

It's time now for Conversation Carte Blanche. Here is Bill Slatter.

BILL SLATTER: Good evening, for the next few minutes Bill Stuckey and I, Bill whose program you've probably heard on Saturday night, "Latin Listening Post" Bill and I are going to be talking to three gentlemen the subject mainly revolving around Cuba. Our guests tonight are Lee Harvey Oswald, Secretary of the New Orleans Chapter of The Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a New York headquartered organization which is generally recognized as the principal voice of the Castro government in this country. Our second guest is Ed Butler who is Executive Vice-President of the Information Council of the Americas (INCA) which is headquartered in New Orleans and specializes in distributing anti-communist educational materials throughout Latin America, and our third guest is Carlos Bringuier, Cuban refugee and New Orleans Delegate of the Revolutionary Student Directorate, one of the more active of the anti-Castro refugee organizations. Bill, if at this time you will briefly background the situation as you know it, Bill

BILL STUCKEY: First, for those who don't know too much about the Fair Play for Cuba Committee this is an organization that specializes primarily in distributing literature, based in New York. For the several years it has been in New York it has operated principally out of the east and out of the West Coast and a few colleges campuses, recently however attempts have been made to organize a chapter here in New Orleans. The only member of the group who has revealed himself publicly so far is 23 year old Lee Harvey Oswald who is the Secretary of the local chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He first came to public notice a few days ago when he was arrested and convicted for disturbing the peace. The racket in which he was involved started when several local Cuban refugees including Carlos Bringuier, who is with us tonight, discovered him distributing pro-Castro material on a downtown street. Now Mr. Oswald and Bringuier are with us tonight to give us opposing views on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and its objectives. I believe that I was probably the first New Orleans reporter

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to interview Mr. Oswald on his activities here since he first came into public view. Last Saturday in addition to having him on my show we had very long and rambling question and answer session over various points of dogma and line of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and now I'll give you a very brief digest of some of the principal propaganda lines, I use the word propaganda, rather I should say informational lines of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Number one the principal thing that they insist is that Castro's government today is completely free and independent, that it is in no way controlled by the Soviet Union. Another cardinal point of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee's propaganda is that Premier Castro is forced to seek aid from the Russians only because the U.S. government refused to offer him financial aid.

Following another line I asked Mr. Oswald if he had ever, or was a member of the American Communist Party and he said that the only organization to which he belonged was the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Mr. Oswald also gave me this run down on his personal background. He said that he was a native of New Orleans, had attended Bogart Junior High School and Warren Eastern High School. Had entered the U.S. Marine Corps in 1956 and was honorably discharged in 1959. He said during our previous interview that he had lived in Ft. Worth, Texas before coming here to establish a Fair Play for Cuba chapter several weeks ago. However, there were a few items apparently that I suspect that Mr. Oswald left out in his original interview which was principally where he lived after, between 1959 and 1962. We, or, Mr. Butler brought some newspaper clippings to my attention and I also found some through an independent source, Washington Newspaper clippings to the effect that Mr. Oswald had attempted to renounce his American citizenship in 1959 and become a Soviet citizen. There was another clipping dated 1952 saying that Mr. Oswald had returned from the Soviet Union with his wife and child after having lived there three years. Mr. Oswald are these correct?

OSWALD:

That is correct. Correct, y s.

BILL STUCKEY: You did live in Russia for three years?

OSWALD: That is correct and I think that those, the fact that I did live for a time in the Soviet Union gives me excellent qualifications to repudiate charges that Cuba and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is communist controlled.

BILL SLATER: Mr. Bringuler perhaps you would like to dispute that point.

BRINGULER: I'd like to know exactly the name of the organization that you represent here in the city, because I have some confusion, is Fair Play for Cuba Committee or Fair Play for Russia Committee?

OSWALD: Well that is very provocative request and I don't think requires an answer.

