, there can be no more excuses.

A foreign observer could see that last week's vote was the result of many factors: partisan bitterness, procedural confusion and a lack of public understanding here about the history and significance of the Nicaraguan civil war. But at the core of congressional opposition to the aid was a moral and intellectual assumption that evidently still guides American liberalism: communists would become democrats if only they were more generously treated.

This still remains the conviction of the Vietnam generation: leaders such as Reps. Michael Barnes and Jim Leach, and Sens. John Kerry and Tom Harkin. They are confident that they possess a unique sophistication and moral authority that, if only given its way, can win over the Sandinista *comandantes*. It is a conviction I know well—too well. It has cost me five years of bitter disappointment and two attempts on my life to learn how profoundly untrue it is.

I myself am one of the Vietnam generation, and I too believed that communists could be persuaded to respect pluralism, human rights and peace. Many of us joined the Sandinistas in a National Unity Coalition against Somoza, but when he was overthrown in 1979, the Sandinistas threw away all our carefully negotiated agree-

"The young liberals of the United States believe they can now accomplish what so many others could not: persuade the Sandinistas to join the community of responsible, civilized governments."

ments for democracy and peaceful reconstruction. I nevertheless served with them on the governing junta, but was obliged to resign when it became clear that I was a figurehead with no authority. I then spent two years inside Nicaragua as a revolutionary dissident, but learned that the Sandinistas do not tolerate political dissent. Tom Harkin, then a congressman, helped me get out of Nicaragua into exile. There I helped organize appeals to the Sandinistas from European socialists and Latin American democrats. It has come to nothing.

The young liberals of the United States believe they can now accomplish what so many others could not: persuade the Sandinistas to join the community of responsible, civilized governments.

I hope that their consciences—and the pressures of your own political system—will now oblige Messrs. Harkin, Kerry, Barnes and Leach to go to Managua in order, as Barnes put it, to "call the Sandinistas' bluff" and to execute the moral obligation their legislative victory has created. In exchange for cutting off aid to our cause, they must receive specific and significant concessions from the Sandinistas—not just fine print and eventualities. An honest concern for peace and human rights cannot be satisfied unless:

- The Sandinistas agree to the Nicaraguan bishops' call for negotiations with both the civic and armed opposition.

- The Sandinista People's Army—now the army of one political faction—becomes a genuinely Nicaraguan army.

- The Sandinistas accept international observers who can guarantee that pluralism and a ceasefire are respected.

- An ironclad and prompt timetable for implementing those agreements is established.

If the young liberals in Congress can obtain these concessions from the Sandinistas, we will all be obliged to honor their insight and ability. But if they cannot, they must have the integrity to join me in the painful admission that they were wrong, and that the struggle for democracy in the Third World cannot be fought with the communists, it must be fought against them.

The writer, who served in the first Sandinista-led government of Nicaragua after the overthrow of the Somoza regime, is now the political leader of the resistance group called the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

U.S. policy unity on Nicaragua could gain much

By Jim Hampton
Nashville Banner Staff Writer

Pay no mind to the Sandinistas' initial rejection of President Reagan's proposal for a 60-day truce during which they'd talk peace with the U.S.-supported guerrillas now fighting them. The Nicaraguans' response was *pro forma*, not final; reflexive, not studied.

Pay no mind, either, to House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill's allegation that the president's offer was just a "dirty trick" that Congress will reject. Of course it's a trick — of sorts. If Ronald Reagan knows anything, he knows which tricks will work on Congress — and this one just might.

Finally, pay no mind to the president's contradictory positions on negotiating with guerrillas in El Salvador and Nicaragua, respectively. He's against negotiating with the leftist guerrillas fighting El Salvador's government, but he now urges the Marxist-Leninist Sandinistas to talk peace with the contras fighting them.

Before long, the president's strate-

gy had been to keep the Sandinistas in line by military means. His administration paid lip service to the idea of a negotiated peace in Central America through the Contadora process. It held negotiations with the Sandinistas in Manzanillo, Mexico. But Reagan's heart wasn't in it, nor was his administration's policy.

Congress forced the president's hand by refusing to authorize funds for the insurgents fighting the Sandinistas. His vote-counters told the president that if he asked for \$14 million to arm the guerrillas, as he intended to do, he would lose.

Rather than risk losing, the president changed strategy. He proposed a truce from Sunday until June 1. During that time the Sandinistas and the insurgents would negotiate under the Roman Catholic Church's mediation. He still asked for the \$14 million, but he vowed that during the truce none of it would be used for arms or munitions. "These funds would be used for food, clothing, and medicine, and other support for (the contras') survival," he said.

Congress could give the president at least part of what he wants. It could, for example, authorize \$2.5 million — 60 days' worth of his requested \$14 million in annual contra funds — and stipulate that the money go only for food, medicine, clothing, and other nonmilitary supplies.

Suppose Congress did that, whether or not the Sandinistas change their minds and agree to talk peace. The first result would be to keep the insurgents fed, clothed, healthy — and in readiness. The second result would be to tell the Sandinistas that at last the Reagan administration and Congress have the beginnings of consensus on a policy toward Nicaragua.

Eight months ago I wouldn't have dreamed of suggesting that Congress give the contras a dime. Eight months ago it still seemed possible that the Sandinistas would make their November 1984 elections open, meaningful, pluralistic. That prospect died a-borning, however. The elections — like most of the Sandinistas' other early promises of representative government — proved to be mere sham.

Within the past eight months, in short, I have slowly been changing my views about the contras, about the Sandinistas and their capacity to threaten Central America, about what the U.S. attitude toward — and tolerance for — them should be.

Three weeks ago, I went to Nicaragua, hoping to discover whether my impressions from afar held true close up. They did. I wish they hadn't; that would have been far less disquieting than having them confirmed. Those impressions now are hardening into convictions. Simplistic or not, they boil down to these elements:

■ The Sandinistas are following the path that Fidel Castro trod after leading Cuba's revolution 25 years ago. If their tracing of his footsteps continues, Nicaragua will become the second full-fledged Communist state at America's doorstep.

■ It is imperative that the United States thwart that progression. If peaceable means will suffice, then by all means every avenue of negotiation and conciliation should — must — be pursued.

■ If peaceable means fail, then armed conflict directly involving U.S. forces is all but inevitable unless the United States resigns itself to abandoning the Monroe Doctrine, not to say its own national security. The war won't come next year necessarily, but inexorably it eventually will come.

That eventuality can be avoided only if the Sandinistas open themselves to negotiations with their internal opposition. They're far likelier to do that if they face a United States whose president and Congress embrace one rational policy toward Nicaragua. That unity in turn will cost less only if that policy has the American people's support.

Reagan's proposed peace talks don't yet qualify as a policy, but they are a welcome and positive alternative to further intransigent saber-rattling. Nor has Congress put forth its own, better alternative. Because it hasn't, Congress should treat Reagan's proposal not as a dirty trick but as a possible way to prevent a dirty guerrilla war from becoming still dirtier.



The Cincinnati Post

"Give light and the people will find their own way"

Editor
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125 East Court Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (513)352-2000 Monday, April 22, 1985

Editorials

The contras on their own

President Reagan wanted \$14 million to arm the Nicaraguan rebels. Instead he will get nothing to arm them. In Washington, this is known as a compromise.

