

Occurrence in Nicaragua - February/March 1991

The purpose of this paper is to document events which occurred in Managua, Nicaragua during February and March of 1991 involving Ruth Paine, U.S. coordinator of Pro-Nica, a project of the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of Friends (SEYM) based in St. Petersburg, Florida. She is the same Ruth Paine who, in the fall of 1963, was acquainted with Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. She befriended Oswald's Russian wife Marina, who together with her young child and new baby lived at the Paine home in the Dallas area for six weeks until the day of the assassination.

Background

Within hours of the JFK assassination on November 22, 1963, Dallas police arrested Oswald and began to interrogate him. He claimed that he had not shot anyone; that he was a patsy. Two days later he was killed at point-blank range among a crowd of people in police headquarters by Jack Ruby, a Dallas night club operator.

The first investigation of the assassination was conducted by the Warren Commission, which concluded the following: Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the President; Oswald fired 3 shots from behind the President from the Texas School Book Depository Building, where Oswald had been employed for about two months; one shot missed, one hit the President in the back of his head, and the other struck him in the back, exited through his throat and then entered Texas Governor, John Connally, wounding him in two places. The Commission concluded that Oswald had leftist sentiments, which had caused him to defect to Russia, work for a "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" in New Orleans in the months prior to the assassination and ultimately shoot the President. Ruth Paine was one of the people interviewed by the Warren Commission.

In 1976 the U.S. House of Representatives established a special committee to investigate the assassinations of both President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. After months of research and interviewing of witnesses, the committee determined that there probably was a conspiracy in the JFK assassination. The committee issued an inconclusive report and closed its doors after several of its witnesses were killed and/or died under mysterious circumstances.

By the late 1980's numerous books and articles had been published which challenged the Warren Commission findings. Many

researchers concluded that the JFK murder was a conspiracy involving the CIA, organized crime, anti-Castro Cubans, and right-wing activists and businessmen, with prior knowledge and cover-up by the FBI and members of the Dallas police force.

These resources indicate that Oswald had intelligence connections and probably was involved in the conspiracy in some way, but that he did not fire the shots which killed Kennedy (which these researchers conclude came from the front) and possibly did not even fire a gun during the assassination.

In his book On the Trail of the Assassins, former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison states that the assassination was a right wing coup d'etat conducted both in retaliation against Kennedy for refusing to order U.S. air assistance for Cuban exiles during their Bay of Pigs attack on Cuba and to prevent Kennedy from establishing peaceful co-existence with Cuba and winding down the Cold War and nuclear arms race with Russia. Garrison argues that one result has been consolidation of power by a war party/shadow government in the U.S. Others have reached similar conclusions. Excerpts from commentary and a reading list published by former CIA official John Stockwell are attached. (In April 1991 film director/actor/producer Costner, who won the 1991 academy award for "Dances With Wolves" and has made other successful movies, announced that he is working on a film on the assassination in which he will play Jim Garrison. The film will implicate the CIA and FBI.)

One of the most informative books is High Treason by Groden and Livingstone (Conservatory Press, 1989 - see Stockwell's list). This book contains these and other assertions about Ruth Paine: her father, Avery Hyde, was in intelligence and was a friend of a Russian exile count, George de Mohrenschildt, who lived in Dallas, provided information to the CIA, was Oswald's CIA "baby sitter" prior to the assassination, was an acquaintance of Papa Doc Duvalier of Haiti and committed suicide shortly he was to testify before the House Assassinations Committee; Ruth Paine secured the job for Oswald at the Texas School Book Depository Building; Paine's car may have been used by conspirators leaving the Depository Building after the shooting; Paine told investigators that a type of camera often used in intelligence work found in her home after the assassination belonged to her husband, not Oswald. A footnote says that in a wiretap put on the Paine telephone after the assassination, either Ruth or her husband Michael was recorded saying they believed Oswald killed Kennedy but that "he was not responsible" and "we both know who was."

Incidents in February/March 1991 in Nicaragua

On February 5 Ruth Paine came to the Benjamin Linder Council meeting with council member Jon Roise, the new director of the Friends Center program in Nicaragua. (The Friends Center program includes ProNica and a hospitality house, El Centro de los Amigos - these are projects of the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of Friends, not the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).) I was at the meeting representing another member group. When Ruth introduced herself I recognized her name and asked if she was from Dallas, which is my home town. She at first avoided the question, and when I asked again if she were the same Quaker Ruth Paine who had known the Oswalds, she said she was and that she lived (perhaps she meant had lived) in Irving, a Dallas suburb. I said I remembered her name from the time of the assassination and had read a great deal about the assassination. She said I should read the book Lee and Marina. I asked if she had kept up with Marina. She indicated she had; that Marina was remarried and still lived in Dallas.

During the meeting Ruth appeared well informed and took many notes on everything we discussed. She made comments which indicated she shared the presuppositions and objectives of others in the group, and she was fully involved in the discussion. (This was unusual in itself, as this was a meeting of the governing body of the Ben Linder House and although the meetings are not closed, visitors do not usually come.) Ruth knew several people at the meeting. She had been to Nicaragua in 1990 and had interviewed some members of the U.S. community about the Friends' project and related matters. She made a comment to Chess Campbell which indicated she was aware of the right-wing Presbyterian Layman attack on the Campbells for their work in Nicaragua.

(During this period the U.S. solidarity community was discussing the Mid-east situation and planning a fast. Earlier there had been demonstrations outside the U.S. Embassy urging a peaceful solution to the conflict. At one of these, I happened to mention to Jon Roise that I had read High Treason and hoped we could discuss the implications of the JFK assassination at one of the monthly Casa Benjamin Linder pot lucks. Even though most people now believe there was a conspiracy, Jon responded that such theories seemed preposterous and "way out" to him. Ruth also made comments which did not seem "in sync" with the views of others in the solidarity community. Once when people were saying those killed the U.S. bombing of Iraq might number in the hundreds of thousands, she said she couldn't believe the numbers could be so high; another time she made a comment indicating she

might know one of the embassy officials who had emerged to talk with the demonstrators, although she never told the group forthrightly of such an acquaintance or relationship with an embassy officer.)

