

How the Cuban Press Serves Castro Cause

3/16/68
BY AL BURT

Chicago Daily News Service

HAVANA — When Luis Gomez Wanguemert, editor of El Mundo, receives an exclusive news story he reaches for the phone.

He wants to be sure that his two major competitors, the newspapers Hoy and Revolution, have the same information.

"If the news is important, it is to my interest that the other newspapers in Cuba publish it, so that all the people can read it."

Wanguemert, 63, a journalist for more than 25 years, thus describes a basic difference in the U.S. and Cuban press.

"The Cuban press responds to ideological motives. The U.S. press responds to economic interests," Wanguemert said.

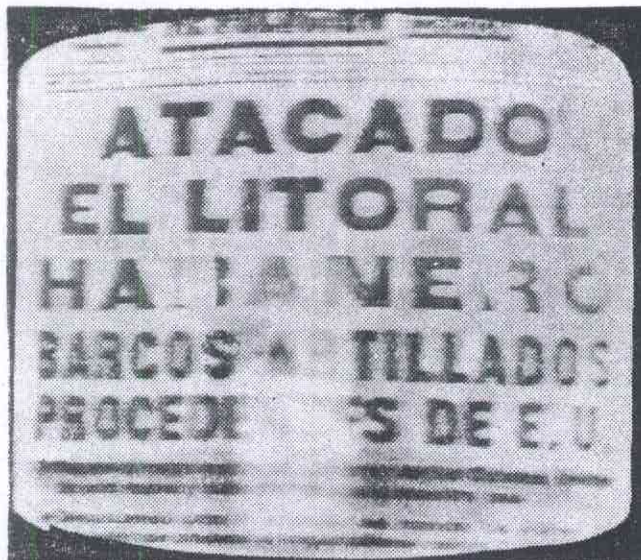
"In the United States, the newspapers want to earn money for their owners. . . . In Cuba, we try to defend our ideas, to put them in practice. . . . because these ideas reflect not our interest but the interest of the people."

WANGUEMERT believes a newspaper should represent the government, thereby guiding the people. U.S. editors believe a newspaper should represent the people, thereby guiding the government.

Wanguemert explained that the press in Cuba has a role beyond that of distributing the news.

"It expounds the fundamental principles and ideas of our revolution, to carry to all the people the initiatives, the plans, so that they can support and contribute to their success.

"Naturally, the only function that we don't have is that of discussing or participating in political conflicts of internal character, because fortunately



The front page of the Havana newspaper Revolution is broadcast over Cuban television. The occasion was a 1962 air attack on the island by Cuban exiles. The headline reads: "Havana Coast Attacked. Artillery Ships Proceeded from U.S." (AP)

for us in Cuba there do not exist now any political differences worth being mentioned."

BLAS ROCA, the editor of Hoy, agreed with Wanguemert's views but expressed them in saltier language.

"Our press is an organ of information and orientation that serves the cause of the construction of socialism in our country. It informs the truth at the service of workers and poor people. On the contrary, the press of the capitalist countries informs lies at the service of the rich and powerful."

El Mundo, Hoy and Revolution—Havana's three morning newspapers—are the largest in Cuba. Each circulates over most of the island.

Other cities, like Santiago in the eastern half of the island with its paper, Sierra Maestra, have their own publications

but Havana newspapers still are sold there and in most other cities.

According to figures produced by Wanguemert, Hoy has Cuba's largest circulation with 200,000 daily. *Revolucion* is second with 160,000. *El Mundo* is third with 140,000.

THE THREE newspapers, although dedicated to the same general goal, have different approaches. Hoy would be placed on the combative left, *Revolucion* in the center and *El Mundo* at the right. All, of course, represent the far left in terms of U.S. political labels.

The papers publish six days a week. On weekdays, they usually carry eight pages; on Sundays, they have 10 plus a supplement or comic section.

Except for *El Mundo*, which carries one full page of classified advertising daily, the newspapers have few ads. But Wanguemert said that *El Mundo*, at least, was a financial success.

In addition to the Cuban news produced by its own staff, *El Mundo* receives dispatches from United Press International (U.S.), Associated Press (U.S.), *Prensa Latina* (Cuban), Tass (Russian), *Sinjua* (Chinese Communist), *Prague Press* (Czechoslovakian) and the East German Press Agency.

READING of the newspapers daily gives the impression that the world is in a ferment of revolution, and that Cuba is the forefront of an inevitable tide of communism sweeping the world. The United States is pictured as a beleaguered giant who has not as many fingers as there are holes in the dike.

When top leaders speak, full texts of their speeches are carried, and they often fill two,

three or four full newspaper pages.

THE CLOSEST thing to an expression of public opinion is found among the letters to the editor, and these admittedly are chosen with great care. Wanguemert said he never got any bad letters with names signed to them.

"The letters generally contain complaints about economic-type questions on problems presented to the readers when they want to buy one thing and cannot find it, problems of the houses," he said.

Hoy also carries a little feature called "facts and figures," in which it cites statistics on things like the burning of U.S. Information Service libraries around the world or the growing number of strikes in Latin America.