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# FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA (PRODEMCA)

2000 L STREET, N.W., SUITE 200, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 202/466-8264

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COALITION FOR DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

ELIE WIESEL  
AUTHOR

MARY N. TEMPLE\*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rediscovering Central America: The Democratic Awakening

A Program of Study and Public Education Sponsored By

THE FRIENDS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA  
(PRODEMCA)

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

## THE MISPERCEPTION

Many North Americans of all political persuasions still think of Central America as a region whose culture and economy are inhospitable to the democratic idea. In both the sophisticated and the popular mind, Central America is often imagined to be a realm which can only be ruled by despotic caudillos or dictatorships of the revolutionary Left. To take one illustration: in a recent Op-Ed article in the New York Times, the Associate Editor of the distinguished and liberal Foreign Policy magazine, Alan Tonelson, argued that efforts by the U.S. to foster democracy in the region are

"... based on a dangerous myth that can only burden our policy with unrealistic goals and increase pressure for deeper military involvement once less drastic measures prove inadequate."

"The spirit of tolerance and the commitment to laws and institutions that enable democracies to ride out heavy political and economic storms are completely alien to Central America."

The truth, however, is that during the past decade democracy has begun to flower in Central America, and there are many reasons to hope that it may flourish even more abundantly. By the end of this year, in all likelihood almost 88% of the peoples of Central America will live under governments which will have crossed the threshold toward democracy. Elections will be held in the Fall of 1985 in Guatemala. The governments of Honduras and Panama, despite some severe tests, remain democratic, and Honduras will also have elections in November of 1985. Democracy has taken firm root in El Salvador, and has proven sturdy in Costa Rica. Even Nicaragua, the most pessimistic case, has not yet been thoroughly pressed into the mold of Communist totalitarianism.

But unless the general public in the United States becomes more fully aware of the democratic transformation that is underway in Central America - and the grave consequences for us should it fail - its prospects will be much diminished. The government of the United States and many of our private agencies have been and will continue to be asked to assist the democratic trend in Central America. Yet public opinion surveys uniformly reveal great confusion and ignorance about these countries, their problems and the role of the United States in the region. Both the accomplishments of the region and its problems must be better understood here if we are to help Central American democracy weather the tests that lie ahead.

Ironically, our own policy experts and academics have long bemoaned the absence of a "democratic center" in the public life of Central and South America. But although such a current has now arisen south of our border, it is little acknowledged in our own public discourse. This can be seen especially in much of the educational and organizational discussion of Central America that takes place outside the formal political processes of our country: in the religious communities, academic institutions, labor, the media, culture and the arts. In these realms, images of Central America persist which reflect the earlier history of that region. Often these false images are kept alive by programs of education and international exchange which obscure the new reality.

Each year, literally thousands of North Americans, both opinion-makers and individuals recruited from the "grass-roots," travel to Central America. These trips are sponsored and managed by religious, labor, academic and cultural organizations which are committed to the proposition that the only hope for the region lies with revolutionary change such as that being attempted in Nicaragua. These travellers return to the U.S. to participate in well-organized and well-financed public education programs which further this misconception. Neither the remarkable success of democracy in El Salvador nor the fact that soon Nicaragua will be the only non-democratic government in the region has had much impact on these programs. (See Appendix E, F, G: Steven Kinzer, New York Times, Edward Cody, Washington Post, Paul Hollander, Commentary.)

I  
Recognizing the New Reality

The Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America is planning a three-stage program to help educate the people of the United States about the new currents of democracy in Central America. The initial phase in this program will involve a series of study tours for six groups of key U.S. opinion leaders to Central America. Each of these delegations will consist of a staff member and five to six figures of significance from our public life who have committed themselves in advance to speak and write about experiences upon their return to the United States. (Larger delegations will be too unwieldy, especially because meetings with top Central American leaders will be sought.)

Although none of the prospective participants has yet been formally invited to take part, the following lists exemplify both the categories from which participants will be drawn and the kinds of individuals we are seeking:

- I Religion:                      Father Theodore Hesburgh - President, University of Notre Dame
- Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum - American Jewish Committee
- Robert Dugan - National Association of Evangelicals
- Bishop James Crutchfield - Past President, United Methodist Conference of Bishops
- John Leith - Professor of Theology, Union Seminary, University of Virginia (Presbyterian)
- II Labor                              John Joyce, President, Bricklayers and Allied Trades, AFL-CIO
- Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
- John Sweeny, President, Service Employees International Union
- Sam Fishman, President, Michigan State AFL-CIO
- Leon Lynch, Secretary-Treasurer, United Steelworkers, AFL-CIO
- III Educators                      Clark Kerr, Chairman, President Emeritus, University of California, Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (ck).
- John Silber, President, Boston University
- Angier Biddle Duke, Trustee, Long Island University

The Rev. Joseph O'Hare, President, Fordham University

Hans Mark, Chancellor, University of Texas

John Bunzel, President, University of California  
at Long Beach

IV Journalists

Morton Kondrake, Newsweek

Michael Kramer, New York Magazine

Ben Wattenberg, United Features Syndicate

Roy Beck, United Methodist Reporter

Fred Barnes, The New Republic

William Raspberry, The Washington Post

V Arts and Culture Saul Bellow, novelist

Richard Grenier, novelist and critic

Hilton Kramer, editor

Liv Ullman, actress

Tom Stoppard, playwright

Pearl Bailey, singer

VI Business

Richard Holbrook, Managing Director Shearson - Lehman  
Brothers - Former Asst. Secretary of State for East Asian  
Affairs, Carter Administration

Daniel Rose, President, Rose Associates  
New York

Maurice Sonnenberg, Investment Consultant

Linden Blue, Chairman of the Executive Committee,  
Cordillera Corporation, Denver, Colorado

John Bennett, Rancher, San Antonio, Texas

Fred Smith, Chairman, Federal Express Corporation

The delegations will spend at least one full week in Central America, beginning in the Fall of 1985. (The first, hopefully, by the time of the Honduran and Guatemalan elections.) The countries they will visit may include El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras, but particular effort will be made to assure that each delegation spends at least two days in Nicaragua.

These will be well-constructed study tours, not sightseeing trips. Participants will meet not only with top government and political leaders, but with their counterparts in the civic and cultural life of the various countries they visit.

## II Public Education

The study tours to Central America will be but the first stage in this project. In the second phase, those who have travelled there will, with the assistance of our staff, convey their experiences to the public in the United States. The Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America is frequently requested to supply educational spokesmen for its views, but too often we have difficulty suggesting names of respected non-governmental figures who can speak with authority. To have visited the region for political study, even if only for a brief time, allows one to speak with considerably greater self-confidence and authority.

The Friends of the Democratic Center has the capability to help prepare and place articles and opinion pieces, to gain representation on television and radio public affairs programs, to suggest speakers for churches, synagogues, universities and civic organizations, and to make public statements in its own right on issues of concern. The organization has attracted attention and support in all regions of this country, and is capable of promoting discussion about democratic development in Central America in localities and constituencies which sometimes are not reached by the usual debates about issues of international affairs.