Actually, of course, the president's decision to postpone a request for military aid rather than face congressional judgment is a rather stunning defeat for his Central American policy—and for the hope of liberalizing the Sandinista government there. No amount of substitute humanitarian aid for refugees can compensate for the setback.

Opponents of military aid cite their reluctance to violate the territorial integrity of another nation and their determination to avoid the mistakes of Vietnam. Some of these same politicians are not quite so deferential to sovereignty (thank goodness) when it comes to funneling food relief to rebel-held areas in Ethiopia, money to independent labor unions in Poland and weapons to Afghan guerrillas.

Some opponents of aid to the Contras recently even proposed arming rebels fighting the Cambodian government. In short, the concept of territorial integrity for them is the polemical equivalent of a tuxedo, reserved for special occasions.

The parallel with Vietnam is even less convincing. Nicaragua's location and historical relationship with the United States, as well as its internal characteristics, could hardly be

more different from Vietnam's.

Nor, for that matter, does history dictate that U.S. military aid escalate into direct intervention. Vietnam was the exception in that respect.

There is one similarity, however: congressional ambivalence and half-measures in both instances.

Although Congress will not support the Nicaraguan Contras, it can't quite bring itself to admit that it has therefore protected the Sandinistas. No, the odor of Marxist doctrine in Managua is a bit too powerful for that. Instead, Congress apparently will provide humanitarian aid for refugees and thus attempt to make its course look better.

Ironically, the refugees include many families of the guerrillas, so aid to one inevitably will bolster the other. It won't make a decisive difference for the rebels, of course, but it probably will be enough to result in additional, futile deaths.

But that is what comes of an American foreign policy that tries to have it both ways. Rather than provide anyone with the tools to succeed anymore, the United States does just enough to guarantee a prolonged and bloody failure. Just enough, too, so that our leaders can walk away from the debacles they engineer and proclaim, faces straight, that they tried their very best.

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 1985

For the Record

From a statement by Alfonso Rubelo, a former member of Nicaragua's junta and now one of the three civilian leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition, delivered to the Social Democrats, USA, on June 15:

The vote last Wednesday in the U.S. House of Representatives to aid the Nicaraguan democratic resistance was stronger than we expected. But I for one was disappointed that so many Democratic Party leaders whom I admire failed to join in it. After all:

It is we who stand for a free trade union movement in Nicaragua.

It is we who stand for the rights of the Miskito Indians and the Creoles on the Atlantic coast.

It is we who stand for a free press, for civil and political rights, for schools that teach rather than indoctrinate and for religious liberty.

And it is we who want and deserve the full support of the liberals of the United States.

Only when we have bipartisan, liberal and conservative support in the United States can we promise our other friends and supporters that we will be able to follow a steady and effective course of action.

Only when we have broad popular support in this country and elsewhere can we consolidate our unity as Nicaraguans. Then we can achieve far more coordination and discipline among all the insurgent forces in Nicaragua's civil war. This will help us prevent human rights abuses by individuals in our country who may react recklessly to the provocations of the Sandinistas. This will help us achieve the cohesion we need if we are to actively pursue a political solution to the conflict, opening the doors for national reconciliation.

Nicaragua's Potential Impact

THE HOLOCAUST was unknown to most Americans in World War II, though at least a few at the higher levels knew or suspected what was happening. The debate will be endless, perhaps, over what should or could have been done about it. But nobody should forget it.

Nor should anyone forget a more subtle holocaust today in many parts of the world — Afghanistan and Cambodia, for example. Nations are being raped in the name of somebody's sense of "justice." Yet if wholesale butchery amounts to a holocaust of sorts, assaults on political and economic freedom in any form are also reprehensible — and legion.

In this 40th year since the end of World War and establishment of the United Nations, man's inhumanity to man makes headlines globally. Whether of right or left, the efforts of totalitarians are unabating. And almost inevitably, they involve Congress and the White House.

THAT'S WHY lobbyists fanned out across America last week on both sides of the \$14 million aid-to-Contras issue. Those opposed point to the Contras' atrocities — atrocities conceded, though by no means applauded, by Alfonso Robelo, a former top Nicaraguan business leader and co-founder of one of the leading Contra groups, on his Cincinnati visit. Yet Robelo emphasized that many others, beyond the Nicaraguans themselves, had a stake in what happens in Nicaragua.

You're struck by Robelo's moderation. He doesn't come across as a doctrinaire anti-Communist of the super-emotional stripe. That makes him all the more believable. A 1961 chemical-engineering graduate of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., Robelo wants President Reagan's Nicaraguan peace plan to succeed. The plan would assign the \$14 million initially to humanitarian aid — food and medicine — to the Contras. It would go for military supplies only if after 60 days of negotiation and no peace the Contras asked for arms.

"We would accept Daniel Ortega as president until a plebiscite to determine what the people want," Robelo explained. "... This is a tremendous opportunity to stop the bloodshed." The



Robert
Webb

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Contras have offered to do what the Salvadoran rebels so far have refused to do — lay down their arms and participate in the political process. If a bona fide one can be devised. Robelo called Mr. Reagan's gesture, based largely on what the Contadora Group of four Latin American countries has sought, "one last effort for a political solution."

ROBELO RECOGNIZES the difficulties of convincing Congress. For one thing, it's hard for many Americans to make the connection between what happens to Nicaragua and what could happen to them, or other Latin countries, including Mexico. Cincinnati's U.S.

It's hard for many Americans to make the connection between what happens to Nicaragua and what could happen to them.

Rep. Willis D. Gradison Jr., R, said on public television's "Capitol Journal" the other night that the Contra-aid issue was by no means the top one in his 2nd District. It's not a grabber, like, say, a tax-hike or tax-cut proposal. Gradison did not say — and perhaps didn't know — how he would vote on the Contra aid issue.

But Robelo sought to put to rest the minds of those who fret that helping the Contras — a word he disdains ("contra" means "against") — means helping restore the Somocistas to power. That he'd help restore anything resembling the Somoza dictatorship would be ironic: Robelo was one of the five members of the original junta governing Nicaragua in the wake of Somoza's overthrow. He is a member now of the Revolution-

ary Directory of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance, fighting to bring democracy to his country.

HE OFFERS these figures: "Out of 15,800 revolutionary fighters as of Feb. 22, 1985, there were only 220 former National Guardsmen (of Somoza's era) — 1½%; out of 54 field commanders, 12 were former National Guardsmen — 25% — of whom seven were lieutenants: four, sergeants; and one, a captain. None could be pinpointed as to having committed a crime. They were too young to have been involved in the corruption of the Somoza era." Nor does he contend the Contras (or, to use his term, revolutionaries) have a monopoly on atrocities. Moreover, he said he had survived two attempts on his own life.

Not 24 hours after Robelo made his case, contending the Soviet Union and Cuba do indeed hope to spread their anti-freedom virus throughout the hemisphere, Carlos E. Palomo, who headed El Salvador's Agricultural Development Bank in 1982-84, made a similar one. He sought support for the Contras on grounds that what happens in Nicaragua has direct bearing on El Salvador. "The people of the United States must understand that the war (in Nicaragua) is not just the Contras' war but it's an American war, an ideological war, to defend freedom and democracy," Palomo said. He said the guerrillas aim in his country to destroy its economy — and he said they'd done a pretty good job of it. "We must fight this (ideological) war together, we need help," he emphasized. "When you support the Contras, you support El Salvador."