I did not see Ruth again until she and Jon Roise came to the Ben Linder House pot luck and discussion on February 15. Except for my comment to Jon mentioned above, neither of them was aware that two months prior to that time our group had tentatively planned to discuss the implications of the Kennedy assassination related to the course of U.S. politics and foreign relations. I introduced the topic and invited Ruth to share any perceptions she might care to about the Oswalds. She said she would share her personal knowledge and then let us pursue the designated topic. She explained that as a good Quaker she had learned Russian to be able to communicate with "the enemy". Through a circle of friends in Dallas (I am not sure whether or not she said these were Russian-speaking friends), she met the Oswalds and had compassion for Marina, who knew no English, was pregnant, whose husband was unemployed and who needed a place to live in Dallas. Ruth offered to put Marina and her child up, since the Paines also had young children. Ruth drove to New Orleans to get Marina and her child. Except for the weekend before the assassination, Oswald came to the Paine home on weekends to visit his family. He spoke good Russian. Ruth did not like Oswald much, mainly because he didn't want Marina to learn English and seemed to want to keep her "barefoot and pregnant." Ruth found Oswald moody. She thought it was possible he had acted alone in killing Kennedy. She described how, upon learning of the assassination, she and Marina went to the garage to look for Oswald's rifle and found it missing. She mentioned Oswald's alleged attack on retired right-wing General Edwin Walker. She mentioned the famous picture of Oswald reading a book on Marx and holding the rifle with which he allegedly shot Kennedy. She admitted in response to a question that she had secured Oswald the job at the School Book Depository Building. She said after the assassination Oswald's family prevented her from seeing Marina, and this had been quite painful. She described her testimony before the Warren Commission. She indicated she believed the Warren Commission conclusions.

During the next two or three weeks, Ruth, Jon and another person were at most gatherings of the U.S. solidarity community including regular meetings at the Benjamin Linder House, evening worship sessions held at the Moravian Church around the fast on the Iraq War, and a meeting of U.S. health workers held at the

Linder House. The third person, a young red headed man named Sean Miller, took many pictures, using a special lens, and taped presentations, including one by Benjamin Linders' parents who visited the Casa during this period. Ruth said Sean was a student at Antioch College (located in Ohio) who was staying at El Centro de los Amigos and taking pictures for the Nicaragua Network. Sean told some people he lived in Washington, D.C.

Ruth came to the March meeting of the Ben Linder Council and took copious notes of every name, organization and subject mentioned. She also peered over the organizational membership list in the office prior to the meeting and took notes. At the close of the meeting, the person chairing commented on the many notes she had taken and pictures Sean had taken and asked Ruth if she would send us a copy of her report after she returned to the States, or share any other document she planned to prepare. Ruth responded that her notes were simply for her report to the group back in St. Petersburg and the purpose was to determine whether or not the Quaker project would continue as a member group of the Ben Linder Council. She said she planned to recommend that they continue, as she found the work of Casa Benjamin Linder to be of value. She said Sean was not affiliated with her program; that he was simply a guest at the Quaker hospitality house and his pictures were for the Nicaragua Network, not her organization.

In conversation after the meeting Ruth explained that SEYM consisted of about 20 Quaker congregations in several southern states and that the work in Nicaragua was funded by about six wealthy people -- presumably affiliated with SEYM. She told us goodbye and that she would be back in June. After she returned home, she wrote follow-up letters to several individuals and sent a copy of a letter which her group had mailed to solidarity organizations in the U.S.



Sue Wheaton
April 20, 1991

April 20, 1991

Attachments:

Excerpts from John Stockwell's National Security reading list, "The United States in Search of Enemies"

"The Friends Newsletter from Nicaragua," Fall, 1990

Addendum to "Occurrence in Nicaragua"

The Nicaragua Network in Washington, D.C. told a friend of ours that they had not commissioned anyone to take pictures in Nicaragua. Thus, the explanation given by Ruth Paine and Sean Miller as to why Sean was taking pictures of members of the U.S. community in Nicaragua was not valid.

In early April Jon Roise asked to talk with me about my telling members of the U.S. community of Ruth Paine's history related to the Kennedy assassination. I agreed, and he came to our house in Managua, where my husband, mother and I talked with him for about an hour. He was concerned that I had a "whisper campaign" going against Ruth and had accused her of being CIA. I said, "Wrong on both accounts. I haven't been whispering about her history; I've been telling people loud and clear. Second, I never said she was CIA because I have no idea who or what she is. I've said only that she is writing down every name and acronym in sight, which she is." Jon said Ruth likes to write things down. He said the Kennedy Assassination was a long time ago and insinuated it was irresponsible of me to "stir things up" at this late date. My husband and I both told him in no uncertain terms why we think history is important. He was familiar with Jim Garrison's case against Clay Shaw and Mark Lane's work (which I found curious, as most people not immersed in JFK assassination reading are very fuzzy on these matters); he said a former roommate of his had known Mark Lane and had found him "off the wall." He accused me of acting in a "McCarthyite way" and said it would hurt the Quakers' work in Nicaragua. I said this relationship with Oswald wasn't my history; it was Ruth's history, and I had no intention of not talking about it, and that was far from being McCarthyite, a slur and slant way off the mark. He said the U.S. community had to stick together in Nicaragua. I told him the U.S. population had been deeply divided over policy toward Nicaragua and there were people on both sides of the contra question in the U.S. community in Nicaragua. When he left, we tacitly agreed that we disagreed on almost everything discussed.

Ruth Paine returned to Nicaragua in the summer of 1991, after my departure in June.

In November or early December 1991, Jon Roise volunteered to secure a speaker for the regular Thursday morning presentation at the Casa Benjamin Binder. According to my husband, who was there for the presentation, Jon got two speakers - former contra combatants who now live in one of the new squatter settlements in Managua. The leader was in a wheelchair. He treated his

companion in a rough, commanding manner. Their settlement is the Asentimiento Enriquez Bermudez, named for the former contra leader who was killed in Managua in 1991. My husband said they complained of lack of support from the Americans and stated that many groups offer help but only two come through for them. When someone asked which two groups these were, the men replied something to the effect of "Oh, the Quakers - they always come through for us."

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Wheaton".

Sue Wheaton
January 28, 1992

Sue Wheaton
January 28, 1992

John Stockwell:

THE NATIONAL SECURITY SYNDROME

BLOODY COUP IN THE U.S.

On November 22, 1963, a paramilitary team of about twelve men laid an ambush for President Kennedy in Dallas. Others manipulated the route of his motorcade. Shortly after he made the turn in front of the Texas Book Depository in Dealey Plaza, they fired at least six shots, close range for rifles, pin point shooting, striking him in the back, the throat, and the back and front of his head. Two shots were fired onto the sidewalk on each side of the car, apparently to draw attention to the sixth floor window where it would be revealed Lee Harvey Oswald worked. The precision of the shooting indicated that the firing had to have been coordinated by walkie-talkie radios. This meant that there was a radio operator at the primary firing points, of which there were probably five including the sixth floor window and the roof of the depository, the grassy knoll, the Dal-Tex Building, and a sewer manhole near the triple overpass in front of the motorcade.