Our organization also has the virtue of spanning a wide band of the political spectrum of the United States: our Council includes liberals and conservatives; Democrats, Republicans and Independents; leaders of both business and labor; leaders of all religious faiths, and some outstanding figures from cultural and academic life.

We have also had significant experience in organizing delegations to Central American countries. In 1983 and 1984, sizable delegations of our members travelled to El Salvador to observe that country's first two critical elections. Both our presence in El Salvador and our reports upon returning home helped significantly to encourage El Salvador's democracy and to gain support for it here in the U.S. Members of our delegations also stopped in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras, where their presence gave strength to democratic forces in those societies. (See Appendix B)

Our organization has already been engaged in a number of projects to educate the U.S. public on issues of democracy in Central America. We have organized press briefings in New York, Washington, Cincinnati, Dallas and Seattle for these and other Central American democrats. Our own staff and officers have spoken before many organizations, appeared on many public affairs broadcasts, and given Congressional testimony on a number of occasions. We recently published a full page statement in The New York Times on democracy in Nicaragua, and were pleased at the breadth and distinction of the signers. (See Appendix D)



### III Visits by Central America's Democrats

A third phase of this project, which strongly reinforces the second, will be the organization of visits to the United States by democratic leaders from Central America itself. Those invited will be drawn from El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua. They will include representatives of all elements of the democratic political spectrum, although care will be taken not only to bring political leaders, but to involve figures from a variety of economic, cultural and religious affairs in those societies. We hope to bring as many as two such figures to the U.S. each month for a minimum stay of one week. All will be required to speak English.

Although each visitor will spend a few days in either New York or Washington, D.C., particular effort will be made to schedule visits to regions of the country which may not frequently receive such visitors. Efforts will also be made to schedule meetings between leaders of counterpart organizations in the U.S. and Central America: i.e., journalists, academics, religious leaders, business, labor, etc.

Participants would be required to commit themselves in advance to a full daily schedule. Our organization has substantial experience in scheduling such tours, having already done this for a number of visitors in the past. A sample schedule for one such trip, a week long tour taken by Nicaraguan democrat Alfonso Robelo, is attached. (See Appendix C & H)

None of the prospective Central American participants in this phase of the project has yet been formally invited to take part, although informal conversations with a number of them convince us of their general desire to do so. The following list exemplifies the kinds of individuals we are seeking:

#### Costa Rica

Eduardo Ulibarri, Editor, "La Nacion"

Guido Fernandez, Journalist; Television Commentator

Father Hugo Bonilla, Catholic Priest; Lawyer

Bernd Niehaus, Former Foreign Minister

Constantino Urcuyo, Dean of Political Studies; University of Costa Rica

NiNi Chinchilla, Former Congresswoman; High School Teacher

Modesto Watson, Director of Nicaraguan East Coast Refugee Camp

#### Guatemala

Jorge Carpio Nicolle, Director of the newspapers "La Razon" and "El Grafico"; candidate for President of Guatemala -- (elections to be held in November 1985)

Julio Celso De Leon Flores, Unionist; Secretary-General of the Central Central American Workers' Confederation; Executive Committee of Latin American Central Workers' Union (CLAT)

Anna Catalina Soberanias, Executive Director, Christian Democratic Party

Mario Gomez Valencia, Economist; former Director of the Central Bank

Vinicio Cerezo, Former Deputy to Congress; Secretary-General of Christian Democratic Party. Candidate for President of Guatemala -- (elections to be held in November 1985)

#### Nicaragua

Pedro Joaquim Chamorro, Former Editor, "La Prensa"

Dr. Leon Pallais, Jesuit Priest

Jenelee Hodgson, Theologian; Founder, Southern Indigenous Creole Communities

Alejandro Bolanos, Physician; Historian

Alejandro Cardenal, Architect; Former Minister of Tourism

Xavier Zavala, Author; Political Activist

Ismael Reyes, Former President of Nicaraguan Red Cross; Former President of Nicaraguan Chamber of Industry

Alvin Guthrie, Former Secretary General of Confederation of Unified Labor Unions

#### El Salvador

Francisco Quinones, Former Chair of the Peace Commission

Francisco de Sola, Jr., Private Sector Leader

Dr. Adolfo Rey Prendes, Minister of Presidency

Monsignor Ricardo Urioste

#### Honduras

Carlos Roberto Reina, Former President of the Central American Human Rights Court

Mario Rietti, Private Sector Leader

Jose Leonardo Callejas, Private Sector Leader

IV  
Conclusion

In sum, this program will fill a profound gap in the effort to educate the people of the United States about the promise and the problems of democratic development in Central America. We expect that this matter will be a vital interest of the United States for some years - this program can have long-lasting benefits. We are concerned about the number of other international education programs now in progress which promote strategies for Central America which are at odds with our conception of democracy. Both for the strategic interests and the intellectual good of our people, other voices must be heard.

Budget

The attached budget is divided into three parts. The first covers staff and office costs, including all costs of educational work here in the United States. The second covers all direct costs of sending the leadership delegations to Central America. The third covers all costs of bringing Central American democrats here. It is possible that a funder could contribute exclusively to any one aspect of this program.

I

Staff

Exchange Director.....	\$35,000
Secretary (bi-lingual).....	20,000
Escort officer, U.S. (full time).....	35,000
Escort officer, Central America (bi-lingual) 15 weeks at \$1,000 wk....	15,000

Sub-total.....105,000

Benefits (17% of total).....17,000

Office

Rent (\$1,000/mo.).....	\$12,000
Telephone (domestic & overseas) (\$1000/mo.).....	12,000
Copying, printing, etc.....	3,000
Postage.....	750
Equipment & supplies.....	<u>4,000</u>

Sub-total.....\$48,750.00

Total (this page).....\$153,750.00

II

U.S. Delegation Travel

Round trip air fare, D.C. to San Jose,  
six delegations of seven persons each  
Total, 42 persons, at \$500 per person.....\$21,000.00

Intra-Central American air fares  
San Jose, San Salvador, Guatemala City,  
Tegucigalpa, Managua  
42 persons at \$550 per person.....23,100.00

Hotel - seven days at \$85/day.....24,990.00  
42 persons

Meals and ground transportation,  
Misc. costs, telephone and telex, etc.  
\$50/day per person x 7 days x 42.....14,700.00

Total (this page).....\$83,790.00

III  
Central American Delegation Travel

Round trip fare, San Jose, Costa Rica to Washington, D.C.  
(48 people X \$500).....\$24,000.00

Domestic air travel  
48 x \$500 @ 5 cities.....\$24,000.00

Hotel - seven days at \$85 per day.....\$28,560.00

Meals & Ground transportation.....\$20,160.00

Misc. costs, telephone and telex, etc.