THE BEST solution in Nicaragua, obviously, would be a negotiated one assuring a free press and free assembly — in short, a free atmosphere in which the Nicaraguans could determine what they wanted. If Mr. Reagan's (or anyone else's) plan can hasten that, it should be supported to the hilt. Nicaragua's future is, to be sure, related to that of America — and the Americas.

Those who know what's happening there, and most members of Congress should have a fairly clear idea by now, shouldn't have any regrets 10, 20 — or 40 — years from now that they didn't do enough.

Robert Webb is a member of The Enquirer's editorial board.

Opinion



Claudia Winkler

Seeing your revolution for what it is

The turning point is different for different people.

I will never forget the Cuban, now an American citizen, who told me his hopes for the revolution finally died, after Castro's takeover, when he first heard political slogans between the dial tones on the telephone. Somehow that experience killed the last traces of his belief that the new Cuba could be a democratic creation of the people rather than something imposed from above by the men with the slogans and the guns.

It is always a gradual process, this realization reenacted so often in our century. But usually, there are moments that stand out.

Adrianna Guillen, the Sorbonne-educated wife of a Nicaraguan doctor, sympathized with the opposition to the Somoza dictatorship in her country for a decade. Revolutionary agents used her house as a place to put on disguises and hide weapons. After the revolution in July 1979, she took a job with the Ministry of Culture so as to follow through on her commitment to a democratic renewal of Nicaraguan society.

But the armed, Marxist-Leninist party in the revolutionary coalition—the Sandinistas—was dominant from the start. Mrs. Guillen was sent

to Marxist Cuba for training, and the intense indoctrination she was exposed to raised grave doubts. The trainers were Bulgarians, and the subject was how to wipe out an old culture and implant a new one.

After that, Mrs. Guillen left her government job and became a reporter for the chief Nicaraguan newspaper, *La Prensa*. On the first anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution, she covered the commemoration of the victory in a small town outside the capital and flew there in a government helicopter with the Sandinista representative, Tomas Borge. Her blood ran cold, she said, when she realized that the pilot of the helicopter was yet another helpful foreigner, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Adrianna Guillen, like so many democratic opponents of dictatorship in Nicaragua, is now in exile. Another, Alfonso Robelo, who was in Cincinnati recently, told what had been the turning points for him.

Alfonso Robelo Callejas was one of the five members of the revolutionary junta that officially governed Nicaragua after Somoza fell. But he was not a Sandinista. An American-trained chemical engineer, he was a prominent leader in

business organizations throughout the 1970s. When the assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, editor of the anti-Somoza newspaper *La Prensa*, mobilized so many Nicaraguans against the dictatorship, Robelo helped call a general strike and bring the private sector and political moderates into active support for the revolution. But his experience in politics, he says bitterly now, was very small.

After the victory, Robelo remained in the revolutionary junta for nine months, but from the start, he said, the Sandinistas' determination to consolidate all power in their own hands and push out all other elements of the revolutionary coalition was plain. So was their effectiveness at achieving that end.

Within days of entering the capital, Sandinista soldiers seized key institutions for the Sandinistas, not for the revolutionary coalition. Thus, the offices of Somoza's newspaper, *Novedades*, became the base for the Sandinista party newspaper, Robelo said. The headquarters of Somoza's pseudo-labor unions became the nerve center for new Sandinista worker organizations. The army was named the *Ejército Popular Sandinista*. The democratic members of the junta fought the Sandinistas

unsuccessfully every step of the way.

A special turning point for Robelo came after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in December 1979. Robelo called an emergency meeting of the junta and urged an immediate public denunciation of the invasion. One of his arguments was that it was particularly important for Nicaragua, so close to the United States, to speak out against a superpower's intervention in its neighbor's affairs.

The junta supported him by a vote of 4 to 1, with Daniel Ortega, the key leader of the Sandinista party, now president of Nicaragua, standing alone. Yet on the heels of this vote, the Sandinista party directorate, without informing the junta, instructed Nicaragua's ambassador in New York to abstain on the U.N. vote condemning the Soviet invasion.

Robelo is only one of the exiled democratic revolutionaries of Nicaragua now fighting the Sandinistas and seeking American backing for their cause. Arturo Cruz, former Sandinista ambassador to the United States, and Adolfo Calero, a businessman who was imprisoned by Somoza for his opposition activities, are others. What these "contras" want is a fair chance to participate in a democratic political process in their country.

Their formal offer to the Sandinistas is for a cease-fire and a na-

tional dialogue mediated by the Nicaraguan Conference of Bishops and guaranteed by observers from Central American governments. Daniel Ortega would remain president while a new electoral law was being drawn up. Then free elections for a new constituent assembly and a plebiscite on whether to hold a new presidential election would take place under international supervision.

It is a decent offer, and to remain true to itself the United States should be backing the forces that have made it. Yet the president's request for a modest \$14 million in military aid is expected to be defeated in the House Tuesday. A substitute package of non-military aid may then squeak through Congress.

We Americans, who rightly loathe the use of force, are apparently unable to grasp that the threat our democratic neighbors, and ultimately we, face is from armed men—men armed with weapons and with an international ideology that justifies, indeed requires, their use. Not enough of us have reached the mental turning point that makes a lover of liberty into a defender of liberty and an enemy of oppression into one who fights tyrants.

Claudia Winkler is editorial page editor of The Cincinnati Post.

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

DEMOCRACY IS THE ISSUE IN NICARAGUA

The people of Nicaragua, after overthrowing the Somoza tyranny, are again being forced to struggle for their freedom and their dignity. Their struggle, like that in neighboring El Salvador, has been waged against extremes both of the Right and the Left. Today they need and deserve the help of all who share the democratic faith.

The Sandinista rulers of Nicaragua are now seeking to impose a totalitarian system upon their people. They will not be deterred simply by humanitarian pleas, diplomatic appeals or economic pressures. If the Sandinistas succeed, the Nicaraguan people will suffer greatly, and democracy throughout the Americas will face an unprecedented threat.

But the Nicaraguan democratic resistance movement can alter this dangerous course of events. Its leaders—figures such as Arturo Cruz, Adolfo Calero, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo—proved their dedication to democracy in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. They seek negotiations for an honorable peace with the Sandinistas through the good offices of the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops. But the Sandinistas still refuse to negotiate with their own people. So the resistance leaders are now asking for our help.

There are many issues in the present debate over U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, but the basic issue is this: will we stand beside the Nicaraguan democratic resistance in its struggle against totalitarianism? Or will we declare that this movement is a lost cause, and offer only to help its supporters adjust to lives as victims, refugees and exiles?

We the undersigned—Democrats, Republicans and Independents, liberals and conservatives, trade unionists, businessmen, professionals, religious workers and intellectuals—believe that our government and our people must now send an unmistakable message to Managua, Moscow and Havana: the American people support the struggle for democracy in Nicaragua. We may differ over what form our assistance should take, but we are firmly united in the conviction that our aid is a moral and strategic obligation.

We urge you to join us by making your views known to the President, your Congressmen and your community. Help us build a movement of support throughout the United States for those in Nicaragua who, at great risk, are standing up for democracy. Please send a generous contribution so this message can be reprinted in other publications, so speakers can be sent out to present our case, so radio and television messages can be broadcast, and so our leaders (and the Sandinistas) will hear the voice of democratic America.

Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA)

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To: Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA)
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☐ Yes, you may add my name as a supporter of the above statement in support of the Nicaraguan democratic resistance movement.
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PRODEMCA: The Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA) is a non-partisan citizens' organization working to build public support for solving problems of conflict and development in Central America by strengthening the processes of democracy. We believe that democracy is proving—as, for example, in El Salvador—to be a practical alternative to extremism of the Left and the Right in this important region. Both the values and the interests of the United States compel us to support those of our neighbors who have undertaken the

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The New York Times

Sandinistas' Visitors: Motives Touch Off Dispute

By STEPHEN KINZER

Special to The New York Times

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, June 27 — For four nurse-midwives from New York City, a recent visit here was a chance to work in a Nicaraguan maternity hospital, sharing ideas and learning about health care in revolutionary society. But their mission was as much political as medical.

They are among tens of thousands of Americans who have visited Nicaragua since the 1979 revolution. These visits have given many of them a basis to speak against Administration policy. But their critics, who include some leaders of the Nicaraguan opposition, say many fail to address fundamental questions about what is happening under Sandinista rule.

"These trips are not propaganda," said Vice President Sergio Ramirez Mercado recently. "Anyone who comes to Nicaragua has an open possibility to see anything."

There are those, however, who say that many visiting Americans are naive about the true nature of the Sandinista Front.

"Partial to the Sandinistas"

"Some honestly come to investigate, but most come to confirm what they already believe," said Jaime Chamorro Cardenal, an editor of the opposition newspaper La Prensa. "They are sent down here by groups that are partial to the Sandinistas, and once they get here they are quite ingenuous. They believe everything they are told."

The nurse-midwives arranged their trip through a New York organization called Madre, which has been aiding Managua's main women's hospital for more than a year, and through the Sandinista women's organization.

"Our presence here is a sign of solidarity with what is going on in Nicaragua," said one of the nurse-midwives, Jennifer Dohrn. "This experience is going to help us organize health workers in the States in opposition to what Reagan is doing."

Farmers to Ship Tractors

Delegations of Americans of all sorts pass through Nicaragua constantly. While Miss Dohrn and her colleagues were instructing Nicaraguan nurses in methods of teaching childbirth, a half-dozen farmers from California were meeting with Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock to discuss their plan to ship 215 tractors and several small cotton processing plants to Nicaragua as part of a campaign of support for the Sandinista revolution.

"Narrow-minded politicians in Washington are backing the wrong side in this revolution," said Rodger McAfee, one of the farmers. "We are supporting a reactionary military organization that blows up agricultural plants that feed people."

Anti-Sandinista insurgents have often attacked economic targets, including Government-owned farm machinery and grain depots.

The Minister of Foreign Trade, Alejandro Martinez Cuenca, who recently visited several cities in the United States, estimated on his return that 100,000 Americans had come to Nicaragua since the Sandinista takeover.

Meet Sandinista Leaders

Members of some delegations meet with ranking Government leaders while others take part in public ceremonies or are quoted in the Sandinista press.

Many of the delegations are religious. In the last few months, important Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and Methodist leaders have been among the visitors.

Most of the visits by Protestant groups are organized through the Protestant Committee for Aid and Development. According to Peggy Heiner, who works for the organization arranging schedules for the visitors, most of those who come are between the ages of 30 and 40, nearly all are from the middle class and half are clergy. "They look around and see what the Government here is trying to do for the people, and they leave asking what they can do to turn American policy around," Mrs. Heiner said.

One American religious organization, Witness for Peace, has established a permanent presence in Nicaragua and has brought more than 1,200 people from across the United States to take part in an unusual set of activities here. As part of their program, visitors are sent to live for several days in remote towns, many in areas where rebels have been active.

Many 'Get Very Fired Up'

The original idea was that the presence of Americans in battle zones might deter attacks, according to one of the group's coordinators, Ed Griffin-Nolan, 28 years old. But Witness for Peace is now active in denouncing human rights abuses by rebel forces that its workers say they have learned about in trips around the country.

"We are trying to build an understanding in the United States of the death and destruction caused by this

war," Mr. Griffin-Nolan said.

On Thursday mornings, visiting Americans often assemble in front of the United States Embassy building in Managua to protest Administration policy toward Nicaragua. The demonstrations, which are sponsored by the Committee of U.S. Citizens Living in Nicaragua, have been held weekly for more than a year and a half.

Although there is no reliable estimate of how many Americans live here, the number is thought to be at least 1,000. Among them are sociologists and economists working for Government agencies, doctors and nurses, university professors and about 150 religious workers.

"One Side of a Story"

Some of the religious activists who visit here have critics within their own denominations. "Unfortunately, there is only one side of a story being told," said the Rev. Mario Fiandri, an Italian-born priest who was expelled from Nicaragua last year for purported involvement in political acts.

One American who recently visited Nicaragua, Robert R. Peck, athletic director of Williams College, said he and other religious Americans who come here "believe in a philosophy that's biblically based, which means it's kind of socialist."

"It says," he said, "feed your brother."

"People understand the faults of the revolution, but they also understand the general direction of the revolution and approve of it," Mr. Peck said.

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Americans Pay Tribute to a Revolution

For Backpacking 'Sandalistas,' Nicaragua Seems a Way Station on '60s Trip

By Edward Cody

Washington Post Foreign Service

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, July 22—One honored guest at the Sandinista revolution's sixth anniversary celebration this weekend was Mayor Bernard Sanders from Burlington, Vt.

A church ceremony lauding Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto and his two-week-old fast for peace was organized by U.S. citizens living in Nicaragua. Their tribute ended with two women, one strumming a guitar, singing a song whose refrain was "Thanks to the Nicaraguans," and with the Americans chanting a Sandinista guerrilla slogan.

Tens of thousands of such Americans have come to visit the revolution here since the Sandinista National Liberation Front took power in 1979. For most, short visits were enough. Others have stayed to live and work for an extended period. Either way, most have made their trip a gesture of solidarity with the Sandinistas and a mark of opposition to U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

For many, traveling here confirms an already solid belief in what the Sandinistas are trying to do. Working on a coffee plantation for a few weeks as an "internationalist" provides an opportunity to share in concrete expression of an ideal, much as some American Jewish youths find satisfaction working summers on an Israeli kibbutz.

For others, the backpacking "sandalistas," Nicaragua seems to be a way station on a trip back through the 1960s. One Nicaraguan calls these young visitors "totally confused Americans." Although most Americans here perhaps are not so confused, few appear to make critical appraisals of what they see.

As a result, anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans charge that most Americans come here with pro-Sandinista organizations, arrive with a predisposition to like what they see, willingly believe what they are told by their Sandinista hosts and then return to the United States to get out the "truth."

Some cannot wait to get back. Visiting U.S. correspondents frequently have been buttonholed in Managua hotel corridors by "internationalists" with insistent suggestions on how to improve coverage of Nicaragua.

Salomon Alarcon, spokesman for the government's Nicaraguan Committee for Solidarity with Peoples, said such testimony by returned U.S. visitors is an important source of support for Nicaragua in the United States.

