

7-25-1990

Interest In Nicaragua By U.S. Solidarity & Development Organizations Declines Since Elections

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Interest In Nicaragua By U.S. Solidarity & Development Organizations Declines Since Elections." (1990).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/4204>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Interest In Nicaragua By U.S. Solidarity & Development Organizations Declines Since Elections

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, July 25, 1990

Thousands of US citizens visited Nicaragua to experience and observe certain aspects of life in a revolutionary society during the 10 years of government under the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Thousands of paid and volunteer workers spent months or years in Nicaragua contributing to the installation or expansion of infrastructure and basic services, such as health care, education, and potable water systems. Since the February elections, participation in US-based solidarity and development assistance programs oriented to Nicaraguan needs has declined, as has funding. According to Dr. Paul Hollander, sociology professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, "The extraordinary thing about the Nicaraguan political tours and the attraction exerted by the Nicaraguan political system is that there were many historical precedents of the same phenomena. "High hopes were dashed when earlier generations learned about the realities of the Soviet, Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese and other political systems. A lot of well-educated people learned nothing from this, because they had an urgent need to find a countermodel to the inequality and meaninglessness that they felt prevailed in their own society. "If they remained involved in projects in Nicaragua, their humanitarian activities would have had a more mundane or prosaic aspect to them. It would have been no different from building clinics or rural schools in, say, Mexico, where the poor would equally have benefitted from such activities, but without the mystique of building a fundamentally different society. Nor would they have been in a position to make a statement against US foreign policy through such activities." Hollander is the author of "Political Pilgrims," an examination of socialist systems and their attractions to western intellectuals. Witness for Peace, which has taken more than 3,400 people to Nicaragua since 1984, canceled six of its 28 delegations this year and combined two others. The New York Nicaragua Construction Brigade closed this month because money and interest were lacking. The Brigade had sent 10 groups to Nicaragua. Vivian Stromberg, executive director of Madre, told the New York Times that the financial effect of the FSLN's loss in February has been serious. Madre spokespersons say the organization has sent over \$1 million in medical supplies to Nicaragua since 1984. Its full-time staff has been reduced from 10 to five. Marazul Tours, which specializes in trips to Cuba and Nicaragua for political groups, advertised a travel package to Nicaragua for the 11th anniversary of the revolution, celebrated July 19. The agency assisted 250 people to attend the anniversary festivities in 1989, and arranged trips to Nicaragua for 25,000 people in the last 10 years. This year no one signed up for the group tour. (Basic data from New York Times, 07/21/90)

-- End --