BRINGULER: Well I will tell you why because before the communists takeover Cuba, Cuba was at the head of the Latin American countries and I can show you that in Cuba in 1958 every 27 persons had an automobile and in Russia was 200 persons, in Cuba was 6 persons for one radio and in Russia was 20 persons for one radio, in Cuba was 1 TV set for 18 persons and in Russia was 85 persons for 1 television set, and in Cuba was 1 telephone for every 38 persons and in Russia was 1 telephone for every 580 persons. Cuba was selling the sugar in the American market and was receiving from the U.S. more than one hundred million dollars a yrs over the price of the world market and the U.S. was paying to Cuba that price in dollars. Right now Cuba is selling sugar to Russia. Russia is paying to Cuba 80% in machinery, and 20% in dollars. I think that Cuba right now is a colony of Russia and the people of Cuba who is living in Cuba every day who is escaping from Cuba every day they disagree with you that you are representing the people of Cuba. Maybe you will represent the er, the colony of Russia here in this moment but not the people of Cuba. You cannot take that responsibility.

OSWALD: In order to give a clear and concise and short answer to each of those, well let's see, questions. I would say that the facts and figures from a an country

OSWALD: Like Pakistan or Burma would even reflect more light upon Cuba in relation to how many TV sets and how many radio and all that, or, this I don't think is the subject to be discussed tonight, or the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and as the name implies is concerned primarily with Cuban-American relations.

SLATTER: How many people do you have in your Committee here in New Orleans?

OSWALD: Er, I cannot reveal that as Secretary of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

BUTLER: Is it a secret society?

OSWALD: Er, no, Mr. Butler, it is not. However it is standard operating procedure, or, for a political organization consisting of a or, political minority, or, to safeguard the names and the number of its members.

BUTLER: Well the Republicans are in the minority, I don't see them hiding their membership.

OSWALD: The Republicans are not a well, or the Republicans are a established political party representing a great many people. They represent no radical point of view, they do not have a very violent and sometimes emotional opposition, as we do.

BUTLER: Oh, I see. Well would you say then that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is not a communist front organization?

OSWALD: The Senate Subcommittees who have occupied themselves with investigating the Fair Play for Cuba Committee or, have found that there is nothing to connect the two committees. We have been investigated from several points of view, that is points of view of or, taxes, allegiance, subversion, and so forth. The findings or, have been as I say or, absolutely zero.

BUTLER: Well I have the Senate Hearings before me and I think what I have in front of me refutes precisely every statement that you have just made. For instance, who is the Honorary Chairman of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee?

- OSWALD: Er, the Honorary Chairman of this Committee, er, the name of that person, er I certainly don't know.
- BUTLER: Well, let me tell you, in case you don't know about your own organization.
- OSWALD: No, I know about it.
- BUTLER: His name is Waldo Frank and I'm quoting from the "New Masses" Sept, 1932 in that the title of his article, 'How I came to Communism - A Symposium' by Waldo Frank - "Where I Stand and How I got There". Er, now let me ask you a second question, who is the Secretary for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee? the national secretary?
- OSWALD: Well we have a National Director who is Mr. V. T. Lee who is recently returned from Cuba and because of the fact that the U.S. government has imposed restrictions on travel to Cuba he is now under indictment by his traveling to Cuba, er, this however is very convenient for rightist organizations er drag out this or that literature supporting to show a fact which has not been established in law. I say that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee has definitely been investigated that is very true but I will also say that the total result of that er, er, investigation was zero. That is the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is not now on the Attorney General's Security List any other matter you may have is superfluous (etc.)
- BUTLER: Oh it is?
- SLATTER: Mr. Oswald, if I may ~~me~~ break in now a moment I believe it was mentioned that you at one time asked to renounce your American citizenship and become a Soviet citizen, is that correct?
- OSWALD: Well I don't think that has particular import to this discussion. We are discussing er, er, Cuban-American relations....
- SLATTER: Well, I think it has a bearing to this extent Mr. Oswald you say apparently that Cuba is not dominated by Russia and yet you apparently, your own past actions have shown that you have a affinity for Russia and perhaps

SLATTER: Communism, although I don't know that you admit that you either are a communist or have been, could you straighten out that part, are you or have you been a communist?