A great deal of information about the plot was available *before* the killing. The FBI knew of it. So did others. However, precautions were not taken. Secret Service officers were out drinking, one until five a.m., the night before in a nightclub that was operated by individuals with Mafia ties.

The conspirators were remarkably confident that their act would be covered up--they left hundreds of leads that would have been exposed in even a cursory investigation. However, the fix, clearly pre-arranged, was immediately implemented. J. Edgar Hoover issued immediate orders that the FBI should seek evidence to prove that the killing had been the work of a lone assassin. The president's body was tampered with at Walter Reed Hospital before it was taken to Bethesda Naval Hospital for a cursory autopsy in which none of the doctors were experienced in forensic autopsies and one was in fact a urologist. Vital evidence and films were lost, and the Warren Commission worked shamelessly to conclude that Lee Harvey Oswald alone had killed the president. On the Commission was Allen Dulles, whom Kennedy had fired after the Bay of Pigs fiasco not long before.

Excerpts from:

John Stockwell, "The United States in Search of Enemies, a selected National Security reading list." Aug. 1989 Rev. WECAN Publishers, 504 W. 24th, #79, Austin, Teas 78705.

Forty-nine people who had some knowledge of the killing and were potential whistleblowers were thereafter killed.

The ambush itself was laid by members of the CIA's OPMONGOOSE operation that had been attacking and destabilizing Cuba from bases in Florida. However, their activities extensively overlapped Mafia activities in Florida, New Orleans and Dallas. For example, one of their pilots, named David Ferrie, also flew for the Mafia kingpin in New Orleans named Carlos Marcello. Jack Ruby, who subsequently killed Oswald, had contacts with the FBI, helped the CIA procure arms and was in fact the principal mafioso in Dallas. Richard Nixon was in Dallas, conferring with billionaire H.L. Hunt on the day of the killing. In 1947 Congressman Nixon had intervened to prevent a congressional committee from grilling Jack Rubinstein in Chicago. Rubinstein, who ran errands for Al Capone, subsequently moved to Dallas and changed his name to Ruby. The mayor of Dallas was the brother of General Cabell, whom Kennedy had also fired after the Bay of Pigs fiasco. A few minutes after the killing General Walker, who ran the radical right-wing John Birch Society chapter in Dallas, and H.L. Hunt flew out of Dallas to hole up in Hunt's villa in Mexico until they could be sure that the fix would work. The web is almost endless.

The motives were substantial and various. The CIA Cuban fighters were enraged because Kennedy had not fulfilled their dreams and bailed them out during the Bay of Pigs debacle and had shut down some of their bases in Florida that were training for an invasion of Cuba. The military was angry because he was beginning to pull U.S. troops back from Vietnam. The mob, one of whose leaders, Santos Trafficante, had already visited Vietnam to set up the drug smuggling machinery from the Golden Triangle, was incensed for the same reason. The right-wing businessmen were angry because Kennedy was rescinding the oil depletion allowances that had made them fabulously rich. The FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, who had a lifetime association with the Mafia, was uncomfortable with the anti-crime activities of the young attorney general, Bobby Kennedy. The radical right was dismayed at Kennedy's liberal reforms and at the prospects that he might be followed in the presidency by his brother, Bobby, and then by Ted. Nixon, who had ties with the mob, had been defeated by Kennedy in the 1960 presidential campaign, and would have his ambitions stymied if the Kennedy's stayed in power.

In short it was a coup d'etat, effected by the Right-Wing Shadow Government, who could not be troubled by the democratic process. They killed John Kennedy and then his brother Bobby,

thereby seizing control of the government and obtaining the Vietnam War, the oil depletion allowances and their continued control of the establishment. They also served an ominous warning to future presidents about who holds the ultimate power in the United States.

No other event demonstrates the unutterable cynicism and power of the Right-Wing Shadow Government like this event, the assassination of President Kennedy. It was a bold and successful coup d'etat that has never been punished.



THE FRIENDS
NEWSLETTER
FROM
NICARAGUA

• APTO. 5391 • MANAGUA • FALL 1990 •

WHAT'S NEW IN NICARAGUA ?

The news media have lost interest in Nicaragua. Since the election of the Chamorro government it has taken flashy stories such as a strike or street fighting to get international attention. Yet over 200 U.S. nationals working for the state department have entered the country and been granted work permits. What are they doing? How is the U.S. spending the money appropriated by congress for Nicaragua? The Persian Gulf crisis has drawn the international attention, reading the morning paper one would think Nicaragua no longer existed. But it does, and the changes are significant and dramatic. I visited the Friends Center in Managua (El Centro de los Amigos) this summer. When in the country one is surrounded by evidence of a country in desperate need.

INFLATION. When I arrived July 19th the exchange rate was 440,000 cordobas to one dollar. When I left three weeks later the rate was 640,000 to one. By the end of August it was up to 980,00 to the dollar. Devaluations of the cordoba were occurring twice a week. Shopkeepers have major difficulty selling goods for enough profit to be able to afford to buy new stock. Costs are escalating so fast that the impact is staggering. Inflation is always most cruel to the very poor. And the very poor are the majority in Nicaragua. Bus fares have more than doubled. The previous government provided subsidies for public transportation, fuel, utilities and some foods. All that has stopped. A government deperately short of funds is seeking any means it can to make ends meet. The ends are not meeting.

MEDICAL CARE. Government funding for medical care has been drastically reduced. Hospitals have had budgets cut, and are no longer being supplied medicines free. Some health posts are being closed because there are no medicines and no funds to pay staff. A friend and cooperant of Pro Nica reported that 100 infants and young children have died recently in the Matagalpa region. They died from a measles outbreak and from diarrhea/dehydration. These are preventable and treatable diseases. But the means to provide care is rapidly eroding. The infant mortality rate is likely to go up dramatically during the coming year.

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WHAT'S NEW WITH PRONICA?

