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Nicaragua: Interview With Bonifacio Miranda, President Of Revolutionary Workers Party (prt)

by Deborah Tyroler

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[The PRT participated in the 1984 elections, and Miranda ran for president. The PRT has not joined the National Opposition Unity (UNO), and is running its own candidates for the 1990 elections. The interview below, which took place prior to the last week in September, was distributed by the Nicaraguan Embassy, Netherlands (The Hague, Netherlands), via GeoNet, a commercial computer network. One of the GeoNet systems ("GEO2"), employed by users in the United Kingdom and members of international non-governmental organizations, routed the interview on 10/17/89 to Peacenet, a non-profit computer network based in San Francisco, Calif.] Q.: What is the role of the Nicaraguan Resistance after the Tela [summit] accords? Miranda: We never believed that the contra project was conceived for the purpose of overthrowing Sandinismo. Despite all its mistakes, the [Sandinista National Liberation] Front is still a very powerful force and militarily, it could not have been defeated. It was a war of attrition after which the FSLN would be forced to negotiate with US imperialism under better conditions [for the US]. In Nicaragua, the contra project developed a social base in 1985, partly because of the mistakes made by the government on the Atlantic Coast with the Miskitos. US imperialism has not changed its policy...[W]hat is happening is that regional conflicts are being solved as a result of the Reagan-Gorbachev, and later Bush-Gorbachev, dialogues. So the contras have been defeated and now there is a new imperialistic policy we call it "democratic reactionary policy" , which tries to promote a democratic mechanism in order to stop all revolutionary processes... The US dreams of an internal coup against the FSLN. Q.: Do you think the FSLN will provide democratic guarantees for the Miskito Indians who have been involved with the contras when they return to Nicaragua? Miranda: I...think the FSLN will comply for the sake of annihilating the contras. Q.: Was the [Aug. 4] National Dialogue [with opposition parties] important? Why? Miranda: The government made some concessions to the political parties but there are still laws that have not changed...There may be a coalition government and we have to participate in such negotiations. We asked for two things: a reform of the electoral law to allow for parliamentary elections and that all financing should be distributed equally. Q.: Why the proliferation of political parties after 1979? Miranda: It was the inevitable result of the destruction of Somoza's bourgeois power structure, although most [of the new parties] were the old ones with different names. However, most were able to acquire legal status and that is an achievement of the revolution. Once the revolution took power, it was so powerful that it divided all social sectors and parties. For instance, the Social Christians split over how to deal with the FSLN... Q.: What is view regarding foreign financial assistance to the contras or to the political parties? Miranda: In the case of the elections, we are not opposed, as long as the money comes from parties or groups with the same ideology and not from governments, especially not from the US government. Q.: What do you think of the fact that some contras have vowed to continue fighting even without US help? Miranda: Mere bragging. Q.: What is your opinion regarding the US economic embargo? Miranda: It should stop immediately. Q.: Has your party had any problems organizing itself for the elections? Miranda: If one requests permission from the police [to hold rallies, and the like], it's granted. But at times our people are pestered at workplaces by Sandinistas. But eventually, that might change. The

Bonaparte-like structure of the Sandinista government will not give up power that easily, though. We will have to fight to get it. Q.: What demands were raised by your party during the National Dialogue that were not met? Miranda: Equal financing for all. The rest is part of the political and ideological struggle. Q.: Do you think basic conditions are in place for your party to participate in a free and fair electoral process? Miranda: The FSLN has been preparing itself for quite a while for the electoral process. We are not as well organized and we don't have much money. Q.: How would you solve the country's economic crisis? Miranda: There is no economic solution for this country. Q.: Did it ever have one? Miranda: Under Somoza the economic panorama worldwide was different, although not more efficient. More cotton was being produced, the exchange rate of the dollar was 7 to 1 for 20 years. Today our agro-export industry is no longer solvent. We cannot compete...The bourgeoisie and its economic model are finished. Hyper-inflation can only be stopped at a very high political cost. State spending has been reduced because the army is being sent back home, but how long will this last? The bleak economic scenario will not change until the country falls apart. Nobody will invest here, and the economic assistance it will get won't be enough to reactivate the economy... Q.: What would your party do if it were in charge? Miranda: It would be problematic. We would not be able to solve Nicaragua's crisis. We believe that the only way is revolution throughout Central America. We cannot survive unless all Central American nations unite in a common economic model fit for 18 or 20 million people. Q.: Will you participate in the electoral process as a single party or as a bloc? Miranda: We think it would be better to join with other left-wing parties and we have come to an agreement with the Marxist-Leninists on representatives for municipal elections. Q.: In your view which political sectors are reflected in La Prensa? Miranda: Our bourgeoisie and our political parties are very peculiar. For example, Virgilio Godoy's Liberal Party does not have members of the bourgeoisie, only coffee and cotton-growers. The Council for Private Enterprise and La Prensa...coordinate efforts constantly. They both represent the point of view of the US Embassy here, though sometimes they appear to be independent-minded. Q.: What is the FSLN's popularity margin? Miranda: It's wrong to make electoral predictions right now. People change during the campaign. Q.: What do you think of the published opinion polls? Miranda: I do not think they are scientific, but I cannot prove it for we don't know the sources. The surveys give the Social Christian party a degree of popularity I don't think it has. I believe Virgilio Godoy is very popular and is an aggressive candidate, with guts... I believe a political pact will be worked out between the FSLN and whatever proportion won by the UNO (National Opposition Unity). If the UNO gets 40% and the Sandinistas 45%, then the opposition makes a deal with the FSLN and forces it to comply. During the recent university elections, the FSLN won by 65%, the right-wing opposition won 30% and we won 6%. We believe there is a margin of left-wingers who have lost faith in the FSLN and we believe we can win those votes. Q.: If the FSLN wins, do you think the US government should normalize relations with Nicaragua? Miranda: Obviously, but not on the basis of political concessions.

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