"Without neglecting the importance of the rest of the world, we think that solidarity from the North American people has a special role to play," he added. "The visitors are . . . very important, because our objective is not only to have these people nick coffee or build houses, but also

Alarcon said 3,000 Americans visited Nicaragua in 1984 through his organization's contacts with sympathetic U.S. groups. Many more visited through church and political groups without contacting the committee, he said, making the number of visitors impossible to estimate.

Bobbie Camacho, a 35-year-old administrative assistant for a legal services group in the San Francisco area, made her visit to Nicaragua for this year's anniversary celebration in a 15-member delegation from Friends of Nicaraguan Culture. The organization describes itself as a network of "artists, cultural workers, intellectuals, opinion-makers and all people who work with ideas" seeking to generate support for Nicaragua.

"We also support the struggles of the peoples in Central America and the Caribbean," including El Salvador and Cuba, Camacho said as she hurried from the d'Escoto tribute to another event.

However they get here, high-ranking Sandinista officials appear to accord importance to the gestures from U.S. visitors. President Daniel Ortega mentioned Sanders' attendance during his July 19 speech. The government press office sponsored a news conference later that day in which Sanders and several visitors from other countries denounced U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

In its coverage of the July 19 festivities, under the headline "Worldwide Support for the Revolution," the progovernment Nuevo Diario newspaper listed visits by the U.S. and other solidarity groups to Defense Minister Humberto Ortega, then added:

"Debbie Reuben, representative of the network of Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People, which has offices in all states of the North American nation, called being in Nicaragua very important 'because at this time when U.S. aggression has been continuing to increase, we consider that the friendship between our two peoples has only increased.'"

In addition to the visitors, several hundred Americans live and work here full time. Activists among them, often joined by visitors passing through, gather Thursday mornings for regular demonstrations in front of the U.S. Embassy to protest U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

Lin Roth, daughter of a retired U.S. Navy officer, teaches ecology at the Jesuit-run University of Central America and has been here since October 1981. Roth, a 35-year-old Radcliffe graduate, explains her continued stay here as professional satisfaction accompanied by political commitment.

"I've never been anywhere where what you do can count so much," she said.

Roth, who played the guitar during the song for D'Escoto d'Escoto, said she particularly opposes U.S. funding of the anti-Sandinista contra rebels known as contras who have been fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government for more than three years.

"I think that this is the worst problem here," she added. "The other problems are not going to get solved as long as the aggression goes on. My main responsibility as a U.S. citizen is to speak out against this war."

WASHINGTON POST
JULY 22, 1985

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COMMENTARY

The Newest Political Pilgrims

Paul Hollander

MARXIST-LENINIST Nicaragua has in the last few years emerged as the new destination of political tourists from the United States who have revived a grotesque and embarrassing tradition in Western intellectual-political history: the reverential pilgrimage to highly repressive Communist countries by educated people, beneficiaries of considerable political freedom and material well-being.

By 1979 this tradition had temporarily fallen into discredit. Following the death of Mao in 1976, his successors' revelations about Chinese society largely demolished the worshipful accounts the pilgrims to China had brought back earlier. Mao himself ceased to be deified and (even before the official Chinese rejection in late 1984 of Marxism as an infallible guide to the future) the new Chinese regime began moving toward more free enterprise and better relations with the United States.

By the early 1980's a number of developments had also reduced the glamor and reputation of another Communist country, Cuba. On the one hand, Dr. Benjamin Spock still believed that "... the Castro government ... has made remarkable, admirable progress in education, in housing, in ... health care—for all citizens," and for a publication of the United Methodist Church, Cuba, as of 1981, still represented "a vision of the future." On the other hand, the appeal of Cuba to its American admirers was sharply reduced by the outpouring in 1980 of 125,000 refugees (most of them poor, and young, and dark-skinned), the persecution of homosexuals, the growing militarization of the society, the stationing of tens of thousands of troops abroad, and the increasingly intimate relationship between Castro and the Soviet Union (which had lost its own attraction decades earlier when even its most ardent supporters were jolted out of their faith by the celebrated revelations of Khrushchev about the reign of Stalin).

As for Communist Vietnam, it was one thing to celebrate it when American bombs were raining down and its heroic guerrillas were defying American military might, but it was something else again to sing its praises after over a million people had escaped under extremely hazardous conditions from the southern portion of the newly united country.

In these circumstances the rise of Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua could not have been better timed. Here was a small country which had earlier been dominated by the United States, run by a corrupt pro-American dictator, and redeemed by an authentic revolution, the culmination of years of guerrilla war. The new regime came complete with a youthful leadership, most of them former guerrilla fighters, some of them intellectuals of sorts (among the top leaders, Daniel Ortega, Ernesto Cardenal, and Sergio Ramírez had poetic-literary leanings or credentials), and others among them devotees of liberation theology. There was also something for the feminists in the person of Nora Astorga, the Deputy Foreign Minister celebrated for helping to trap and kill a general of Somoza ("Oh God," said an American woman described by the *Washington Post* as a political activist, "to try to get the guy to bed and then kill him! Fantastic. It's like a Western. That's my dream, to do that to Reagan, George Bush, go right down the line!").

For many American sympathizers, events in Nicaragua represented a replay of the 1960's—there was, at any rate, an appealing resemblance: "Here," said *Playboy*, "was a place seemingly run by the kind of people who were 60's radicals. Wherever we went, people were young, singing political folk songs and chanting, 'Power to the people.' One night there was even a Pete Seeger concert in town!" Elsewhere the leaders of the regime were described as "Rock 'n' Roll Rebels ... into baseball, beer, and Bruce Springsteen."

No wonder, then, that the roster of prominent supporters of the Sandinista regime included so many well-known veterans of the radical movement of the 1960's: William Sloane Coffin, Ron Dellums, Ramsey Clark, Linus Pauling, George Wald, Benjamin Spock, Allen Ginsberg, and Abbie Hoffman. The National Sponsors of USOCA

PAUL HOLLANDER is professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a fellow at the Harvard Russian Research Center. His books include *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (1981, 1983) and *The Many Faces of Socialism* (1983).

(U.S. Out of Central America), a major pro-Sandinista lobby, included Eqbal Ahmad (of the Institute for Policy Studies), Noam Chomsky, Harvey Cox, David Dellinger, Douglas Dowd, Richard Falk, John Gerassi, John C. Leggett, Robert McAfee Brown, Bertell Ollman, Ruth Sidel (author of a glowing report on welfare in China under Mao), Pete Seeger, Leonard Weinglass, Adrienne Rich, Jessica Mitford, the Berrigan brothers, and many other Vietnam-era radicals.

People of this political stripe were, somewhat paradoxically, reinvigorated by the 1980 victory of Ronald Reagan ("the best organizer we have," as one of them said during a demonstration against the administration's policies in El Salvador). Reagan was the exponent of everything the Left detested: faith in capitalism, simple patriotism, an expressed willingness to use force in the defense of American interests abroad, and an unapologetic anti-Communism. Far from killing off the Left, then, the election of Reagan stimulated a resurgence of its political energies, especially in the universities, the churches, and the media.

KNOWING that it had this substantial reservoir of sympathizers on which to draw, and making good use of the lessons of Vietnam—the main one being that public opinion in the United States has great influence on foreign policy—the Sandinista regime began organizing and encouraging tours to Nicaragua almost immediately after the triumph of the revolution in 1979: "Now that the rebels are victorious," wrote a *New York Times* correspondent, "there is a new rush of assorted politicians, journalists, academics, and 'revolutionary groupies' eager to witness . . . the first popular revolution on the continent in twenty years."