The volatile situation in Nicaragua since the election in February have resulted in disorganization, confusion and desperate measures to meet deperate needs. Pro Nica and the Friends Center has been trying to respond in sensitive and creative ways. Our involvement with some projects continues: The Mother Milk Bank and Breast Feeding Programs, the Sawmill projects, the support of medical program, etc. Quaker House continues to provide a base for travelling friends and meetings and worship. New projects are being considered in the fields of agriculture, the environment and education. Clothing and medical supplies are being distributed. The preparation of Shipment Number 11 of crucially needed humanitarian aid is underway. New persons to coordinate projects and to direct the center are being interviewed and will soon be on their way. (SEE INSERT)

Support for Pro-Nica and the Friends Center (El Cenro de los Amigos) projects has been generously supplied by numerous individuals and groups. A network of support now includes people throughout the U.S., contributions have come from Mexico, Canada, England Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg, Thailand, and elsewhere. Over fifty monthly and yearly meetings have helped, other peace groups and churches have participated. Contributions of goods have filled more than ten cargo containers. The National Central American Health Rights Network has made it possible for us to purchase medical supplies at a small percentage of regular prices.

Yet needs grow and only increased financial support can keep up with the frightening inflation and the inability of the Nicaraguan government and other agencies to provide for the desperate situation (the government has proposed a new cut of 40% in already inadequate medical expenditures.) Pro-Nica seeks to respond; it needs greatly increased financial support in order to do so.

Nicaragua



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FLOODS ON THE ATLANTIC COAST. There have been disastrous floods following exceptionally heavy rains on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. This was much in the news there, but not a whisper about it here. Many people are homeless and have lost all their possessions. The government has been slow to respond, and response has fallen far short of the need. The area is called the South Atlantic Autonomous Region, and in this case autonomous appears to mean they're on their own to meet this emergency.

Our presence as concerned internationals is needed in Nicaragua desperately. After a period of reevaluation and review of our program, Pro Nica has affirmed its mission to develop projects and provide material aid in Nicaragua. For all of you interested in Nicaragua who have been such important support to our program, we urge your continued support. Through this newsletter and occasional additional updates, we will provide information and feed-back on what we accomplish together working side-by-side with Nicaraguans.

LIFE
IS CONTINUALLY GIVING
US CHANCES.
B. REINER

ACCION MEDICA CHRISTIANA

Accion Medica Christiana has become one of the most active partners of the Friends Center in Nicaragua. A non-governmental association of Nicaraguan health professionals it has brought fundamental medical care and health education to outlying regions not served by other medical services: in the north at Waspan and Sahoá and in the south at Rama Cay and Pearl Lagoon. AMC maintains a warehouse and offices in Managua and provides specific lists of priority needs to which Pro Nica responds. Medicines, medical supplies and limited financial assistance have been provided in an ongoing program of cooperation.

NCAHRN and AID

PRO-NICA has been working with NCAHRN (The National Central American Health Rights Network) for the past three years. A recent statement in its bulletin explains their decision not to cooperate with the U.S. government's Agency for International Development (AID):

"AID, far from being a simple humanitarian service agency, has described itself as "a tool of U.S. Foreign policy" and "an economic arm of the State Department." Its programs are designed to provide "civilian" support to U.S. economic and military interests, and its policies serve to increase inequality, create dependence on imports and foreign capital, and disempower people's organizations and the labor movement. Its activities in Central America have included supplying "non-lethal" aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, building roads and bridges along the Honduran and Costa Rican Borders with Nicaragua to facilitate Contra movements, and training the police and judiciary in Guatemala and El Salvador. Acceptance of grants from AID not only implies endorsement of these policies, but cannot help but result in more or less subtle compromises in programs, not to mention participation in information gathering by the U.S. government."

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW STAFF

Many of you know that Jose and Soledad McIntire (who began to make appeals for replacement staff over a year ago) left Nicaragua in July, and have moved to Italy. They have done remarkable work in Nicaragua (see Soledad's article on the Sawmill Project, page -) and we salute them and hope to be worthy to carry on the program they developed. The SEYM/ProNica committee has been in high gear seeking and interviewing applicants for the job of running the Friends Center program in Nicaragua. We've had excellent applicants, interviewed eight in person, obtained references, done Spanish language checks, and selected:

Jon Roise! (pronounced ROY-see)

To our delight he also selected US from among the jobs he was considering.

Jon is from Seattle and an attender at University Friends Meeting there. Last year he worked for the Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City. There he developed new programs and resources for visitors and volunteers seeking ways to put their convictions to work. The year before he traveled independently in Central America informing himself about the region and honing his Spanish.

Prior to his Central American sojourn, Jon worked for seven years at the Environmental Works Community Design Center in Seattle. There he oversaw construction projects for social service agencies, and supervised volunteers learning building trades.

Jon brings many organizational and personal skills to the job. He is a creative self-starter. All his references remarked on how well he works with others. He has demonstrated skills developing programs and doing long range planning. We feel he is just the person we need at this time of a new beginning for El Centro de los Amigos en Nicaragua.

Jon is expected to start work in Nicaragua in October. He will stop on the way to Managua in St. Petersburg and Miami to confer with ProNica committee members.

Jon shares with us a dedication to finding ways to accompany the Nicaraguan people as they seek to improve the economic and social power they exercise in their lives. He has a commitment to Friends' values of non-violence and respect for all people. Like SEYM/ProNica, he has sought a means to express partnership with God in improving the human condition spiritually and materially. He has selected El Centro de los Amigos as the vehicle for that work at this time in his life. Bienvenido Jon!

PEOPLE

Ninfa Tijerino, a Nicaraguan member of the Managua Worship Group is the Steward/Hostess for El Centro's Quaker House. Tell your friends we welcome visitors, and have room for 8 overnight guests (in three rooms). The address is:

Colonia Las Brisas
de la entrada del Hospital Lenin Fonseca
5 cuadras al lago, 75 varas arriba
Mano is quierda. Telefono 663216

Yes, that really gets you there!

Ruth Paine has accepted a post as coordinator of the SEYM/ProNica committee work in the U.S. The job began officially with her trip to Nicaragua (see page 1 "What's new in Nicaragua"). She is finding there is a lot to coordinate!

Other wonderful folks on our scene in Nicaragua:

Peter Devereux and Leigh Dix have just returned to Nicaragua from Australia. They now have a seven month old son, Matthew. Leigh will be working as a physical therapist at Los Pepitos, Peter will be caring for their son.

Joe and Sharon Ryan and their ten month old have returned to Nicaragua after a summer trip. They came to Florida, then Sharon and their son went on to England to see family. Joe is working on an exciting project training Nicaraguans in the skills necessary to monitor and protect the environment effecting the fishing industry on the Atlantic Coast. More in another newsletter.