Total (this page).....\$96,720.00

Grand Total, Phases I, II and III.....\$334,260.00

APPENDIX

- A. Friends of the Democratic Center (PRODEMCA) tax determination letters
- B. Clips of El Salvador delegation
- C. Clips of Cruz & Robelo - Miami, Cincinnati, Tenn., etc.
- D. N.Y. Times, advertisement
- E. N.Y. Times, Steven Kinzer, Delegations to Managua
- F. Washington Post, Tribute to a Revolution
- G. Commentary, The Newest Political Pilgrims
- H. Robelo Schedules





RECEIVED JUL 25 1984

Internal Revenue Service  
District Director

Department of the Treasury

Date: July 20, 1984

Employer Identification Number:

Accounting Period Ending:

December 31

Foundation Status Classification:

509(a)(1) & 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

Advance Ruling Period Ends:

December 31, 1985

Person to Contact:

R. D. Morris

Contact Telephone Number:

1-800-424-1040

► The Citizens' Committee for the  
Pro-Democratic Coalition in  
Central America  
1901 N. Fort Meyer Drive, Suite 202  
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Applicant:

Based on information supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Because you are a newly created organization, we are not now making a final determination of your foundation status under section 509(a) of the Code. However, we have determined that you can reasonably be expected to be a publicly supported organization described in section 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)\*.

Accordingly, you will be treated as a publicly supported organization, and not as a private foundation, during an advance ruling period. This advance ruling period begins on the date of your inception and ends on the date shown above.

Within 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period, you must submit to us information needed to determine whether you have met the requirements of the applicable support test during the advance ruling period. If you establish that you have been a publicly supported organization, you will be classified as a section 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) organization as long as you continue to meet the requirements of the applicable support test. If you do not meet the public support requirements during the advance ruling period, you will be classified as a private foundation for future periods. Also, if you are classified as a private foundation, you will be treated as a private foundation from the date of your inception for purposes of sections 507(d) and 4940.

Grantors and donors may rely on the determination that you are not a private foundation until 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period. If you submit the required information within the 90 days, grantors and donors may continue to rely on the advance determination until the Service makes a final determination of your foundation status. However, if notice that you will no longer be treated as a section \* organization is published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, grantors and donors may not rely on this determination after the date of such publication. Also, a grantor or donor may not rely on this determination if he or she was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act that resulted in your loss of section \* status, or acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would be removed from classification as a section \* organization.

If your sources of support, or your purposes, character, or method of operation change, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your exempt status and foundation status. Also, you should inform us of all changes in your name or address.

Generally, you are not liable for social security (FICA) taxes unless you file a waiver of exemption certificate as provided in the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. If you have paid FICA taxes without filing the waiver, you should call us. You are not liable for the tax imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Organizations that are not private foundations are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, you are not automatically exempt from other Federal excise taxes. If you have any questions about excise, employment, or other Federal taxes, please let us know.

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

You are required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, only if your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$10,000. If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$10 a day, up to a maximum of \$5,000, when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay.

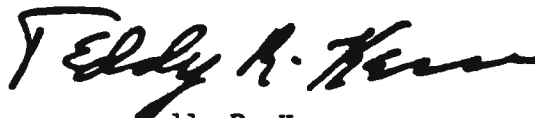
You are not required to file Federal income tax returns unless you are subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If you are subject to this tax, you must file an income tax return on Form 990-T. In this letter, we are not determining whether any of your present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

You need an employer identification number even if you have no employees. If an employer identification number was not entered on your application, a number will be assigned to you and you will be advised of it. Please use that number on all returns you file and in all correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service.

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your exempt status and foundation status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Teddy R. Kern  
District Director

The attached caveats are an integral part of this letter

cc: Jeffery L. Yablon  
c/o Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge  
1800 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Letter 1045(DO) (6-77)

For tax years ending before December 31, 1982, you must file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income tax, only if your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$10,000. For tax years ending on and after December 31, 1982, you are required to file Form 990 only if your gross receipts are normally more than \$25,000. For guidance in determining whether your gross receipts are "normally" more than \$25,000, see the instructions for the 1982 Form 990. If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$10.00 a day, up to a maximum of \$5,000, when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for delay.

Beginning January 1, 1984, unless specifically excepted, you must pay taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (Social Security taxes) for each employee who is paid \$100 or more in a calendar year.

You claimed to be an organization described in section 509(a)(2). Based on information you submitted, however, you can reasonably be expected to qualify as an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). You will therefore be treated as a 509(a)(1) organization during the advance ruling period indicated in this letter.



# HOW SALVADORAN ELECTIONS LOOK AND FEEL TO AMERICANS WHO SEE FOR THEMSELVES

REPORT OF THE CITIZEN OBSERVER GROUP AT THE  
SALVADORAN ELECTION



*Poll watchers from the two competing parties on election day,  
May 6, 1984, in northwestern El Salvador.*

PRODEMCA  
JULY 1984

Arrangements for the Citizen Observer Group to see the Salvadoran election were made by the Citizens' Committee for the Pro-Democratic Coalition in Central America (PRODEMCA). PRODEMCA announced that anyone who wanted to go (and who could pay a share of the cost) was welcome. PRODEMCA publicized the opportunity to observe the elections through a wide variety of organizations, through radio and press announcements, and through direct mailings to hundreds of Americans.

The twenty-five people who responded to PRODEMCA's announcements traveled to El Salvador under the auspices of PRODEMCA but not as its representatives. Their participation in the PRODEMCA-organized trip should not be understood as endorsement of PRODEMCA's position on the conflict in Central America.

### **PRODEMCA Who We Are and What We Stand For**

We are a completely independent and nonpartisan group of citizens who have come together because we share a belief that the United States should stand for democracy, human rights, and social justice in Central America.

At a time when our country is deeply divided about many issues raised by the conflict south of our border,

we have joined together in this Committee to express our unity on some fundamental issues of fact and values. We ourselves are divided on many questions, but we feel strongly about the importance of some critical points on which we think most Americans can agree.

In brief, our position is that there is a life-or-death struggle now taking place between two groups in Central America. One side is committed to democracy, to human rights, and to social progress; the other is anti-democratic and believes that the program of an "enlightened vanguard" is more important than human rights. We believe that if the United States is to have a decent regard for the needs and wishes of the people of Central America, we must continue to support the pro-democratic side in this struggle.

PRODEMCA will take no position on the nature or amount of U.S. aid to the members of the pro-democratic coalition, nor on whether it should be conditional, nor on specific diplomatic proposals, nor on any specific legislation or candidates. PRODEMCA condemns death squads of every political persuasion and favors effective action to prevent killings and other deprivations of basic human rights.

PRODEMCA is incorporated in the District of Columbia as an educational nonprofit organization and is organized and will operate to meet the requirements of section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, so that contributions to the Committee are tax-deductible.

