

Cubans in Miami Fearful Lively Exile Magazine Is Target for Bombers

Motives for Terrorism Unclear to Authorities

By Terri Shaw

Washington Post Staff Writer

During the recent wave of violence in Florida's Cuban exile community, three bomb incidents have been directed against the staff of a lively Spanish-language magazine called Areito.

Named for an equally lively Cuban folk dance, the quarterly attempts to give exiles a sympathetic view of Cuban life today.

"The press of the (exile) community is monolithic and conservative," said Lourdes Casal, a member of Areito's editorial board. "If you read the Miami newspapers you get the impression that all Cubans are poised with their knives in their mouths ready to retake the island."

Like many of the young exiles associated with Areito, Casal actively worked against the Castro government until she left the country after the attempted U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

Casal, now a professor at Rutgers University, said in a recent interview that during her 15 years of exile she went through a "very complicated process" of reassessing her attitude toward the government of Fidel Castro, finally coming to admire it. She is one of a small number of former opponents who have been allowed to return to Cuba for brief visits, which she has described in Areito.

Despite criticism from other Spanish-language papers in Miami, Areito's editors believe that more exiles are willing to take a new look at the Castro government than is generally believed.

Casal pointed out that a recent Miami Herald survey found that 47 per cent of the exiles interviewed did not oppose resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations.

"Even among those who opposed relations," she added, "30 per cent said they would go back to Cuba for a visit."

She estimated that perhaps a quarter of exiles under 25 might support Areito's position of "an openness toward Cuba and a sympathy with revolutionary

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By Jay Clarke

Special to The Washington Post

MIAMI—Two weeks ago, Emilio Milian, a widely-known radio journalist who had editorialized against terrorism and violence, stepped into his car after a show and turned the ignition key.

A bomb exploded, throwing the hood of the car over a cement wall, ripping the left front fender and tearing open the driver's door. The blast also blew off Milian's legs.

Milian, father of two sons and a daughter, is in a Miami hospital, a recent casualty in a growing pattern of violence in the Cuban community here in which four Cuban exile leaders have been killed, two wounded and many others threatened.

Bombing and other terrorist incidents in southern Florida numbered 32 in 1974, 57 in 1975 and eight so far this year, according to the FBI.

The violence has brought fear to Miami's Little Havana. This fear has hampered efforts to pin down the cause of the incidents, law enforcement officials say.

No one group is thought

to be behind the terrorism. Many incidents are believed to be the work of hard-line foes of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro who are attacking those who they believe support him. Some people point to the deaths of anti-Castro exile leaders and blame Castro agents. And some law enforcement officials believe criminal elements are taking advantage of the volatile political atmosphere in the community of 400,000-plus exiles, using it as a cover for extortion and other crimes.

Among the targets:

• Jose Elias de la Torre, 69, an exile leader whose plan to mount a major armed effort against Castro brought him international attention in 1969-70, who was shot to death in April, 1974, in his Coral Gables home as he watched television with his wife.

• Luciano Nieves, 43, an outspoken advocate of peaceful co-existence with the Castro regime, who was fatally shot in February, 1975, with a 45-cal. pistol in

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Exile Magazine Bombing Target

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goals," if not all of Castro's methods. Most older exiles still oppose the Castro government, said Casal, who is in her mid-30s.

While most exiles who work on the magazine are younger than Casal, they seem to have undergone a similar emotional and intellectual process of gradually becoming more sympathetic to Castro.

When asked why they changed their minds, several mentioned their involvement in anti-Vietnam war activity. One said the Vietnam war and the Marine invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 made him realize that "it's not easy for developing countries to carry out transformation without someone stepping on the process."

Marifeli Perez-Stable, 26, a graduate student at the University of Florida, compared the interest among young exiles in learning

about today's Cuba with "the search for cultural identity" among other ethnic groups.

"When I speak at universities," Casal said, "Cuban students come up to me afterward and ask, 'How did you get there? How can I go?'"

Cubans in Miami Are Alarmed by Terrorism Wave

MIAMI, From E1

the parking lot of a children's hospital after visiting his son. A group called the Movement for Cuban Justice claimed responsibility.

• Rolando Masferrer, 58, former Cuban official known as "El Tigre" and a leading Castro foe, who was slain here in October, 1975, when a bomb placed under a car wheel exploded as he began to drive away from his home.

• Residences of two staff members of a Spanish-language quarterly, Areito, which espouses a policy of peaceful coexistence with Castro's Cuba, were bombed. FBI agents have linked a 25-year-old Cuban graduate student, Antonio de la Cova, to those—and other—bombings. He was picked up as he allegedly bent down to place a pipe bomb at a bookstore. Ce la Cova had written for the weekly Libertad.

In law enforcement circles, it is believed that a substantial number of the bombings may be connected to extortion rather than politics. "If a business is bombed, it will lose customers," one investigator said.

Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre outlined possible groups this way:

"The first is the criminal element—people in narcotics, gambling and extortion.

"The second are the work of what I call the 'hotheads.' These are militants, either anti-Castro or pro-Castro, who use [bombing] as a political tool in their vision of what is right and wrong."

The third group, Ferre said, "are highly trained professionals active in international terrorism, usually trained in Havana."

Fueling the climate that spawns bombings is widespread hatred among exiles of the Castro regime.

"All political activity in the Cuban community is keyed to one central theme—the return of the exiles to Cuba," said a politically knowledgeable Cuban.

It has been difficult to obtain evidence on the bombings here and this has frustrated law enforcement officials, who have made few arrests in the incidents. Fear of reprisals, they say, has kept the exile community from supplying information.

But the early May arrests of de la Cova and two companions at the bookstore, and of the publisher of a Spanish-language weekly on charges of planting an unfused bomb in his own car last year, have encouraged investigators on a joint state-federal task force.

Julius Mattson, head of the Miami FBI office, said "a very definite change" has occurred since bombs exploded in six public buildings in December. He said the incidents created "outrage on the part of the (exile) community at large . . . The progress in the case last week could not have been accomplished without help from the community."

Many Cubans here agree about the change in attitudes, but say it came about more recently. "The Milian bombing has been a turning point," said Armando La Casa, head of the Little Havana Community Development Committee. "It really shocked the conscience of the community. When a thing like that happens, there is no security for anyone."

Security is a very meaningful word to Cubans here. So is fear.

"Certainly there is fear. The community is uptight," said a Cuban businessman who asked not to be identified. Many Cubans, fearing reprisals, are reluctant to be identified in print with any statement that may have political ramifications.

Another Cuban businessman, mindful of bombings involving booby-trapped cars, put it this way: "I'm looking for a home far away from the Cuban sector—and it's got to have a two-car garage."