

Cuban Refugees in Miami Turn Their Attention to

Miami, Fla. — (AP) — The Miami area's Cuban refugee colony of almost 300,000 is once again a hotbed of activity — but this time aimed at social betterment here, not an invasion of the Communist-ruled homeland.

Activity is centered around a new organization, CUBANOS — Cubans United for Betterment and New Opportunities and Services.

It was elected by representatives of 194 Cuban refugee organizations of the most diverse stripes. Also, it seems

to be an uncharacteristic unification of many thousands of very individualistic Cubans into one nonpolitical group seeking social betterment, new opportunities and services.

Moral Debt

"Each Cuban has a responsibility and moral debt to this community," says Armando Lacasa, head of CUBANOS.

"As a result of this moral debt, we considered it essential that we form a representative, a political organization to resolve social problems the Cubans may have.

"This is long overdue," he said.

The organization was formed to identify refugees' social welfare goals, hold discussions with community leaders and attempt to obtain official support.

'A United Voice'

Dade County Manager Ray Goode said in a recent speech to a Cuban group that he recognized the new phenomenon.

"We have been vaguely aware of some of the unique situations presented by such a large minority for some

time," he said.

"But now, you seem to have a united voice and are making us aware of specifics that we never bothered with.

"Cubans are more aware that they are a part of the community," he said.

Requests Outlined

In meetings with authorities, Lacasa and other Cuban leaders operating under CUBANOS' banner have:

—Requested that Dade County's public offices hire bilingual personnel to deal with Spanish-speaking people in

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their own language. This was interpreted — Cuban leaders say wrongly so—as a demand that the county be officially declared bilingual.

—Sought to place more Cuban representatives on public boards and agencies.

—Negotiated for expanded bilingual education in public schools.

—Began a campaign to register Cuban-born American citizens to vote.

—Convinced authorities that more city jobs such as policeman and fireman should be

offered to Cubans because U. S. citizenship no longer is a requirement for such employment.

—Demanded a greater role in the distribution of federal funds for minority programs.

First Objective

Dade County is the home-away-from-home for almost half of those who fled the island of Cuba since January 1959, when Fidel Castro muscled out dictator Fulgencio Batista.

The overriding objective for many of the refugees — who

make up one-fourth of the country's population — during most of this time has been "El Regreso," the return to Cuba after the overthrow of Prime Minister Castro.

But CUBANOS is another indication that many Cubans have decided that after 13 years of exile they may be in the country to stay.