*The following trip report was written by the PRODEMCA staff and does not necessarily represent the views of the participants in the PRODEMCA El Salvador Election observer group. The statement written by the observers themselves follows the trip report.*

# Trip report of the Citizen Observer Group to the Salvadoran Runoff Election for President

Twenty-five Americans traveled together to El Salvador at their own expense in order to observe the runoff election for President of that country. The group included Democrats and Republicans, a former ambassador, college professors and a college student—men and women of ages ranging from 21 to 75. Some traveled as representatives of Catholic and Protestant organizations, some were sent by nonprofit foundations, and some were traveling at their own initiative.

All the people in the Citizen Observer Group had been following the Central American conflict and had preconceptions about what they would see based mostly on what they had read and seen in the media. And all of them returned to the United States profoundly concerned because they found that what they saw with their own eyes and heard from the Salvadoran people they spoke with bore little resemblance to what the American media had led them to expect.

Because of all they had heard and because they were all aware that elections in Central America have in the past often been corrupt affairs characterized by massive fraud and intimidation, the observers went out to the polls suspicious of what they would be told by officials and doubtful that voters would be willing to speak openly. They were watching for even subtle signs of the continuation in the present of the corruption of the past, or of voters whose words would reflect their fears rather than their feelings.

The observers found that they had had three misconceptions about (i) the quality of the electoral process, (ii) the spirit of the voters, and (iii) the meaning of the elections.

## ON THE QUALITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS:

**PRECONCEPTION:** The clear plastic boxes into which the voters put their ballots opened the door to intimidation of voters and made "a mockery of the secret ballot."

**OBSERVATION:** The vast majority of the ballots were folded so that it was impossible to see which party symbol had been marked.

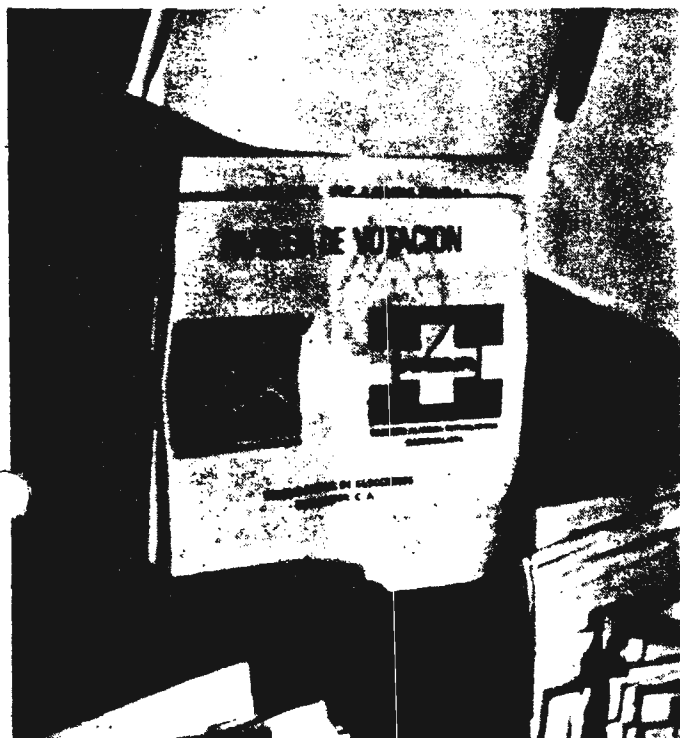
None of the twenty-five observers ever saw anyone, in or out of uniform, standing near the ballot boxes, or "urnas," watching how people were voting (let alone putting the names of those who voted the "wrong way" on blacklists, or death lists). Those Salvadorans who did not take the care to fold their ballots well enough to be unreadable were simply not bothering to use an available precaution against a nonexistent threat. Some of the PRO-DEMCA observers even saw ballots (some cast for each party) which had been folded by voters with the obvious intention of having their choice clearly visible. Where there are no "malicious intimidators," in the words of one of the observers, "there is no need to behave as if there are." The observers agreed that the few ballots which were readable through the sides of the box were evidence of the absence of intimidation at the polls, not of its presence.

**PRECONCEPTION:** The fact that voting is mandatory in El Salvador, with severe punishment for some non-voters, would mean that a large turnout at the elections was no more meaningful than the almost 100% turnout for

Soviet elections.

**OBSERVATION:** While some of the hundreds of Salvadorans with whom the observers spoke said that they were voting because it was the law to vote, the vast majority said they were voting because they felt the candidate of the party they favored would bring peace to their country. It also turns out that not a single non-voter has ever had to pay for his inaction. The fines simply have not been enforced in any of the three elections since 1979.

**PRECONCEPTION:** The voting process in El Salvador, with its electoral register, indelible ink, and identification cards would be so complex that the portion of El Salvador's population which is illiterate would in fact be excluded from the vote.



*A ballot.*

**OBSERVATION:** The voting process was not an great obstacle to the illiterate. The key part of the electoral process, the marking of the ballot, involved only putting a mark through the party symbol of the voter's choice (the white fish on the green background of the Christian Democrats and the cross on a red white and blue field of the ARENA symbol are as well known in El Salvador as the golden arches of McDonald's are here). For those parts of the electoral process which were more complex, help was always available from the droves of poll-watchers from the two parties who were eager to see as many people vote as possible.

The complexity of the 1984 elections lay in the electoral register which limited the number of places where each Salvadoran could choose to vote. Out of over 5,000 urnas, the voter could choose only one of those fifteen which were accompanied by a voter list which carried his name.

The first of these was at the place where the voter's "cedula," or identification card, had been issued. The other fourteen were backup lists in the capitals of each of El Salvador's fourteen districts which prevented voters away from their home towns from being excluded from the vote. Voters had to check the newspaper to find which urna had been assigned to their cedula number. At no polling place visited by the observers in the PRODEMCA group was there ever any shortage of newspapers or of people offering help to those who could not figure out where to vote. And, even if there had been a newspaper shortage or the voter had forgotten which urna to approach, it would still be possible to find out where to vote by looking at the urnas themselves. Each was clearly marked with the cedula numbers which were assigned to it.

### **ON THE SPIRIT OF THE VOTERS AND THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE POLLS:**

**PRECONCEPTION:** The Salvadoran elections would take place in a "climate of fear." Being in El Salvador would be hardly less dangerous than being in Beirut.

**OBSERVATION:** The "climate" at the polls has been described by members of the observer group as that of a "festival," and as being "like small towns in the U.S. on the 4th of July." All the observers said that they felt safe. By the time they left the country, they laughed at the image of San Salvador as a city under siege.

The observers had traveled around El Salvador in eight cars, each with the freedom to choose both its own route and which polls to visit. While the cars traveled only in the western half of the country, the areas which they vis-



*An hour before the polls opened at a San Salvador polling place on election day, May 6, 1984.*



ited hold close to two-thirds of El Salvador's population. Everywhere they went the observers reported seeing parents bringing their children to the polling places and vendors selling soft drinks and flavored ices to the lines of voters. It is not difficult to tell if a crowd of people is happy with or burdened by what they are doing. The mood of the crowds on May 6th was cheerful and positive even after many people had stood on line for three hours in the sun.

