
Obligation to Cuba Not Being Fulfilled, Is View

OAS Agreements Cited
by Seminar Speaker

The president of the Miami-based Truth About Cuba Committee, told an audience at International House Tuesday night that the United States "has failed to fulfill the obligation it has to Cuba under agreements made through the Organization for American States (OAS)."

Speaking at a seminar dealing with the past and present situation in Cuba and U.S. policy toward that country, Luis V. Manrara said that Cuba, under Castro, has made a shambles of the OAS and has even trained men to "foment revolution in other countries. He said the U.S. should take a greater concern in the affairs of the Cubans. He said Castro-controlled Cuba spends millions of dollars on propaganda in the Western Hemisphere, but the U.S. is "always singled out as the enemy that must be destroyed."

Manrara stated that the Cuban people "have been maligned and maliciously lied about" to the point that most Americans think of Cuba and Cubans in part as a myth.

He said he was out to dispell those myths. Cuba before Castro was "miserable, underdeveloped, illiterate country." However, he pointed out such conditions exist in all countries of the world.

But, he said, what Cuba was before Castro can be understood only by those who fled the country after he came to power in January, 1959. He said that to date, 250,000 Cubans have left their homeland, and another 1.5 million or roughly 20 per cent of the population have applied to enter the U.S.

DISCRIMINATION

But, he added, the United States only admits 50,000 refugees a year. Those that stay behind, he said, are exposed to suffering and degradation to human dignity.

Manrara said the educational background of the exiles is high. He pointed out that more exiles with "four or five years

of college leave Cuba" than exist in Dade County, Fla., which he said is above the national average literacy level.

Comparing discrimination in Cuba on a before-after Castro basis, Manrara said: "Before Castro, the Negroes thought of themselves as Cubans who by chance were Negro. Now, they think of themselves as Negroes who by chance are Cuban."

The "debacle of Red Cuba," he said, was due in part to passive resistance of the Cubans still in Cuba and the exodus of professional and skilled workers from Cuba.

FOOD RATIONING

Underscoring Manrara's thesis concerning the plight of Cubans today, John F. Fitzgerald, coordinator for Cuban Affairs, U.S. State Department, said, "When Castro came to power he had the support of a large segment of the Cuban people as well as the U.S. and the rest of the world." He said the regime has survived, not prospered, since food rationing is at an all time high.

He stated it was Castro, by his actions toward the Cuban people and American officials in Cuba, that brought about the diplomatic break between the two countries.

Rounding out the seminar discussion, Professor William Griffith of the Tulane University history department, said that the transition of Cuba from a small sugar-growing country to one dotted with large plantation holdings brought about a "cataclysmic change" in the country. He said this paved the way to "large scale, technical-type manufacturing."

He pointed out that many Cubans today resent Americans for their intervention in the war for independence in 1898, for allegedly exploiting the country—socially, politically, economically—and for maintaining a base at Guantanamo Bay.

The seminar was sponsored by International House, Foreign Relations Association and the Young Men's Business Club of New Orleans.