

Nicaragua in Latin America - The Invisible and the Reality

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In Nicaragua, the population lives the daily reality of the country's revolutionary development, the democratization of the economy, the modernization of the health and education systems, the transformation of infrastructure and a dynamic reaffirmation of culture, identity and national dignity. However, overseas and in the region itself, these tremendous socio-economic victories are practically invisible. It is instructive to look at this reality more carefully.

In a recent interview, Treasury Minister Iván Acosta observed that Nicaragua "is one of the countries that grew the most, we grew in the years of the pandemic a combined 8.3%, which is the highest growth in Central America, one of the highest in all of Latin America and probably internationally." The data cited by Minister Acosta are endorsed by international financial institutions. Likewise, both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration confirm that Nicaragua is among the best countries in terms of the execution of their respective loan portfolios. Now too, the Financial Action Task Force has certified Nicaragua as a country free of money laundering.

A study in May 2021 by the World Health Organization and the University of Oxford included Nicaragua among the ten safest countries for travelers in relation to Covid-19. Nicaragua was the only Latin American country on the list. Nicaragua has the most extensive and well-equipped public health system in Central America. Six more major hospitals are expected to be completed in the coming months. Nicaragua has just inaugurated the first medical oxygen plant in Central America. The National Reference Diagnostic Center is one of the pioneer laboratories of molecular biology in Latin America, second in the region. In Nicaragua, public health care is free.

Education in the public school system from preschool and primary to secondary is also free, as is vocational technical education offered in the extensive national network of colleges of the National Technological Institute. Public universities guarantee equal access to higher education for all high school students. More than one million packages of scholastic supplies are delivered to students all over the country every year. Food is distributed to schools to

guarantee a daily school meal to more than 1.2 million students, in a country with a population of 6.5 million.

Nicaragua is among the first countries in the world in gender equality. It is among the first countries in terms of citizen security in Latin America and the Caribbean. It has the best road network in Central America. About two million families are legally more secure because they have received title to their properties from the government. The country generates 70% of its electricity from renewable sources, with electricity distribution covering more than 99% of the population. The government maintains subsidies for the price of petrol and its derivatives, for public transport on both land and water transport and for electricity for low income families.

Nicaragua has the most advanced and democratic system of autonomy for indigenous peoples in Latin America with over 30% of the national territory titled in the name of 23 indigenous and Afro-descendant territories. It is a country practically self-sufficient in food production. Its food security initiatives include programs such as the Productive Bonus and the CRISSOL solidarity program for basic grains, involving more than 200,000 producers. The women's credit program, Zero Usury, enables more than 115,000 women a year to improve the standard of living of their families.

One might think that this tremendous social and economic success of the People as President in the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua would be of great interest and general admiration at the regional and continental level. But in fact that is not the case, to the contrary. Of course, within Nicaragua, all these socio-economic victories are known and experienced day by day by the population. The victories of the People as President in Nicaragua are also recognized, although generally in a low profile way, by the respective international institutions concerned, such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF and UNESCO among others.

The key thing to grasp is that Nicaragua has overcome centuries of colonial oppression and neocolonial exploitation in order to achieve these victories. Then, after the triumph of the Sandinista Popular Revolution in 1979, an endless campaign of harassment and aggression was unleashed by the United States and its allies. That is the origin of the systematic media, NGO, academic and institutional campaign to denigrate, belittle, undermine and ignore the unquestionable, outstanding success of the policies of the government of President Comandante Daniel Ortega and Vice President Rosario Murillo.

One is dealing not only with the routine psychological warfare waged by regional and international media, but also with a determined propaganda offensive disseminated by the proliferation of NGOs, by the academic social sciences industry, and by institutions such as for example, the OAS or the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and several instances of the European Union. All these instances have abandoned the most basic rules of good faith reporting.

Genuine reporting is based on collecting good faith first-hand testimony, on the use of reliable documentation and data, on a process of adequate corroboration, on the recognition of contrary narratives and a constant effort to allow readers to decide for themselves. In the case of Nicaragua, as with Cuba and Venezuela, these norms have been replaced by a ruthless campaign of lies, omissions, arbitrary opinion, permanent bias and blatant manipulation. Perhaps the most emblematic case of this abandonment of good faith on the

part of almost all sources of information in Latin America and internationally, was the beginning of the failed coup d'état in Nicaragua in April 2018.