**PRECONCEPTION:** The presence of members of the Salvadoran Armed Forces at the polling places would be a source of voter intimidation.

**OBSERVATION:** Because the ballots were cast in secret, with no members of the military watching how people voted at any of the dozens of polling places visited by the small groups of PRODEMCA observers, the presence of the military cannot be said to have influenced the voters' choice of parties.

The twenty-five observers agreed that intimidation from the military was not only absent but also impossible, given the presence of poll watchers from both parties at every voting table. Because the poll watchers had the power to reject, at the time of the counting of the ballots, votes which they felt had not been freely cast, the military could not get away with intimidation had that been their goal. In fact, however, the observers saw no reason to believe that members of the military ever even tried to tilt the vote toward either candidate. Soldiers were under strict orders from their commander-in-chief not to vote and, so far as we could tell, none did. This command was so closely followed that the PRODEMCA observers who tried to convince soldiers to tell them which party they favored were completely unsuccessful—even when they caught an individual soldier alone and promised that his words would be off the record, they could not get him to admit even *hypothetically* which party he favored.

**PRECONCEPTION:** Salvadorans would resent the ubiquitous presence of soldiers at the polls.

**OBSERVATION:** None of the observers saw any indication, subtle or direct, that the presence of the Armed Forces at the polls was felt by Salvadorans to be motivated by anything other than the need for security.

A number of the PRODEMCA observers, when they asked civilians standing in line at the polls what they thought about soldiers being denied the vote, were surprised by the answers they received. Some voters said they thought it unfair to deny the thousands of citizens who happen to be in uniform the right to have a share in choosing their commander-in-chief. But the most surprising answer came from some of those Salvadorans who did not regret the soldiers' requirement not to vote—"of course they shouldn't vote, they're busy guarding us."

**PRECONCEPTION:** The "Democratic Process" in El Salvador is little more than a creation of those forces in the United States who want to see military aid to El Salva-

dor approved. The huge lines of voters will be a sign of intimidation rather than of grass-roots support for the electoral process.

**OBSERVATION:** All the observers found that the Salvadorans whom they saw and met were voting for their own country and for their own welfare rather than out of concern for American strategic interests.

The feeling among the observers was that the Salvadorans who went out to vote did so enthusiastically. "Why else would they get on line a whole hour before the polls opened?" one observer asked. One of the clearest indications of that enthusiasm was the number of people who devoted the whole of May 6th to working at the polls. There were over thirty thousand poll workers—at each of the approximately 6,000 urnas there was the three-person electoral "committee" as well as at least two "vigilantes," wearing either the green aprons of the Christian Democrats or the red, white and blue ones of the ARENA party, plus many other vigilantes and supervisors.

**PRECONCEPTION:** The hatred felt by the two candidates for each other that is so obvious any time either



*A Salvadoran woman has her finger marked with indelible dye after voting on May 6, 1984.*

candidate speaks is so great that the tension between supporters of the two parties at the polls will be near the breaking point. Given that hatred, cooperation between the parties will be unlikely.

**OBSERVATION:** The hatred which exists between the candidates disappeared at the polling places—an observation which is especially amazing given the fact that many voters and vigilantes seemed convinced that without the victory of their party, El Salvador was doomed.

At every polling table in the country there were people from the two parties working together closely and peacefully for a very long day. The party members at the polls were committed to only one thing more than their own parties—the fairness of the election. They all realized that the validity of their party's victory would be challenged if the elections were less than perfect, and they all seemed to believe that their party would win.

A few of the observers in the group reported that they were in the largest polling place in El Salvador at six in the evening just as the polls closed—the national fairground. At exactly six o'clock the power failed and the lights went out. Within seconds, they said, hundreds of flashlights flicked on, and everyone moved away from the ballot boxes. Then two people, one from each party, rested their elbows on the top of each box and shined a flashlight inside so that nobody could claim that the darkness had been taken advantage of as an opportunity to stuff the ballot boxes. They said that they saw some of the party workers actually lock arms around the boxes.

While there were stories about fights breaking out at one polling place between the vigilantes of the two parties, none of the PRODEMCA observers reported seeing anything more violent than heated but civil debate where they went.

## **ON THE MEANING OF THE SALVADORAN ELECTION:**

**PRECONCEPTION:** No matter how long the lines are at the polls, an election in a country where a civil war is

going on (and only one side of that war is on the ballot) will not be a very meaningful measure of the popular will.

**OBSERVATION:** The observers found only the most sporadic indications that the absence of an FMLN/FDR (the guerrillas' organization and its political representatives) party symbol was missed by the Salvadoran people. The observers in the group who watched the vote count in the evening reported that all but a few of the ballots they saw had been cast for one of the two parties—some of them were surprised by this because they had expected to see more of the blank and defaced ballots which have always been the accepted way for voters to say that they dislike all the choices on a ballot. One observer said she saw one ballot on which the words "they're both killers" had been written.

## **CONCLUSION:**

A couple of the observers from the PRODEMCA group came up with the best explanation of the meaning of the Salvadoran election so far. They said that the people who cast votes for the Christian Democrats felt Duarte could best bring peace to El Salvador and that the people who marked the ARENA symbol felt that D'Aubuisson could best bring peace to El Salvador. The fact that more PDC symbols than ARENA ones had been marked, they explained, meant that more people wanted Duarte than D'Aubuisson to be El Salvador's President. They said that those people who cast null ballots, or no ballots, rather than votes for one of the two parties could be considered to be dissatisfied with the candidates or the electoral process and that some fraction—perhaps even most—of those people could even be supporters of the guerrillas.

What the observers said was self-evident. But sometimes the obvious has to be pointed out if it is to escape from the fog of over-analysis. By finally saying the obvious, the members of the citizen observer group of the runoff presidential election in El Salvador are making a contribution as fundamental as that of the boy who finally said, "The Emperor has no clothes!"

# Statement of the PRODEMCA El Salvador Election Observer Group

*May 7, 1984*

We are 25 Americans who responded to an opportunity to come as private citizens at our own expense to see the Salvadoran elections for ourselves. We include Democrats, Republicans and independents, supporters and opponents of President Reagan's reelection. We speak for ourselves, not for any organization.

We want to express our appreciation for the hospitality we received from Salvadorans everywhere we went. Our credentials as non-governmental observers made us welcome everywhere we wanted to go.

We will comment only on what we saw and the facts that we have evidence to support. We will not speak about specific policy questions because they depend on much more than the facts we learned. And we certainly take no position on the Salvadorans' choice between their two candidates.

Before starting, we want to say that what we saw made us proud of our country: first by the demonstration that the Salvadoran people share our democratic faith; and second because four million of our tax dollars helped to make the arrangements for this successful election possible. The money could not have been better spent.