Tom Louden and Jenny Atlee have been long-term volunteers working in Nicaragua since 1984. Their Daughter, Carmen, was born during a sojourn in Northamerica last year. They were living in the Friends Center Staff Residence in Managua during July and August and were a tremendous help to Ruth Paine when she was there. From September to December they will be back in the States. Tom will be raising money for an agricultural irrigation project while Jenny completes a master's degree in Theology. Our thanks to Jose and Soledad for inviting these wonderful people to stay at the Friends Center when the McIntires were moving out. The presence of Tom and Jenny was just one of the many ways the McIntires paved the way for us to carry on their work. Future newsletters will keep you posted on the projects the Louden/Atlees are developing.

Our thanks to all our friends who have been looking after things on behalf of the Friends Center during this interim between the McIntires tenure and Jon Roise's start. Bob Ganter (Clerk of the Worship Group), Lucy Morren (Director of the Soya Nutrition Project) and Ninfa Tijerino have all been generous with their help. Un beso y un abrazo!

Beyond THE LAGOON

*After the 1988 hurricane, vast forest in Nicaragua lay devastated rotting in the tropical heat. Efforts to salvage a part of the timber called for lumbering equipment. Pro-Nica through a creative international effort which involved the Canadian Friends Service Committee and Quaker Peace and Service in England provided two saw mills which were established at Karawala and LaBarra and already the enterprises have produce lumber to repair houses, build new pig pens and a surplus which can be sold on the international market. Numerous visits to the village have been made. Elaine Bishop reported her observations in *Quaker Concern* (Vol. 16, No. 2). This summer two Nicaraguans from the villages, Steve Taylor and Edwardo Garcia came to Indianapolis for further training at the "Woodnizer" plant where the mills were manufactured. Roger Height, Moravian relief worker, has assisted in procuring spare parts and equipment. The following account is taken from Soledad McIntire's diary of one of her visits to the villages.*

I had been warned that the area around the Rio Grande, which is one of the security zones, was going through a difficulty transitional period and I was advised against travelling alone. Paul Dix, longtime attender of our Quaker Meeting and distinguished Witness for Peace photographer/journalist offered to join me in Bluefields to make the long, tedious trip by panga (riverboat) to the isolated communities.

Our first stop was Pearl Lagoon to pick up the Aps Nica sawmill mechanic and to learn more about the situation in the lagoon area. Steve, the sawyer who usually helped with the sawmills was out fishing so I spoke to Mansel, the young mechanic working with the Aps Nica mills. Mansel is 22, a light-skinned black creole, native to Pearl Lagoon. He seemed intelligent and sharp, and best of all, intuitive. I asked him to accompany us on our visit to the communities to check out the sawmills. He hesitated giving me a number of excuses, but finally he agreed to come with us.

We heard that a band of contras had attacked the health center in Tabapauni and decided to stop and check it out. The lagoon was very rough and we had not been out for more than half an hour when we overtook a small boat laden with sacks of food and people. It was sitting low in the water and seemed to be broken down. As we passed they yelled out begging us to take a few passengers to lighten their load. . . Two people crawled out from beneath a heavy black plastic tarp and climbed aboard. Through pelting rain we tried to get acquainted. Sara was the newly elected representative of Tabapauni for the UNO. . . We finally docked at the village. Sara's daughter, Alicia, sold food out of their house. They told us about the elections and the new government. Sara pretty much ran the village. She had the keys to the health post and showed us around. Indeed, windows had been broken and those responsible had fled the village. The nurse had quit and gone to Bluefields. Sara refused to put any political implications into the story and we had no way of uncovering more facts. Everyone was mad at whoever did it.



Shortly before we arrived in Karawala, Mansel started getting fidgety. I talked to him for awhile trying to see what the problem might be. . . Finally he told me that he had done his military service under the Sandinistas in Karawala! . . . The isolated community looked normal. Women were waist deep in the brackish water washing clothes and their children. Both Mansel and Guillermo, the Pangaman (boat man), seemed very uneasy. We walked silently past the papdawatla (thatched houses) to the center of the village to a little hut where we had occasionally been able to get a meal. Marcia was out sowing fields, but her daughter said they had some leftover rice. So we sat down. Conversation was at an absolute low. Guillermo whispered to me, "the place is full of contra". Mansel looked like he wanted to disappear. We glimpsed armed soldiers walking back and forth in front of the house.

A few minutes later a tall slender Miskitu Indian walked in. I had never before seen his face in the village but I was pretty sure who he must be. He introduced himself as Lino and told us that YATAMA, the indigenous people's armed resistance movement has won the elections and "everything was different now." He very politely asked us who we were and what we were doing in his village. I explained that we were electoral observers here to visit the security zone accompanied by our Pangaman and our mechanic. I was very worried that Mansel might faint or that Guillermo might say something under his breath. Paul and I maneuvered Lino outside, leaving the two young men to finish the rice.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

I explained our involvement with the sawmills and expressed an interest in meeting with the village committee and the sawmill committee. Lino was more interested in telling us about himself than he was in the sawmills. Suddenly his name changed and he became Mariano. He spoke Spanish and better English than most Creoles. He said he was the YATAMA political leader of the whole mouth of the Rio Grande (about five villages). He told about his many years in the "bush". Literally the indigenous armed resistance lived in the thick, swampy jungles, and were called Bushmen. They were characterized by their jet black long hair, colorful headbands, often a single earring, and U.S. government issue camouflage uniforms and equipment. We learned later that Mariano had been taken first to Honduras for training, then he was taken (blindfolded) by plane to another country for military-political training. Some of the trainers spoke English, he said, though he was never sure where he was. . .

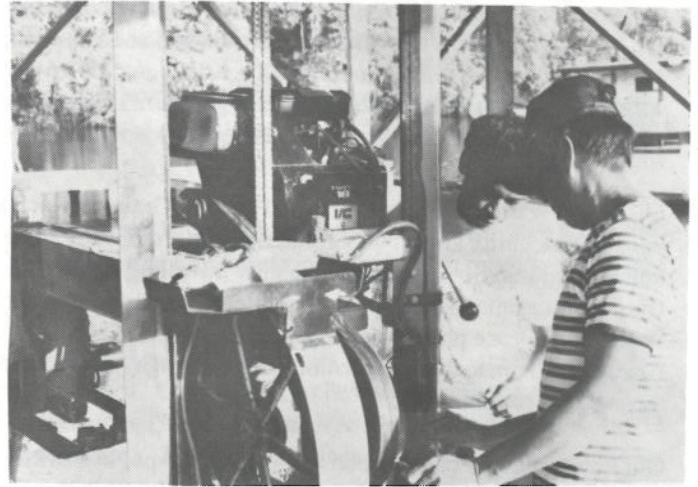
That night Mansil said he was afraid they would come and kill him in his sleep, so Paul, Guillermo and Mansel locked themselves in a tiny office of the new health post with the windows shut tight, while I slept alone in the old broken down post. A full moon and attacking mosquitos kept me awake enough to realize that sentries were guarding both buildings during the night. Just before dawn they disappeared. The next morning work with the committees and the "check-up" of the sawmill went well and Mansel gained a few points with the YATAMA. But at every opportunity he said to me in Italian, "andiamo via" (let's get out of here). I forgot to mention that the FSLN had sent Mansel to Italy for a six month course in mechanics. . .