OSWALD: ^{answered that, ~~let's~~, etc,} Well I ~~don't see~~ er, what er, prior to this program or another radio program ...

STUCKEY: Are you a Marxist?

OSWALD: Yes, I am a Marxist.

BUTLER: What's the difference?

OSWALD: The difference is primarily the difference between a country like Guinea (sic) Ghana, Yugoslavia, China or Russia. A very, very great differences. Difference which we er, appreciate by giving aid let's say to Yugoslavia in the sum of a hundred million or so dollars a year.

BUTLER: That's extraneous, what's the difference?

OSWALD: The er, difference is as I said a very great difference er many parties, many countries are based on Marxism er, many countries such as Great Britain display very socialistic er, aspects or characteristics I might point to the socialized medicine of Britain. ~~I speak~~
I was speaking of...

Butler:
SLATTER: Gentlemen I'll have to interrupt, we'll be back in a moment to continue this kind of lively discussion after this message.

COMMERCIAL

SLATTER: Tonight Bill Stuckey and I are talking to three guests: Lee Harvey Oswald, who is local secretary of a group called the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and with Ed Butler the Executive Vice-President of the Information Council of the Americas (ICA) and Carlos Bringuier a Cuban refugee and obviously anti-Castro. Mr. Oswald as you might have imagined is on the hot seat tonight I believe you Bill Stuckey have a question.

STUCKEY: Mr. Oswald I believe you said in reply to a question of Mr. Butler's that any questions about your backgra

STUCKEY:

WERE extraneous to discussion tonight. I disagree because of the fact that you're refusing to reveal any of the other members of your organization so you are the face of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans. Therefore anybody who might be interested in this organization ought to know more about you. For this reason I'm curious to know just how you supported yourself during the three years that you lived in the Soviet Union. Did you have a government subsidy?

OSWALD:

Er, well, as I er, well, I will answer that question directly then as you will not rest until you get your answer er, I worked in Russia er, I was er under the protection er, of the er, that is to say I was not under protection of the American government but as I was at all times er, considered an American citizen I did not lose my American citizenship.

SLATTERY:

Did you say that you wanted to at one time though? or what happened?

OSWALD:

Well it's a long drawn out situation er, with permits to live in the Soviet Union being granted to a foreign resident is rarely given er, this calls for a certain amount of technicality, technical papers and so forth er, at no time as I say was I er, did I renounce my citizenship or attempt to renounce my citizenship or at no time was I out of contact with the American sub

BUTLER:

Excuse me, may I interrupt just one second. Either one of these two statements is wrong. The Washington Evening Star of Oct 31, 1959 page 1 reported that Lee Harvey Oswald a former Marine, 4936 Connally St., Ft. Worth Texas had turned in his passport at the American Amb in Moscow on that same date and it says that he had applied for Soviet citizenship. Now it seems to me that you've renounced your American citizenship if you turned in your passport.

OSWALD:

Well, the obvious answer to that is that I am back in the United States a person who renounces his citizenship becomes legally disqualified for returning to the U.S

BUTLER:

Right, and Soviet authorities, this is from the Washi

BUTLER:

Post and Times Herald of Nov. 16, 1959, soviet authorities have refused to grant it although they informed him he could live in Russia as a resident alien. What did you do in the two weeks from Oct. 31, to Nov. 16th 1959?

OSWALD:

AS I have already stated of course this whole conversation and we don't have too much time left is getting away from the Cuban-American problem, however I am quite willing to discuss myself for the remainder of this program, as I stated it is very difficult for a resident alien, for a foreigner to get permission to reside in the Soviet Union. During those two weeks and during the dates you mentioned I was of course er, er, with the knowledge of the American Embassy getting this permission.