Throughout the early 1980's the tours gathered force. As another *Times* correspondent wrote in 1982: "So many Americans and Western Europeans have descended on Nicaragua to study and work with the Sandinista government that a word, '*internacionalistas*,' has been coined to refer to them." A year later, in 1983, the *Times* reported that "Over the past year the Managua government has been a near-permanent host to American fact-finding missions, ranging from church delegations to doctors, students, and Senators, who are warmly received, briefed, and shown projects."

The scope of the new pilgrimages may be gauged in part from the number of organizations promoting the tours. They include Marazul Inc. (specializing in trips to socialist countries; in January 1985 alone, Marazul sponsored 13 different tours to Nicaragua); National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People (with branches in 75 American cities); Nicaragua-Honduras Education Project (which "Sponsors trips to Nicaragua, mostly for state and local opinion-makers

such as elected officials"); Nuevo Instituto de Centro America (which organizes five-week courses of language study); the *Guardian* (a weekly radical newspaper which has organized tours since 1980); Tropical Tours (the official representative of Tur-Nica, the Nicaraguan national tour agency); Tur-Nica itself; U.S. Out of Central America (a "national group with representatives in more than 100 cities actively opposing U.S. policy . . . in Central America. Work includes lobbying elected officials, tours, and donations of medical supplies, . . . teach-ins, and a traveling slide show"); Witness for Peace (supported by the Quaker American Friends Service Committee, with 100 chapters nationwide).

Careful preparations have preceded the tours. According to a story in the *Christian Science Monitor*:

... At a conference in Mexico City, Rosario Murrillo, the wife of Nicaraguan junta leader Daniel Ortega Saavedra, asked a well-connected American, Blase Bonpane, to organize delegations of prominent American celebrities to Nicaragua. . . .

Mr. Bonpane, a former Maryknoll priest and professor of Latin American history at the University of California at Los Angeles, is a liberation theologian sympathetic to the Sandinistas. He understood . . . the impact Hollywood stars could have on American public opinion.

By now American liberals have created a virtual industry of delegations to Nicaragua. . . . More than 2,500 Americans have taken part in such missions. . . .

Delegations of church activists, college professors, architects and planners, artists and photographers, nurses and health-care workers, journalists and media-professionals, Vietnam veterans and average citizens . . . have headed south. . . .

Many of the most visible critics of U.S. policy come from Hollywood—celebrities like Ed Asner, Mike Douglas, and Susan Anspach.

Much of the Hollywood interest in Nicaragua can be traced back to Blase Bonpane who helped organize a nine-city tour . . . with singer Jackson Browne, actors Mike Farrell and Diane Ladd, former Georgia State Sen. Julian Bond, and others. The tour was aimed at rallying opposition to U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

THE extraordinary political importance attached to the tours has also been indicated by the readiness of the Sandinista leaders to make themselves available to the visitors. In the words of a Miami *Herald* account:

Almost any visiting American official, no matter how low his rank, can now expect to meet with at least two of the nine *comandantes*. . . . Non-official American visitors . . . can count on at least one *comandante* and a well-worn tour of revolutionary highlights.

There are visits to the neighborhood Sandi-

nista Defense Committees, tours of schools and clinics, and trips to the northern town of Jalapa to witness the damages wreaked by CIA-backed anti-Sandinista guerrillas. . . .

"When they return to the United States they have a multiplier effect on the public opinion of your country," [Interior Minister Tomás] Borge said.

The experience of Texas Civil Liberties Union Legal Director, James C. Harrington, was typical:

We met with Sergio Ramírez (a novelist and member of the three-member junta . . .), two department directors, with Deputy Foreign Minister Nora Astorga (a charming heroine of the revolution), . . . with the Minister of Culture (Father Ernesto Cardenal), and with two of the three Electoral Commission members. . . .

We broke mid-day bread with three Supreme Court members. . . .

Claudia Dreifus, who interviewed members of the Sandinista Directorate for *Playboy*, also found them most accessible:

After the interviews were under way, some of the Nicaraguan leaders began inviting Marcelo [the photographer] and me, well, to hang out with them. Things we did in Managua: go with Borge to a prison farm for Miskito Indian counterrevolutionaries; watch Father Cardenal put on an all-day Latin American song festival in Revolutionary Square . . . dinner at Ramírez house.

The Nicaraguan public-relations campaign has been appropriately described by the Miami *Herald* as ". . . a low-key but relentless sales job, subtle but effective, high in moral tone but aimed right at the guts of the Americans' conscience." For as Minister Borge has said: "Nicaragua's most important war is the one fought inside the United States. . . . The battlefield will be the American conscience. . . ."

Accordingly, the regime has tailored its message to different audiences. As John Vinocur of the New York *Times* has noted:

To American visitors, frequently from church and university groups, the revolution is described as a humanist one, a struggle against misery. To other visitors, with left-wing views, the talk is of "scientific change" with no interest in achieving "perfect democracy," but a revolution aimed at a "total social transformation."

Not all visitors have been mere sightseers. The Washington law firm, Reichler and Appelbaum, which is the Nicaraguan government's official registered agent in the United States (and is reportedly paid about \$320,000 per year for its services) has sent hired investigators who have been provided "in-country transportation, boarding, housing, office space [and] staff," to help collect information on atrocities committed by the *contras*.

Other visitors, like their predecessors in Cuba

who cut sugar cane (the Venceremos Brigade), have volunteered to work on various projects such as picking coffee beans. However, the "central thrust is what each volunteer does when he or she returns to the United States." In other words, to quote Diane Passmore, national coordinator of the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People, "The major goal is to have them return and tell others about the country and their experiences."

AND so they have. For example, following a ten-day visit, Republican State Senator Jeanette Hamby from Oregon and her fellow women tourists returned with "the fervor of new converts." Reported Colman McCarthy in the *Washington Post*:

In Oregon, Hamby and her friends have been speaking regularly before political, civic, and church groups. They are seeking to persuade people . . . that our policies there [in Nicaragua] are politically wrong and morally corrupt.

So too, Michael Harrington, the well-known author and chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, came back from Nicaragua feeling, as he wrote,

more ashamed of my country than at any time since the Vietnam war. The Nicaraguans are a generous people, a poor and often hungry people, who want to make a truly democratic revolution and it is we who work to subvert their decency.

Similar feelings both about the Nicaraguan revolution and American policy were expressed by other prominent American writers. William Styron joined a group of fellow novelists from Europe and Latin America in protesting American threats to the "modest but profound achievements of the Nicaraguan revolution." The poet Adrienne Rich described Sandinista Nicaragua as "a society that took poets seriously" and approvingly quoted someone who told her: "You'll love Nicaragua. Everyone there is a poet."

This remark recalled the news brought back from North Vietnam by Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd in 1966:

We knew . . . what the Vietnamese contribution to a humane socialism would be: it was evident in the unembarrassed handclaps among men, the poetry and song at the center of man-woman relationships, the freedom to weep practiced by everyone. . . . Here we began to understand the possibilities for a socialism of the heart.