As we were loading the panga to leave Karawala, Mariano suddenly decided to accompany us to Sandy Bay and La Barra, since he was the political chief of the area. At La Barra we met with some of the sawmill committee members (others were out planting their crops) and Mansel and the mechanic straightened out some problems in the working of the mill. As we walked around the little village viewing community projects which used the lumber from the mill, Mariano took the opportunity to tell us about the time they had attacked La Barra and held the whole area for 12 days. Here too, the YATAMA flag had replaced the FLSN.

I emphasized to Mariano again that I had brought the mechanic especially to look at the sawmills and that I wanted to meet with the committees to discuss any problems. More combat ready Bushmen walked by wearing heavy boots, long sleeves and caps, carrying Bazookas, rifles, handgrenades and machetes. . .

Finally Mariano accompanied us to the sawmill. Along the way we met the new district representative who sported a brand new blue UNO tee-shirt and baseball cap. He, Yocelyn, had been elected by the villagers, whereas Mariano had been appointed by the YATAMA. The two men conversed in Miskitu. From my little knowledge for the language I understood that Yocelyn was questioning our credentials, especially Mansel's. He might have recognized him. Then Mariano started questioning Mansel - where was he from, who did he work for, etc. I tried to change the subject by asking about the newly installed Yatama flag flying high over the village. It worked. Mariano proudly explained how they had finally gotten their territory back and kicked the Sandinistas out. In fact, most of the FSLN supporters seemed to have packed up and left the village.

When we finally left the Rio Grande and Guillermo pointed the panga toward Pearl Lagoon, Mansel smiled for the first time. The lagoon was beautiful, calmer than before and our spirits lifted and we laughed and told jokes and talked about Italian food. . .



About a half an hour outside of Pearl Lagoon we learned of the Wala Gallo ceremony - a three day marathon ritual with brujos (male witches) and curanderos (healers). We pulled ashore at a little cove where some tents had been set up. A bed of chicken feathers led to the main tent. Inside it was dark, smelly and full of witchdoctors. The sick woman, who the day before was dying of an uncontrollable hemorrhage, was up greeting visitors. A large table was laden with over 150 sacrificed chickens who had left their feathers outside. Drumming and dancing would go on all night for three days. If the ill person survived it was due to the talents of the witch doctors - if they died it was because they didn't have enough faith. Visitors came to pay their respects, took some food, prayed, hung around outside, slept, danced and chanted. . .

We had to get out of the lagoon before dark so we wished the sick woman well and started off again - picking up and dropping off hitchhikers all along the way. As we pulled up to the wharf at Pearl Lagoon a crowd of children in the shallow water caught our attention. They were teasing a huge sword fish which was tied to a pole. It was still alive. I was reminded of an old Italian folk song about a female sword fish who was caught by fishermen and dragged back to the village behind their boat. Her mate went crazy with a broken heart and followed the boat right into a trap of harpoons - and so the two lovers were together in death. . .

We left Mansel on the dock at Pearl Lagoon. He had been a great help, putting aside his own real fears and working with men whom he might have killed before and who might easily have decided to kill him now. His smile reached both ears "Arrivederci", he shouted. We all waved.

on NOT abandoning...

Last spring British Friends sent a Quaker study tour to Nicaragua. "Nicaragua through Quaker eyes" is the published report of the tour which was arranged in cooperation with Soledad and Jose McIntire of the Friends center in Nicaragua. After the elections Marigold Best looks at the experience:

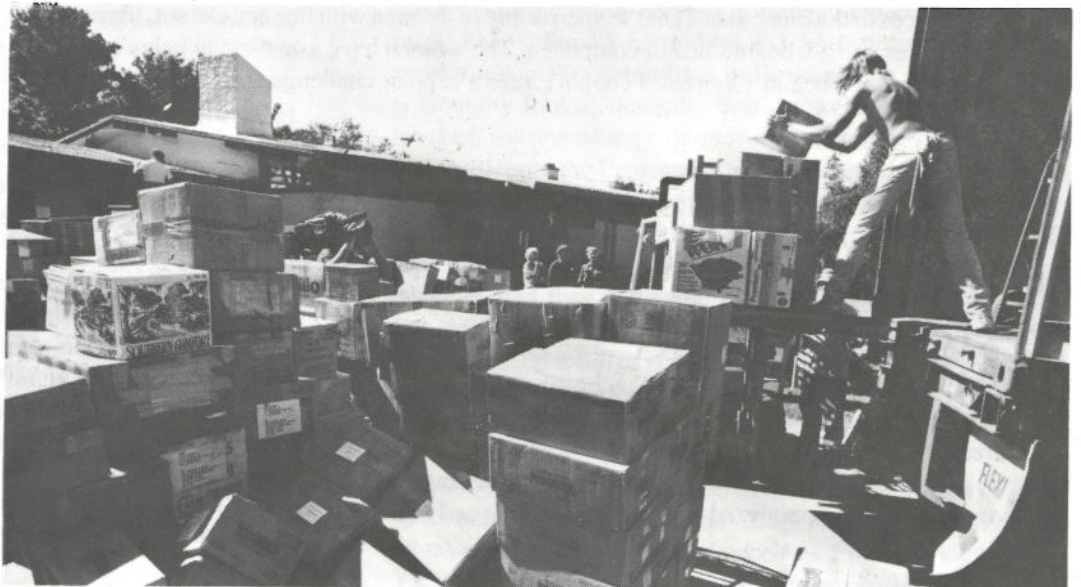
On 25th February 1990th Sandinista government of Nicaragua was defeated in "free and fair" elections by the UNO 14-party coalition led by Violeta Chamorro, to the dismay of some, the delight of others and the astonishment of nearly everyone.

Does this mean that the experience of the Friends who went on the quaker Study Tour to Nicaragua in May-June 1989, and returned with such a fervent desire to witness to what they experienced, is no longer relevant? BY NO MEANS!! The claim that Nicaragua's is truly "a different kind of Revolution" is only confirmed by the holding of such exemplary elections and by President Daniel Ortega's dignified and reconciliatory acceptance of the result.