BUTLER:

Were you ever at a building at 11 Kuznyetskaya St. in Moscow?

OSWALD:

Kuznyetskaya? Kuznyetskaya is the er, well that would be the building that would probably be the Foreign Ministry I presume, or no I was never in that place although I know Moscow having lived there.

SLATTER:

Excuse me. Let me interrupt here. I think Mr. Oswald is right to this extent we shouldn't get lose sight of the organization of which he is the head in New Orleans, the Fair Play for Cuba

OSWALD:

The Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

SLATTER:

As a practical matter knowing as I'm sure you do the sentiment in American against Cuba, we of course severed diplomatic relations sometime ago, I would say Castro is as unpopular as anybody in the world in this country. As a practical matter what do you hope to gain for your work? How do you hope to bring about what you call "Fair Play for Cuba"? Knowing the sentiment?

OSWALD:

The principals of the thought of the Fair Play for Cuba consist of restoration of diplomatic trade and tourist trade with Cuba that is one of our main points, er, we are for that I disagree that this situation in American-Cuban relations is very unpopular

OSWALD:

we are in a minority surely, er, are not particularly interested in what Cuban exiles or rightists er, er, members of rightist organizations have to say, we are primarily interested in the attitude of the U.S. government toward Cuba. And in that way we are striving to get the United States to adopt measures which would be more friendly toward the Cuban people and the new Cuban regime in that country. We are not at all communist controlled regardless of the fact that I had the experience of living in Russia, regardless of the fact that we have been investigated er, regardless of any of those facts, er the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is an independent organization not affiliated with any other organization, our aims and our ideals are very clear and in the best keeping with American traditions of democracy.

BAINBRIDGE:

Do you agree with Fidel Castro when in his last speech of July 26th of this year he qualified President John F. Kennedy of the United States as a ruffian and a thief? Do you agree with Mr. Castro?

OSWALD:

I would not agree with that er particular wording. However I and the er Fair Play for Cuba Committee does think that the United States Government through certain agencies mainly the State Department and the C.I.A. have made monumental mistakes in its relations with Cuba. Mistakes which are pushing Cuba into the sphere of activity of Lat's day very dogmatic country such as China is.

SLATTERY:

Mr. Oswald would you agree that when Castro first took power er, would you agree that the United States was very friendly with Castro that the people of this country had nothing but admiration for him that er that they were very glad to see Batista thrown out?

OSWALD:

I would say that the activities of the United States government in regards to Batista were a manifestation of not so much support for Fidel Castro but rather a withdrawal of support from Batista; in other words we stopped arms to Batista; what we should have done was to take those arms and drop them into the Sierra Maestra where Fidel Castro could have used them, as for public sentiment at that time I think even at that even before the revolution there were rumblings of official

- OSWALD:** comment and so forth from government officials
er, against Fidel Castro.
- WYLLER:** You've never been to Cuba, of course, but why are
the people of Cuba starving today?
- OSWALD:** Well in any country er, emerging from a semi-
colonial state and embarking upon reforms which
require a diversification of agriculture er, you
are going to have shortages, after all 80% of impor-
into the United States er from Cuba were two produc-
er tobacco and sugar. Nowadays er, while the er,
Cuba is er, reducing its product as far as sugar can
goes it is striving to go unlimited and unheard of
for Cuba quantities of certain vegetables sweet potato
lima beans, cotton and so forth so that they can be-
come agriculturally independent...
- SLATTER:** Gentlemen I'm going to have to interrupt you our time
is almost up. We've had three guests tonight on Com-
astia Carte Blanche, Bill Stuckey and I have been
talking to Lee Harvey Oswald, Secretary of the N.O.
Chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Ed But-
Executive Vice-President of the Information Council
the Americas (IBCA), and Carlos B. Ingular Cuban ref.
Thank you very much.