Other echoes of past pilgrimages to Communist regimes could be heard in comments about Nicaraguan prisons:

The prison we visited was the first of seven prison farms. Former national guardsmen will-

ing to cooperate are moved through a series of more and more relaxed prison settings. The prison we saw had 38 inmates, no armed guards, conjugal visits. . . . The man speaking had high praise for the government and said if freed he would go to fight for the FSLN [the Sandinistas] in the north. Money made from the crops is put back into improvements for the prison. . . . As part of the routine the men attend classes in literacy and agriculture. Many who previously had no skill but shooting a gun now have plans to become farmers.

This, from a group of American churchmen. And indeed, of all the pilgrims to the Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua, it is church groups who have become its most active and dedicated supporters (perhaps because, as former President Jimmy Carter put it in announcing his endorsement of a project "to build homes for landless peasants" in Nicaragua, "We want the folks down there to know that some American Christians love them").

Thus: Maryknoll nuns have returned from Nicaragua to lobby in Washington and have exerted considerable influence on House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill. The Reverend William Sloane Coffin (who had earlier affirmed the decency of the North Vietnamese Communist regime) now assured readers of the *New York Times* that the Nicaraguan regime could not possibly be Marxist-Leninist since it included Roman Catholic priests (all of whom, incidentally, were on record asserting the compatibility of Marxism and Christianity). In any case, Coffin was satisfied that the goals of the Sandinistas were "to stop the exploitation of the many by the few and to end foreign domination." A reporter for the *Catholic Worker* sensed "an atmosphere of youth, vitality, and hope throughout Nicaragua." Father Richard Preston of Lansing, Michigan, reached the conclusion that "the reign of God has arrived in Nicaragua" as well as "the reign of truth, hope and justice." A member of the Quaker Witness for Peace group disclosed that he had "never been in a society so permeated by religion" as Sandinista Nicaragua, and David Sweet, a founder of Witness for Peace, emphasized "the Christian nature of the Nicaraguan revolution" and insisted that "the revolution is drawing its strength from Christians. . . ."

On this point too the echoes of past pilgrimages are loud. For example, D. F. Buxton, an English Quaker, wrote of the Soviet Union in 1928: "In the emphasis they place on the spirit of service, the Communists have taken to heart some of the most important maxims of the New Testament . . . their society is a more Christian one than ours." An American Quaker, Henry Hodgkin, proposed in 1932: "As we look at Russia's great experiment in brotherhood, it may seem to us that some dim perception of Jesus's way, all unknown, is inspiring it. . . ." Hewlett Johnson, the

Dean of Canterbury, regarded Stalin's Russia as "singularly Christian and civilized. . . ." And to a group of Christian theologians, Mao's China "has come to exert some particular impact on our understanding and experience of God's saving love."

It is not being suggested here that Nicaragua today is nearly as repressive or violent a country as the Soviet Union under Stalin or China under Mao. But on the other hand, as Octavio Paz, the eminent Mexican writer, puts it, "the process of Sovietization is quite advanced" in Nicaragua today. Thus even when allowances are made for the overpowering effects of favorable predisposition and the inherent limitations of learning about a country through a short conducted tour, the credulousness of the pilgrims to Nicaragua remains staggering. Not only do they ignore the lessons of similar pilgrimages and tours in the past; they also blind themselves to the abundant information and testimony available about Nicaragua, much of it coming from Nicaraguans untainted by any association with the Somoza regime and who were in fact supporters of the revolution which deposed him, that belies the image projected by the Sandinistas and carefully cultivated through the tours.

Edén Pastora is one such prominent leader who first fought against Somoza and is now fighting the Sandinistas. He writes:

Sadly, the revolution's bright promise has not been realized. The Sandinista directorate has replaced the Somozas with a totalitarian tyranny. . . .

The government has emasculated the country's independent labor unions. . . . Freedom of the press has been practically extinguished. . . . The directorate has set up a powerful secret-police apparatus. . . . [The regime] remains silent in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and acts as an apologist for the . . . crackdown in Poland.

. . . Despite . . . loans and outright grants totalling over \$1.5 billion, the economy is in shambles. . . . Living conditions are deteriorating. The real wages of Nicaragua's working class have plummeted 60 percent during last year. . . .

Domingo Sanchez Delgado, "a dedicated Marxist-Leninist" and nominee of the Socialist party for President, says:

We are not Sandinistas. . . . We don't want a country where the press is not free . . . where power is abused . . . where young people can't

* The German novelist Guenter Grass agreed. After visiting a Sandinista prison in the company of Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge, Grass decided that "in this tiny, sparsely populated land, . . . Christ's words are taken literally. . . ."

go to the movies because they are afraid they will be captured for military service.

... There is arrogance and abuse of every sort. This is hardly revolutionary conduct. ...

Virgilio Godoy Reyes was Minister of Labor in the Sandinista government from 1979 until 1984. He has reached the conclusion that

these five years have shown the great error we made in giving our confidence to those who think of nothing but the interests of their party. ... After so many dreams, disillusion. Instead of liberty, new forms of oppression. To say that the workers and peasants are in power is a monstrous lie. ... The only equality we are achieving is equality in misery.

Arturo Cruz, former Sandinista ambassador to the U.S. and the most prominent democratic critic of the regime, writes:

The Sandinistas are evidently determined to ignore the democratic yearnings of the Nicaraguan people. ... The problem of Nicaragua is not MIG's and assault helicopters. It is, fundamentally, the absence of liberty—the character of the government that will put such weapons to use.

There has also been criticism from some former American admirers of the regime. Robert S. Leiken of the Carnegie Endowment is one of them:

For one who has sympathized with the Sandinistas, it is painful to look into the house they are building. ... Each succeeding trip to Nicaragua drains my initial reservoir of sympathy for the Sandinistas. ...

One of the most depressing aspects of our trip was to hear from so many that their lives are worse today than they were at the time of Somoza.

... A Sandinista *nomenklatura* has emerged. Party members shop at hard-currency stores, dine at luxury restaurants restricted to party officials, and vacation in the mansions of the Somoza dynasty, labeled "protocol houses" [as in Cuba]... Vans pull up daily at government and party offices to deliver ... delicacies unavailable elsewhere.

... Ration cards are confiscated for non-attendance at Sandinista meetings.

... Draft resistance has become a mass movement in Nicaragua.

Senator Edward Kennedy, generally speaking

not a harsh critic of the Sandinistas, has had this to say about their policy toward the Miskito Indians:

... The Sandinistas' treatment of the Indians continues to be unconscionable. One-third to one-half of the 90,000 Indians on the coast have been displaced. Some 20,000 fled to Honduras to escape the Sandinistas' scorched-earth policy ... 10,000 are confined to resettlement camps. ... Most disturbing of all, 3,000 to 5,000 have lived for two years in forced-labor camps which resemble concentrations camps. ...

The treatment of the Indians is not the only manifestation of the repressive policies pursued by the regime. Contrary to the claims of American sympathizers, the Sandinistas (according to the Nicaraguan Commission of Jurists) carried out over 8,000 political executions between July 19, 1979 and December 12, 1982. This and many other examples of political violence and human-rights violations have been extensively documented in what probably is the single best compilation of the true record of the Nicaraguan regime. Its author, Humberto Belli, used to be a supporter of the Sandinistas and editorial-page editor of *La Prensa*.