The following observations apply to what we were able to see ourselves. We went in eight cars, each with an interpreter and each choosing its own route. We covered the areas of the country where most of the people live, small towns and big cities. We believe that the dozens of polling places we observed, and the hundreds of voters we talked to were reasonably representative of most of the country. But of course we didn't see everything; many

things could have happened that we didn't see.

1. For us it is beyond doubt that this was a free and fair election, a shining example of the democratic spirit of which the Salvadorans are justly proud.

2. It was clearly the whole Salvadoran community turning out in an enthusiastic expression of national spirit. The atmosphere was like small towns in the U.S. on the 4th of July, with families bringing the children along.

3. We saw no indications that people were voting because of intimidation or because the law required it. On the contrary, all the signs, subtle as well as direct, were that people voted because they had decided that it was their duty to do so as part of their commitment to democracy and to achieve peace.

4. The imperfections we saw were technical and inconsequential, neither one-sided nor substantial.

5. We were amazed at the number and spirit of the young people working at the polling places, over 30,000 altogether. They worked hard and with good spirit between the parties that was very good-hearted.

6. It was clear that the Army was committed to having free competitive elections. They worked hard providing effective security and they were neutral.

7. The people believed that the Army supported a free election. The people, the government, and the Army all saw themselves as working together in a common strong commitment to a government based on free and competitive elections.

8. The voters knew that the guerrillas rejected the elections—and they overwhelmingly rejected the guerrillas' po-

sition on this issue. We saw no indication that many people wanted to have an opportunity to vote for the guerrillas or their political representatives. In the places where we saw the count, the number of null votes—an accepted way of expressing support for the guerrillas—was below the 10% level of the March election.

**Conclusion:** We came to see for ourselves, and on two major issues we found things very different than what most people we talked to at home believe.

A. Our friends thought we were brave—or crazy—to go to such a “dangerous” place. We felt safe. The Salvadorans were out with their children, so they felt safe. Undoubtedly there is violence and danger somewhere in

El Salvador. But we can testify that there are large areas which are peaceful and feel safe.

B. All kinds of doubt have been cast on Salvadoran elections—as propaganda, a climate of fear, etc., etc. These doubts are wrong. The Salvadoran elections are first-class free elections.

We must ask whether the process by which Americans try to inform themselves about El Salvador is so great a failure on other matters as well.

Finally, we strongly believe that to be true to ourselves, our country must support El Salvador so that its brave commitment to government based on free elections is not defeated by those now attacking it.

The following is a list of those who participated in the election observer trip:

Steve Allen	Anniston, Alabama	Joachim Maitre	Boston, Massachusetts
John Bennett, Jr.	San Antonio, Texas	Mihajlo Mihajlov	Columbus, Ohio
Francis Carroll	Worcester, Massachusetts	John Miller	Chicago, Illinois
Shari Cohn	Laurel, Maryland	Sister Camilla Mullay	Columbus, Ohio
Paul Dietrich	Washington, D. C.	Barbara Perkins	New York, New York
Angier Biddle Duke	New York, New York	William D. Sindlinger	Cedar Falls, Iowa
Peter Flaherty	Washington, D. C.	William W. Sindlinger	Cedar Falls, Iowa
Daniel James	Washington, D. C.	Alex Singer	Ithaca, New York
Harry T. Johnson	Medway, Massachusetts	Max Singer	Chevy Chase, Maryland
Roger Kaplan	New York, New York	Kenneth Smilen	New York, New York
Penn Kemble	Washington, D. C.	Mary Temple	New York, New York
Phillip Lawler	Washington, D. C.	Vicki Thomas	Bethesda, Maryland
		Esther Wilson	Washington, D. C.

### App.: Comparison of Vote Totals Three Elections

	ELECTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES			PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS					
	1982			March 1984			May 1984 *		
	votes	% of valid	% of total	votes	% of valid	% of total	votes	% of valid	% of total
P. D. C.	546,218	40	35	549,727	43	39	752,625	54	49
ARENA	402,304	30	26	376,917	30	27	651,741	46	43
Other Parties	413,817	30	27	334,632	27	24	--	--	--
Total Valid	1,362,339	100	88	1,266,276	100	89	1,404,366	100	92
Invalid	131,498		8	104,557		7	81,017		5
Blank	51,438		3	41,736		3	32,582		2
Chal- lenged	6,412		0	6,924		0	6,114		0
Total Invalid	189,348		12	153,217		11	119,713		8
TOTAL	1,551,687		100	1,419,493		100	1,524,079		100

Figures rounded to the nearest whole percent

\* Provisional results as of May 11, 1984 with 96.08% of the vote counted.

CHICAGO SUN 5/14/84

# Visitor finds Salvadoran election 'free, fair'

By John L. Miller

I was one of a group of 25 Americans who visited El Salvador as private citizens to observe for themselves the May 6 runoff elections for president.

I personally visited seven polling places of disparate economic background, including two out in the countryside. While we can only comment on what we saw—and, of course, we did not see everything—the conclusion of our group, supported by my personal observations, was that the elections were fair, free, honest and in the best traditions of democracy.

I have seen a great many elections in this country, and what we saw had the feel, taste and smell of an election combined with some festive aspects seldom visible here. People turned out in enormous numbers and stood in long lines to cast their votes.

I was able to talk to dozens of voters; they said they were voting as a duty to their country and were voting for peace and a better life. Two women explained, with tears in their eyes, that an election was the way to

end the killing.

I wish to strongly emphasize that we saw no evidence that people were voting because of intimidation or because the law requires it. Compulsory voting laws exist in many countries, including Australia, home of the secret ballot. Such laws are based on the theory that voting is a public duty, as well as a private right.

None of the people I talked to seemed to be afraid. Many approached us to volunteer their opinions. The enthusiasm of the poll-watchers, the children accompanying their parents to the polls, the demeanor of the people in line and the spontaneity of those at Christian Democratic Party headquarters awaiting the results (Harold Washington would have enjoyed it) bear testimony that people acted for democracy.

While the act of voting is obligatory, the voter is not obliged to vote for one of the two runoff candidates. The voter can cast no vote or make his "X" so as to touch both party boxes, effectively voiding the ballot.

This is an accepted expression of rejecting the choices offered, and in past

## PERSONAL VIEW

Salvadoran elections has approached 40 percent. This is also an accepted fashion of expressing support for the guerrillas.

In the places where we observed the count, the number of null votes was well below the 10 percent level of the March election. The voters knew that the guerrillas rejected the elections—and they overwhelmingly rejected the guerrillas' position on this issue.

Any election has its snafus. However, the ones I saw were garden-variety election-day irregularities.

At one polling place, a Christian Democrat poll watcher, believing I was an official, lodged, in Spanish, a complaint of electioneering, showing me some suspect literature. I was soon surrounded by partisans of both sides.