It is very important for us to understand what is happening in Nicaragua, and these vivid accounts of the wide variety of Friends' visits and meetings provide valuable illumination. "Nicaraguans did not vote for democracy there was much more of that around than they had ever dreamt of in 1979. They voted for food.", wrote the Independent's John Carlin. They (Nicaraguans) saw the effects of the US-backed Contra war and the general longing for its end. The hope that a UNO victory would end the need for conscription was a powerful factor in the election. . . The message the people had received from Washington, to quote John Carlin again, was "that to vote Sandinista in Sunday's election was to perpetuate fighting and to accelerate poverty". A majority of people could not face that prospect.

Nevertheless, the Sandinistas received about the same proportion of the vote as that which gave Mrs. Thatcher her present majority here! Theirs will be by far the largest single party in the new assembly. . . Much of what the Revolution has accomplished is irreversible and nothing can extinguish the generous dedication to achieving a better and more Christian society that the Friends found everywhere they went.

Whatever happens, the Nicaraguan people will need international concern and help just as much as ever. Steve Cary and Art Schmidt were begged, "Please don't abandon us!" We don't think that any of us who have been to Nicaragua and had the privilege of getting to know so many outstanding people could bear to do that. . .



Photograph: St. Petersburg Times

SHIPMENT

11

Although the U.S. embargo of Nicaragua has been lifted and regular shipping channels are beginning to open, Pro-Nica will continue its shipping program. Actually, needs in some categories have increased; medicines for instance. Shipment 11 is now being assembled in St. Petersburg.

Pro-Nica shipments are made in response to specifically stated needs. They go to established projects which have reported their high priority needs and which have the capacity for efficient responsible distribution and use. As space permits and as shipping funds are available a limited number of shipments for other groups (third party shipments) are included. If you or your group are interested in such shipments, please write for a copy of the arrangements that should be made. Some clothing will be sent and distributed through Pro-Nica: sturdy clothing for children, clothes and diapers for infants, sturdy work clothes and shoes for children and adults. If you have questions with regard to possible contributions of materials, please write. (Pro-Nica, the Meeting House, 130 19th Ave S.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33705) Costs for shipping are approximately \$6000 per container, obviously we must cover this in order to proceed.

at MULUKUKU

Dorothy Granada and Charles Gray worked as Friends Center Coordinators for six months in 1989. They are now working in Mulukuku. We include excerpts from their most recent report.

"The day begins about 4 a.m. in the Montoya household. Roosters crowing, cows announce with loud moos that they are quite ready to be milked, and the pat-pat, pat-pat of Angelita making torillas lets us know the day has begun even though it's still dark.

We crawl out from under the mosquito net about 4:45 when dawning gets serious. Dorothy gets the laundry together and helps in the kitchen. I load tools for the day's work in my backpack . . . After morning chores, Dorothy has been helping plan a womens center and I go off 3/4 of a mile to help build a house for us to live in.

We are happy and grateful to be here. We've come at the invitation of Fr. Jim Feltz of the Roman Catholic parish of Cristo Rey in Bocana de Paiwas . . . The Proyecto Cristo Rey is a response to the needs of the many families that have come into the area. It promotes self-help programs in 15 asentamientos (communities of war-displaced).

Mulukuku (Sumu Indian "cacique") is HOT, HUMID and has a thriving mosquito and other biting insect population. It is also lush and beautiful. Mulukuku sits on the Atlantic coastal plain that was once entirely rain forest. Only small patches of virgin forest remain, such as that on the land of Noel and Grethel Montoya, our hosts. Noel is the former mayor and heads the Hurricane Reconstruction Committee and Grethel is a "promotora" of the Proyecto working with three women's cooperatives... The rainy season is upon us and the Tuma River is swift and deep as its brown water carry rich top soil to the Atlantic. This is a new community. . . a frontier - no police, some thievery and lack of trust since some neighbors don't know one another. . .

There are 36 members in the cooperative all of whom have many children with the exception of one childless woman. Six of the women are widows and 19 have been abandoned by their mates. In the year of their existence, they have organized a day-care center run by 2 coop members. A resident cow provides fresh milk every morning. The women have a workshop making building blocks of cement, earth and sand. These they use in constructing their own homes and sell for use in other buildings in the new town.

Future plans of the cooperative include a sewing shop, carpentry workshop which Charles will help with and a women's center. The center will offer services to the more than 2,000 women living in the area with literacy classes, library, legal counseling, mental health resources, meeting facilities and a women's health component The women have asked me to help develop the center and my special responsibility will be, of course, the health services. I couldn't have a happier challenge."