IN THE light of such information, and against the background of past precedents, the current political pilgrimages to Nicaragua emerge as a remarkable example of the confluence of deception and self-deception. This, indeed, is in part the message that Michael Massing intended to convey in an article in the *Nation* ("Hard Questions on Nicaragua," April 6, 1985), a rather mild demurral from the Left's blind enthusiasm for the Sandinista regime for which, predictably, he was then heavily pilloried in that magazine's letters section. As that exchange once again underscores, today's new pilgrims demonstrate the same tenacity of belief, the willful inability to learn from history, and above all the hostility toward our own society that have repeatedly predisposed certain groups and individuals to admire and idealize political systems opposed to ours, especially when they are run by revolutionaries acting in the name of Marx. The only question is—and it may not be premature to raise it, since as we have seen there are already signs of disillusionment with the Sandinistas—who will be next?

H

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FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER
IN CENTRAL AMERICA (PRODEMCA)

FT. LAUDERDALE/MIAMI, FLORIDA

Tuesday, April 9th

8:30 A.M.	Live radio interview by telephone. WINZ radio.
10:00 A.M.	Interview with editorial board of the <u>Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood Sun-Tattler.</u>
11:00 A.M.	Interview with editorial board of the <u>Ft. Lauderdale News & Sun Sentinel.</u> Kingsley Guy will be present.
12:00 P.M.	Depart by car to Miami, Florida.
1:15 P.M.	WQBA radio interview. Live interview 15 min.
1:45 P.M.	Interview with the editorial board of the <u>Miami News.</u> Lou Salome will be present.
2:45 P.M.	Brief meeting with Congressman Claude Pepper, D-FLA.
3:00 P.M.	Interview with Guillermo Martinez, editorial writer for the <u>Miami Herald.</u>
4:00 P.M.	Spanish International Network (SIN), live television interview.
4:30 P.M.	Interview with <u>Diario Las Americas,</u> Mr. Remos will interview.
7:00 P.M.	Live radio interview/talk show for one hour with Q & A. WNWS radio.

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FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA (PRODEMCA)

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Wednesday, April 10th

ROBELO TOUR

10:30 A.M.	Interview with WPLN radio.
11:30 A.M.	Live radio interview with WLAC radio for 30 minutes.
12:00 NOON	Meet with John Boone, political activist and host of private luncheon for Mr. Robelo.
12:15 P.M.	Private luncheon with community and religious leaders.
1:00 P.M.	Interview with the editorial board of the <u>Tennessee Banner</u> .
2:30 P.M.	Meeting with the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. Those present will report to the Board of Governors of the Chamber.
3:00 P.M.	Meeting with Congressman Boner, D-TENN.
3:45 P.M.	Television interview with WSMV, NBC affiliate.
4:00 P.M.	Television interview with WKRN, ABC affiliate.
5:00 P.M.	Interview with WSM radio. Angela Murray will interview.
5:30 P.M.	Interview with the editorial board of the <u>Tennessean</u> . Foreign Affairs reporter present.
6:30 P.M.	Dinner with members of the Nashville Business and Industrial Council.
8:00 P.M.	Interview with Business & Industrial Council editorial board for syndication use.

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FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER
IN CENTRAL AMERICA (PRODEMCA)

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Thursday, April 11th

8:00 A.M.	Arrive in Cincinnati, met by City-Councilman Ken Blackwell. (Mr. Blackwell will escort Mr. Robelo the entire day)
9:00 A.M.	Interview with editorial board of the <u>Cincinnati Post</u> . Foreign affairs reporter will be present.
10:00 A.M.	Radio Talk show WCKY with Jan Michelson. One hour interview with Q & A from the public.
11:00 A.M.	Interview with the editorial board of the <u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u> . Foreign affairs & political affairs reporters will be present.
12:00 Noon	Luncheon with City Councilman Blackwell.
1:00 P.M.	Interview with PROBE radio station.
2:15 P.M.	Interview with 2-WAY radio station. Rick Bird will interview.
3:00 P.M.	Meeting with Mayor Charles Luken, Democrat. Mayor's office.
4:00 P.M.	Meeting with Bill Messner, President of the World Affairs Council.
5:00 P.M.	Departure for Texas

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Attorney, Washington, D.C.

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A. Philip Randolph Institute

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President, Boston University

William E. Simon
former Secretary of the Treasury

Max Singer*
The Potomac Organization

Kenneth B. Sorensen*
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Maurice Sonnenberg*
Investment Consultants, New York

~v. Ullman
Actor

Ben J. Wattenberg
Candidate for Democratic Mayoralty

De Witt
Author

Mary N. Treppe*
Executive Director, PRODEMCA

* Member of the Executive Committee
(All affiliations are for identification
purpose only.)

FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER
IN CENTRAL AMERICA (PRODEMCA)

WASHINGTON, D.C. SCHEDULE--ACTUAL

April 18 - 22, 1985

Thursday, April 18th

5:30 P.M. Interview with Morton Kondracke,
Newsweek magazine. Mr. Robelo.

Friday, April 19th

7:00 A.M. Live Interview with National Public
Radio. Bob Edwards will interview
Mr. Robelo for 20 minutes.

8:20 A.M. Live interview with WTOP radio station.
Mr. Robelo.

10:30 A.M. Editorial Board interview with Scripps-
Howard. Mr. Cruz & Mr. Robelo.

11:30 A.M. ABC interview with Mr. McWethy. Mr. Cruz
and Mr. Robelo.

1:00 P.M. Luncheon interview with Boston Globe.
Present will be Bob Healy, News Editor.
Mr. Robelo.

2:00 P.M. Interview with UPI. Mr. Cruz and Mr. Robelo.

3:00 P.M. Interview with NBC. Susan King will
interview Mr. Robelo.

4:00 P.M. Interview with Time magazine. Bill Stewart
will interview. Penn Kemble will accompany
Mr. Robelo.

5:00 P.M. Interview with AP. George Gedda will
interview. Mr. Robelo & Mr. Cruz.

6:30 P.M. Interview with Cord Meyer, syndicated
columnist. Mr. Robelo.

7:30 P.M. Dinner with Dave Mason, Legislative
Analyst for Cong. Trent Lott.

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democracy, human rights and social justice in Central America.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. SCHEDULE
April 18-22, 1985

Saturday, April 20th

11:15 A.M. Interview with Cable News Network. Terry Frieden
will interview. Mr. Robelo.

Noon Interview with Michael Kramer, New York magazine.
Mr. Robelo.

Sunday, April 21st

White House meetings.

Monday, April 22, 1985

9:30 A.M. Congressman Bennett, D-FLA. Mr. Robelo.

10:30 A.M. CBS News Nightwatch taping for the evening program.
Mr. Robelo.

2:15 P.M. Wall Street Journal interview with Robert Greenberger.
Mr. Robelo.

2:55 P.M. Cable News Network. Live Interview with Bernard
Shaw. Mr. Cruz and Mr. Calero.

3:00 P.M. Congressman Claude Pepper, D-FLA. Mr. Robelo.

3:30 P.M. Congressman Bart Grodon, D-TENN. Mr. Robelo.

4:00 P.M. Congressman McCurdy, D-OK. Mr. Robelo.

4:30 P.M. Senator Gordon Humphrey, R-NH. Mr. Cruz,
Mr. Robelo & Mr. Calero.