I did not need a translator to understand the dispute; it was one I have seen dozens of times. With the assistance of regular election officials, both sides agreed not to distribute the literature.

Disputes like this one do

not cast doubt upon the process; indeed, they provide the human inconsistency that shows citizen participation, commitment and involvement. There are no such disputes in totalitarian states.

A familiar complaint was about names missing from the voting register. In my judgment, the number was very small, especially considering the technical difficulties incumbent upon the creation of a nationwide computerized voter name list in four months.

Anyone who has ever worked with computers or voting lists will understand the difficulties encountered in the first round of the elections in March. The bugs were almost entirely out of the system for the runoff election.

The registration list was meant to serve the same purpose it does here: prevent fraud. As the director of the project for the creation of the list told me, some have criticized the registration lists, but no one has said the elections were stolen.

A few comments about the role of the army are appropriate. In many Third

World nations, younger and better educated military officers have been a force for modernization, albeit not always for democracy.

The image of the military officer as reactionary is outdated. We saw no evidence that the Army was anything other than neutral. Indeed, members of the armed forces abstained from voting as a demonstration of their neutrality.

In short, I found things in El Salvador very different than most people I talk to at home believe. In particular, my friends thought I was brave or crazy to go to a "dangerous" place. Well, San Salvador is not Beirut; the rebels are not on the verge of rolling up to the Central Plaza. I felt safe; Salvadorans, many of whom were accompanied to the polls by their children, clearly felt safe.

I was disappointed when I got off the plane in Miami to see "Rebels Attack Mars Voting" in headline type. The incident was isolated and fleeting and our group's observers in San Miguel reported the election proceeded normally and with a heavy turnout.

Second, the doubt that

has been cast on the Salvadoran elections reflects cynicism of the double. The commitment of the Salvadorans is refreshingly firm from that "sophistication."

The degree of citizen participation—as elect judges, poll watchers, a workers—was amazing high: over 30,000, most young people actively involved in the process.

I was able to spend some time talking privately with Jose Napoleon Duarte, a parently now president elect. He spoke of a "social pact," enlisting the cooperation of the disparate elements of Salvadoran society to rebuild the economy, achieve peace and, extending beyond El Salvador, to social pact among the nations, including the United States.

American support for democracy and economic progress in El Salvador is clear part of his broader vision. Should we, for any reason, fail to provide such support, my sadness would not be just for El Salvador.

John L. Miller is a partner in the Chicago law firm of Shaw & Miller and recognized authority on election law and practice.

## REGION REPORTS

### PRIVATE US OBSERVERS AGREE SALVADOR ELECTIONS FREE AND HONEST

San Salvador—Twenty five Americans who visited El Salvador at their own expense to observe the May 6, run-off elections for President reached the unanimous conclusion that the elections were fair, free, and honest in the best traditions of democracy. The following is their statement, followed by a list of those participating:

"We are 25 Americans who responded to an opportunity to come as private citizens at our own expense to see the Salvadoran elections for ourselves. We include Democrats, Republicans and independents, supporters and opponents of President Reagan's reelection. We speak for ourselves, not for any organization.

"We want to express our gratitude for the warm welcome we received from Salvadorans everywhere we went. Our credentials as non-governmental observers made us welcome everywhere we wanted to go.

"We will comment only on that we saw and the facts that we have evidence to support. We will not speak about specific policy questions because they depend on much more than the facts we learned. And we certainly take no position on the choice between the two candidates.

"We want to say that what we saw made us proud of our country: first by the demonstration that the Salvadoran people share our democratic faith; and second because 4 million of our tax dollars helped to make the arrangements for this successful election possible. The money could not have been better spent.

"The following observations apply to what we were able to see ourselves. We went in eight cars, each with an interpreter and each choosing its own route. We covered the areas of the country where most of the people live, small towns and big cities. We believe that the dozens of polling places we observed, and the hundreds of voters we talked to were reasonably representative of most of the country. But of course we didn't see everything; many things could have happened that we didn't see.

"1. For us it is beyond doubt that this was a free and fair election, a shining example of the democratic spirit of which the Salvadorans are justly proud.

"2. It was clearly the whole Salvadoran community turning out in an enthusiastic expression of national spirit. The atmosphere was like small towns in the U.S. on the 4th of July, with families bringing the children along.

"3. We saw no indications that people were voting because of intimidation or because the law required it. On the contrary, all the signs, subtle as well as direct, were that people voted because they had decided that it was their duty to do so as part of their commitment to democracy and to peace.

"4. The imperfections we saw were technical and inconsequential, neither one-sided nor substantial.

"5. We were amazed at the number and spirit of the people working at the polling places, over 30,000 altogether. They worked hard and with good spirit between the parties that was very heart-warming.

"6. It was clear that the Army was committed to having free competitive elections. They worked hard providing effective security and they were neutral.

"7. The people believed that the Army supported a free election. The people, the government, and the Army all saw themselves as working together in a common strong commitment to a government based on free and competitive elections.

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"Finally, we strongly believe that to be true to ourselves and our

#### From page 8... PRIVATE US OBSERVERS...

country must support El Salvador so that its brave commitment to government - based on free elections is not defeated by those now attacking it."

The statement was unanimously approved by the group: Esther Wilson, Washington, D.C., Sister Camilla Mulvey, Columbus Ohio, Vicki Thomas, Bethesda, Md., Kennet Suilen, N.Y.C., Francis Carroll, Worcester, Mass., John Miller, Chicago, William D. Sindinger Cedar Falls, Iowa, Mary Temple, N.Y.C., Penn Kramble, Wash.

D.C., Daniel James, Wash. D.C., Angier Bidle Duke, N.Y.C., Joachim Maitre, Boston, Alexander Singer, Ithaca, Paul Dietrich, Wash. D.C., Shari Cohn, Maryland, Roger Kaplan, N.Y.C., Harry T. Johnson, Medway, Mass., John Bennett, Jr., San Antonio, Tex., William W. Sindinger, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Steve Allen, Anniston, Alabama, Peter Flaherty, Wash. D.C., Philip Lawler, Wash. D.C., Barbara Perkins, N.Y.C., Mihalo Mihalov, Columbus, Ohio, Max Singer, Chevy Chase, Md.

# Diverse group observes El Salvador elections

EDITOR'S NOTE: John M. Bennett, a retired Air Force major general, retired San Antonio banker and a rancher, observed the May 6 runoff elections for president of El Salvador. He also visited Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

By JOHN M. BENNETT

One of the most unusual things about the trip to Central America was the diverse group of American observers whom I accompanied.

There were Democrats, Republicans and political independents. The ages ranged from 19 to 75. There were two college professors, a college student, a former ambassador, a black woman writer, a nun, a retired Vietnam veteran and representatives from Catholic and Protestant organizations and from non-profit foundations.

Yet, we 25 Americans of all these different persuasions and backgrounds reached the unanimous conclusion that the El Salvador elections were fair, free, honest and in the best traditions of democracy. We all traveled at our own expense.