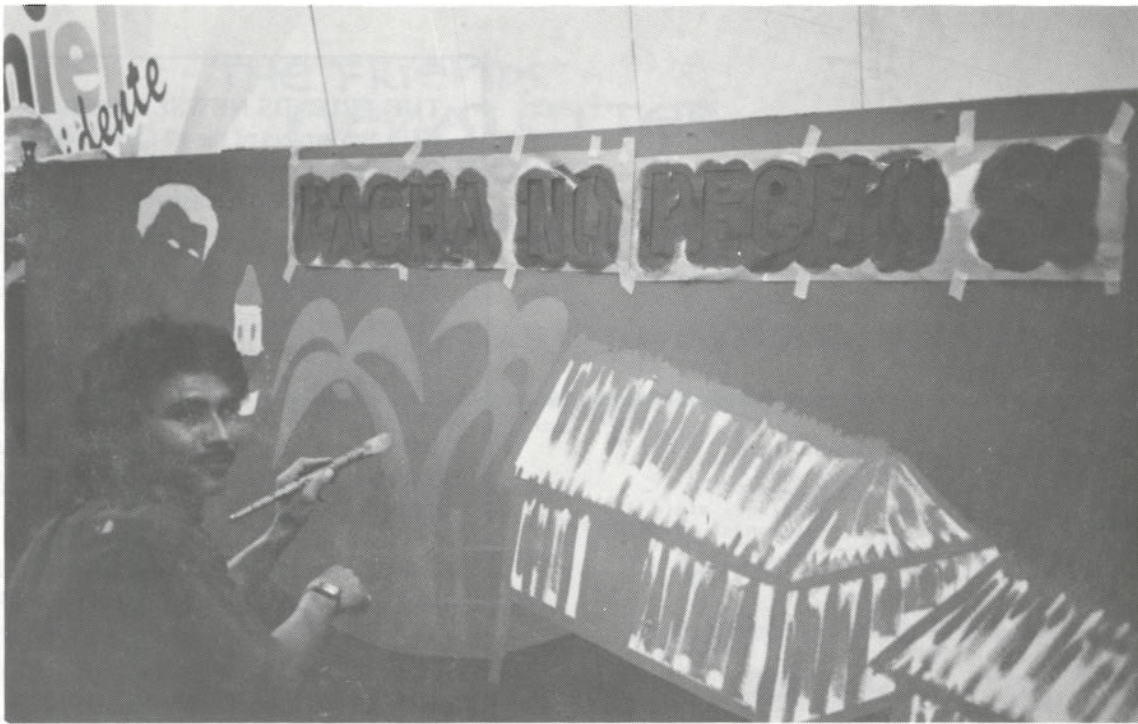
HEALTH CARE UNDER THE WEATHER

... Since Violeta Chamorro's April 25 inauguration the country's already fragile health system has been thrown into crisis. Scarcity of medicine and other supplies in health care centers and hospitals virtually paralyzed health care delivery early in May.

... FETSALUD, the health care worker's union, charges that the crisis in health care was created with the aim of eventually privatizing the health services out of the reach for many Nicaraguans, as they were before 1979. According to FETSALUD representative Aura Lila Carrillo, "The government is strangling the health care centers and hospitals in order to first close them and then sell them off." She says the government's policies could lead to widespread epidemics this year that will be particularly dangerous for the country's children.

Since 1979 much of the health care assistance has come from Cuba. After the February elections, some of the Cuban doctors, who worked for no pay and under difficult technical and professional conditions, were pulled out of particularly conflictive areas after receiving threats from UNO supporters. Some of these same supporters are now bemoaning the absence of Cuban doctors in their communities. Salmerin (Health Minister) has said aid will be welcome from "any and all countries," but has taken no steps to date to bring those Cuba medical personnel back.

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SLIDE PROJECTORS NEEDED

Carrousel slide projectors (as many as ten) are needed in the health education projects of AMC and of the Breast Feeding program. The later has been supported by Pro-Nica for three years and includes the now famous billboards in the Managua area. New billboards and other materials have more recently been taken to outlying regions where they have been translated into Miskito and other native languages.

TOXIC WASTES REJECTED

The UNO government officially rejected the offer from Lion Investment, Inc. in Miami to receive 230,000 metric tons of toxic ash monthly in return for road making equipment and just under \$1 million annually. On World Environment Day, June 5, Natural Resources Institute (IRENA) Minister Jaime Incer announced, as reported by the FSLN's Barricada, "We are definitely not going to permit the use of our national territory as a garbage dump, especially not as receptacle for toxic garbage. We will pass laws and take action to prevent it."

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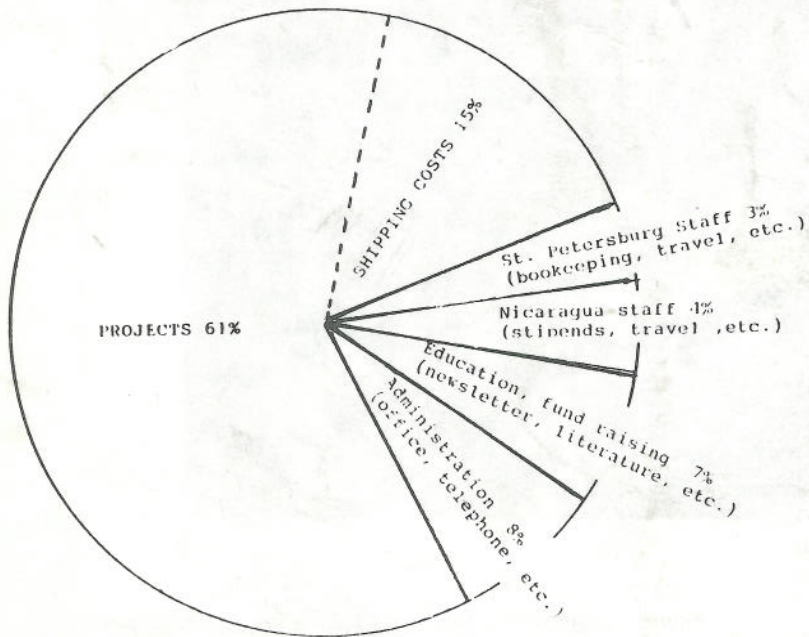
ENVIO, published in Managua by Instituto Historica Centroamericano (IHCA) is a Jesuit publication which presents important reports and analysis of development in Nicaragua. (available from the Institute of Human Relations, Loyola University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70118. \$27 per year)

An artist paints a new bill board for the Breast Feeding project which has been extended to the Atlantic coast with signs, seminars, and literature. "PACHO NO, PECHO SI", bottles no, breasts yes.

CITY IN a LARGER WORLD

"City of God" figures in Nicaragua have close ties to a similar group in Costa Rica, the "Sword of God". They are also close to a group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, known as the "Word of God". One of the Michigan devotees, Thomas Monaghan, owner of both the domino's Pizza chain and the Detroit Tigers baseball team and prime financial backer of the antiabortion "Operation Rescue" campaign, visited Nicaragua shortly after the April 25 inauguration of Violeta Chamorro and promised several million dollars to Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo for the construction of a new cathedral for Managua. He also plans to open a pizza restaurant in Managua. Monaghan has a number of business interests in Honduras related to his pizza chain and has been a financial backer of the contras for a number of years. Construction on the cathedral is scheduled to start soon.

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The chart represents expenses paid from the SEYM Pro-Nica account (St. Petersburg) 1989-90 fiscal year: total expenditures: \$91,812. This figure does not include material contributions, the value of which far exceeds the cash collected and spent. Except for cost-of-living stipends paid to staff in Nicaragua, no wages were paid, services were contributed.

THE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER FROM NICARAGUA is a project of the El Centro de los Amigos and of Pro-Nica, its support group in the U. S. A. Both are under the care of the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers).

THE NEWSLETTER is distributed to Meeting clerks, pastors, and friends. We would like it to reach groups and individuals interested in Nicaragua. *If you have received this issue but do not wish to receive others, please let us know . . . or if the address we have used is not accurate.* There is no subscription charge. You are welcome to contribute to the work of the Friends Center in Nicaragua through Pro-Nica. Contributions are tax deductible.

Checks should be made out to SEYM Pro-Nica, and mailed to: **PRO-NICA, THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 130 19th Avenue S.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33705, tel. (813) 896-1310.**



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