In Nicaragua, we all remember that the initial pretext for the violent protests was the reform of the Social Security Law, which was distorted and misrepresented in such a way that the vast majority of people ended up believing the absurdity that big business wanted to defend the rights of pensioners and workers. In fact, the bosses' organization, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), wanted to raise the retirement age from 60 to 65, eliminate the minimum pension and the reduced pension, the Christmas bonus and the maintenance of the value of pensions. They wanted to double the number of contributions to qualify for a pension from 750 to 1500 and proposed the privatization of the clinics of the Nicaraguan Institute of Social Security (INSS).

Regional and international information sources completely suppressed this reality and lied about the government's proposals, which in truth were: a gradual increase in the employer's contribution of 3.25% and of the workers of 0.75%; that people with high salaries pay a quota proportional to their income; increase the government contribution for the public sector by 1.25%; keep the number of weekly instalments to qualify for a pension at 750; keep the reduced pension and the minimum pension; keep the Christmas bonus and the index-linking of pensions to maintain their value; to guarantee complete medical care in the INSS clinics for retired people in exchange for a fee of 5% of their pension; and not to privatize the INSS clinics.

However, if one reads practically any journalistic or academic article or the cynical, false summaries of the OAS, the UN or the European Union, they all allege that it was the Nicaraguan government's attack on the Social Security system that provoked the protests in April 2018. This remains the dominant narrative that prevails in almost all the material one encounters about the failed 2018 coup d'état in Nicaragua. In fact, what provoked the protests was a campaign for regime change promoted, financed and directed by the United States and its European allies. At that time in 2018, the only media that sought out the truth was Telesur, at the initiative of its director Patricia Villegas who consulted with Sandinista media to find out what was really happening.

For the rest, almost all the other Latin American media, across the entire ideological spectrum, swallowed the stupid lie that big business and US and EU funded NGOs were defending the INSS in Nicaragua in favor of the working class and pensioners. This is just one of the clearer examples of the wholesale abandonment of basic reporting standards by the vast majority of information sources in Latin America in relation to Nicaragua. The word "pathetic" doesn't even come close to describing this collapse of moral and intellectual integrity at a continental level.

In the same way, the vast majority of information sources in the region and internationally speak of "political prisoners" to refer to people in Nicaragua who received money directly or indirectly from various foreign governments and committed, among other offenses, the crimes of: misappropriation and improper withholding; laundering of money, property and assets; dishonest management and falsification by misrepresentation. All are crimes punishable under Nicaragua's Criminal Code of 2007, approved by a legislature controlled by Nicaragua's right-wing parties. Moreover, almost all of these people openly lobbied in favor of illegal coercive measures by foreign powers, who were also paying them directly or indirectly, against their own country, an offense of criminal treason punishable in practically all countries of the world.

Here in Nicaragua, we have in the Sandinista media first rate genuine reporters. But they are generally excluded as sources of information in Latin America and internationally on the pretext that they are media associated with the government. As if the lazy, dishonest and incompetent journalism that prevails in the region is not bought off by their countries' various respective corporate and government interests, just like the NGO industrial complex or the academic social sciences industry, bought off and operating comfortably in disinformation networks manipulated by the corrupt corporations and institutions that predominate in the region, answering to the interests of their Western masters.

The vast majority of information sources in the region research nothing in good faith, but look for what they want to find. In effect, they are just another despicable actor in the West's psychological warfare offensive, recycled through an infinite feedback loop, into which they too feed their false reports. These are the main sources of the production and distribution of information in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the West in general. In the case of Nicaragua, they use sources almost entirely financed by the US and European governments but still have the audacity to describe those tainted sources as independent.

So Nicaragua is facing a system designed to make the victories of the Sandinista Popular Revolution invisible, and to the extent possible also to belittle the achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the Cuban Revolution. However, sooner or later, reality does prevail because the truth goes on existing behind and beyond the virtual phantasmagoria of disinformation. So, to the same extent that the radical democracy of the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela are steadily defeating the economic, psychological and political blockades of the West and its local proxies, so too will the Sandinista Revolution of the People as President in Nicaragua.

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Featured image: Nicaragua's public health system now has two linear accelerators to treat cancer patients, who receive their treatment free of charge. (Source: [Tortilla con Sal](#))

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