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Interview: Gustavo Tablada, Nicaraguan Socialist Party General Secretary

Deborah Tyrolier

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Interview: Gustavo Tablada, Nicaraguan Socialist Party General Secretary

by Deborah Tyroler

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[The Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) participated in the 1984 presidential elections, capturing 1.5% of the direct vote. The party has two seats in the National Assembly. For the February 25, 1990 elections, the PSN has opted to join forces with the National Opposition Unity (UNO) coalition, rather than field its own candidate. 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 contras after the Tela Accords? Tablada: ...[W]e don't believe in military options. All problems can be solved in a more civilized manner...To a large extent, the Tela accords are a result of the [Aug. 4] document signed here in Managua between the opposition and the government. Our party supported this. We believe that members of the Nicaraguan Resistance will join the UNO in its civic struggle. There is a great deal of space there to begin an intense political activity against the FSLN. Q.: To what extent was the national dialogue between the opposition and the government important? Tablada: We feel it was very positive as the opposition had been insisting since February 14, after the last Esquipulas Accords, that it wanted to dialogue with the government. The most important demands dealing with the elections and other political and social issues were introduced that day, and we calculate that about 80 to 85% of them were satisfactorily fulfilled, if only in a general sort of way. We trust the word of President [Daniel] Ortega and believe the accords will be implemented. Q.: What were the demands that your party didn't see fulfilled during the national dialogue? Tablada: The central issue of amnesty and the fate of the 39 political prisoners [former National Guardsmen] are two things that concern us still... Q.: Has your party had problems in organizing and preparing itself for political action? Tablada: Not really, or nothing outside of the ordinary. Sometimes it is difficult to obtain authorization from the police because it claims UNO isn't a legal organization. But it is only a matter of time... Q.: In your view, what is the margin of popularity that the FSLN still has? Tablada: It's difficult to say. The surveys published in La Prensa and La Cronica which basically say that the Frente has about 30%, the opposition another 30% and the remaining 40% is undecided. My feeling is that after the campaigning, there will be about 65 to 70% in favor of the opposition. If I am right, the FSLN and the opposition will be able to govern jointly. And even if those are not the results, it would be beneficial for the FSLN to ask the opposition to participate in a coalition government a government of national reconciliation would be the best way out of this crisis. Q.: If the FSLN wins, do you think the US government should normalize relations with Nicaragua? Tablada: The US government shouldn't wait for the results of the elections. It should normalize relations right away and stop the economic embargo because the Nicaraguan people are the victims. We don't believe that economic sanctions are successful as a means of pressure. Q.: Which social and political perspectives do you believe are reflected in La Prensa? Tablada: At times it appears as if there is no unified criteria. Sometimes our party as an UNO member does not receive appropriate coverage and sometimes things are manipulated. I think
La Prensa and everyone else should start reflecting the interests of the peasants and the workers in order to find an answer to the problems they face. We will ask La Prensa to do its share as an opposition newspaper and thus reflect consistency with the UNO program and its objectives. Q.: Why the proliferation of political parties after 1979? Tablada: It wasn't after the revolution that the political parties began proliferating. It is happening now, during the last couple of years. I think the reason is that after years of living under a repressive regime, when people see the beginning of real democratic space, they burst out in an attempt to express themselves. Q.: Why do you think former President Reagan called Nicaragua a communist dungeon? Tablada: The majority of US leaders have always been unable to fully comprehend the liberation processes throughout the world. The US government justifies its stance on behalf of democracy, for it is true that most revolutionary regimes have made some mistakes. But as the democratic space opens and there is respect for human rights, then it should change its position. As Nicaragua becomes more democratic, that criteria must start changing. Q.: What is your objective as a party within UNO? Tablada: We haven't defined it yet, but there are two positions. One is to win the elections and the other to unite the entire opposition so that we can all find a common solution to the problems of the Nicaraguan people.

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