## Choosing

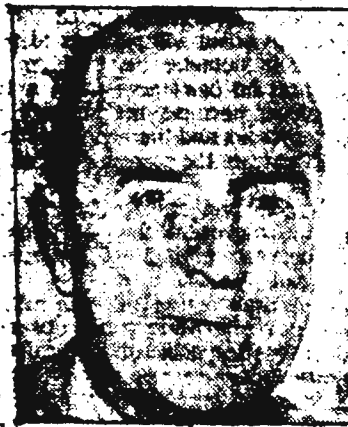
We chose where we wanted to go to observe the polling places. Our driver, Jose Ortega had attended Texas Military Institute in San Antonio. He made no effort to take us to predetermined places.

My group chose two polling places in San Salvador, the capital, and the villages of La Libertad, Armenia, Lourdes and Colon, plus the New Braunfels-size town of Santa Tecla.

Each polling place represented 40 voting precincts. People waited in line at each place and were good-natured about it.

These people were not compelled to vote. The law requiring citizens to vote is not enforced. Some risked being shot by the Communists to vote.

I saw no animosity between the poll-watchers for the candidates, Jose Napoleon Duarte and Roberto d'Aubisson. They seemed to be pretty good



JOHN M. BENNETT

... fair, free, honest

ballots were set aside for election judges.

The night before and the night after the election, the Communists short-circuited the electrical system. This caused some problems in counting the votes, but the election officials expected it and were ready with candles and flashlights.

Once, when the lights came back on, I saw the Duarte and d'Aubisson watchers both leaning on the ballot box, keeping the lid on with their elbows.

Members of El Salvador's army are allowed to vote but, on orders from the commander-in-chief, they did not as the army remained neutral. I was impressed by the sharp appearance of soldiers guarding the polling places, but they may have been in their Sunday best.

After the election, seven members of my group went to Managua, Nicaragua, for two days.

We visited with five people. The man who will direct the Nicaraguan election in November, an opposition newspaper publisher, a representative of the business community, a representative of labor and a spokesman for a human rights group.

Mariano Fiallos, the election chief, promised an honest election and said we would be invited back to observe the nation

but a member of the American Embassy staff said we weren't the kind of people to be invited.

The Sandinista government has lowered the voting age to 16, which will greatly increase the Sandinista vote. It appears the Sandinistas are insuring their victory, according to the same embassy staffer.

Pablo Antonio Cuadro, the publisher of *La Prensa*, told us that the government does not censor his opposition paper line by line. He said the censorship is sporadic but, if he deviates too far from the government's limits, then his newsprint supply is simply cut off and he can't publish.

Xavier Zevala, president of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights, a private organization, said the Sandinistas do not rule by violence or imprisoning people. Instead, the government controls access to the food supply, health care and education to keep people in line.

Carlos Huembas, secretary-general of a labor organization, said he was surprised by many American visitors who do not want to hear anything good about the United States.

We asked U.S. Embassy officials when the popularity of the Sandinistas began to wane and they said it dated from Pope John Paul II's visit when Sandinistas pulled the plug on the pontiff's microphone and tried to shoot him down.

They also said the government tried to do away with Holy Week this year, but most people ignored the decree and took their holidays.

In Costa Rica, Eduardo Vilbarri, publisher of *La Nacion*, the country's biggest newspaper, told us he was concerned about Mexico's role in the Contadora peace effort. He feared Mexico was hampering rather than helping.

The trip convinced me that it is terribly important for the United States to support people who want true democracy, no matter whom they vote for.

# Bay State Observers Hail Salvador Voting

By DONALD W. SWINTON

Of The Gazette Staff

El Salvador had a free and clean election Sunday, two election observers from Massachusetts said this morning.

Francis R. Carroll, president of the Small Business Service Bureau Inc., and Harry Johnson, a retired Army colonel from Medway, spent their own money to witness Sunday's runoff presidential election in El Salvador, they said.

They told about their experience this morning at a press conference at the bureau's Main Street headquarters.

"We watched a democracy being born," Carroll said. The imperfections they saw were technical and inconsequential, he said.

"It was a humbling experience to see democracy competing against terrorism. And the Salvadoran's strong desire for a democracy for the first time in 50 years . . . They were obsessed with keeping this election free and clear," Carroll said.

El Salvador is a Central American country about the size of Massachusetts with a population of about 4.7 million.

In March, the voters in the agricultural country went to the polls to elect a president from eight parties running candidates. There was no clear majority so a runoff election was called.

Voters were asked Sunday to choose between the conservative Arena party and the more liberal Christian Democratic Party.

About 1.6 million of the country's 1.8 million voters participated in the choice between Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon Duarte and Roberto D'Abuisson of the Arena Party.

This morning The Associated Press reported Duarte was claiming victory with 55.86 percent of the vote to D'Abuisson's 44.92 percent.

"The voters knew the Communist guerrillas rejected the election and they overwhelmingly rejected the guerrilla's position on this issue. We saw no indication that many people wanted to have the opportunity to vote for the guerrillas or their political representatives. In the places where we saw the count, the number of null votes — the accepted expression of support for the guerrillas — was below the 10 percent level of the March election," Carroll said.

## 'Army Stayed Out'

Carroll said, "The army stayed out of this completely."

In the 60 precincts he and Johnson toured from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., the army was never close to the polls. People lined up at the polls and showed identification cards to members of both parties certifying the voters. Voters also had a finger and the palm of their hand marked with ink to ensure they could not vote again, Carroll said.

At each of the 60 polls the two men visited, six to 10 people from different sides monitored the election. There were 8,000 polls, Johnson said. That means there were from 30,000 to 50,000 people helping check the vote. In addition there were computers to tally the vote.

"This was the fairest and most open election I've ever seen in my life . . . If anyone knows about voting fraud, Americans do," Carroll said.

While the election appeared to be fair, Johnson said that was "no guarantee the newly elected government will be stable."





# 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 too formal, 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 arm conflict directly involving U.S. forces 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 eventual 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 come 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  
Paul F. Knue

Editorial Page Editor  
Claudia Winkler

Managing Editor  
Thomas E. Dunning

Associate Editor  
James L. Adams

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

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SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 1985

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## *For the Record*

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*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 or 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

ENQUIRER  
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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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former Secretary of the Treasury,  
Nixon and Ford Administrations  
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Official U.S. Observer to the  
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pel us to support those of our neigh-  
bors who have undertaken the



# 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 1,800. 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 pick 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

**M**ARXIST-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).

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).

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 Ramirez 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

(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.

**K**NOWING 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.

**T**HE 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 Ramirez 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 handclasps 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?

II

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Executive Director, PRODEMCA

Member of the Executive Committee  
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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 &amp; 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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Dr. Wiesel  
Author

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Executive Director PRODEMCA

Member of the Executive Committee  
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## 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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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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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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Page 2  
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.