

Cubans in Miami: A

By Peter Jay

Washington Post Staff Writer

MIAMI—When 26-year-old Teresa Torres stepped out of a small airplane over Homestead Airport south of here last Sunday to make her second parachute jump, she wasn't simply doing it for sport.

She was an exile from Fidel Castro's Cuba, where her parents live and her brother is said to be imprisoned, and after her parachute failed to open and she fell to her death a major Cuban exile group here announced that she had been making the jump as part of their military training program.

It has been 11 years since the doomed amphibious assault at the Bay of Pigs, and as the time has passed Miami's more than 200,000 Cubans have grown richer and more comfortable in their exile. But the dream of someday toppling Castro and returning home in triumph dies hard.

There are at least a score of organizations here with the avowed purpose of restoring non-communist rule to Cuba. Some of them have only one or two members, and others are little more than social clubs like the Bay of Pigs Veterans Association, whose middle-aged members—about 500—generally confine their militancy to talk.

But others are still capable of action: demonstrations, small-scale bombings, even an occasional hit-and-run raid against outposts on the Cuban coast—operations that must evade both the Cuban navy and the U.S. Coast Guard.

One organization, Alpha 66, says it has "thousands" of cells within Cuba whose members are ready to arise at the propitious moment and seize the country from Castro.

American law enforcement officials here, both local and federal, do not regard Miami's Cuban underground as a serious threat to the peace—either domestic or international. But with Cuban demonstrations promised for both of this summer's national political conventions in Miami Beach, there has been a re-awakening of official interest in the activities of the exile community.

Also, the June 17 arrest of five men—three of them from Miami and all with a background in intelligence, anti-Castro activity or both while allegedly attempting to bug Democratic headquarters in Washington has focused new attention on the exiles.

It is the conventional wisdom in Miami that despite the plottings of fringe groups most Cuban refugees are happy here and probably wouldn't return to Cuba to stay even if they could. Cuban family income, it is pointed out, is relatively high—over \$8,000 a year, compared to \$9,200 for the area as a whole and under \$6,000 for blacks.

Officials here also maintain that there is an important generation gap in the Cuban community, and that young Cubans who have lived in the United States since they were small children do not share their parents' fervent anti-Castro sentiments or nostalgia for their homeland.

This may or may not be true. In the drive-in restaurants of Miami's thoroughly Latin "Little Havana" section, it is easy to find Cuban teenagers lounging in their cars who will say they have no interest at all in Cuba or their parents' politics.

But listen to 27-year-old Ella Alvarado, the Miami coordinator of an anti-Castro youth movement called Ab-

dala (after a patriotic poem by the Cuban poet Jose Marti):

"It's hard for high school students to have from political ideas. But when they get to college they start to look at things in a new way. The Miami Herald says all Cubans want to stay here, but that's not true. We want to free our country."

Abdala described by an American student of Latin affairs as "a hotshot group of young intellectuals, and tough." Its members hint they are conducting military training, but most of their activities have been demonstrations and protests.

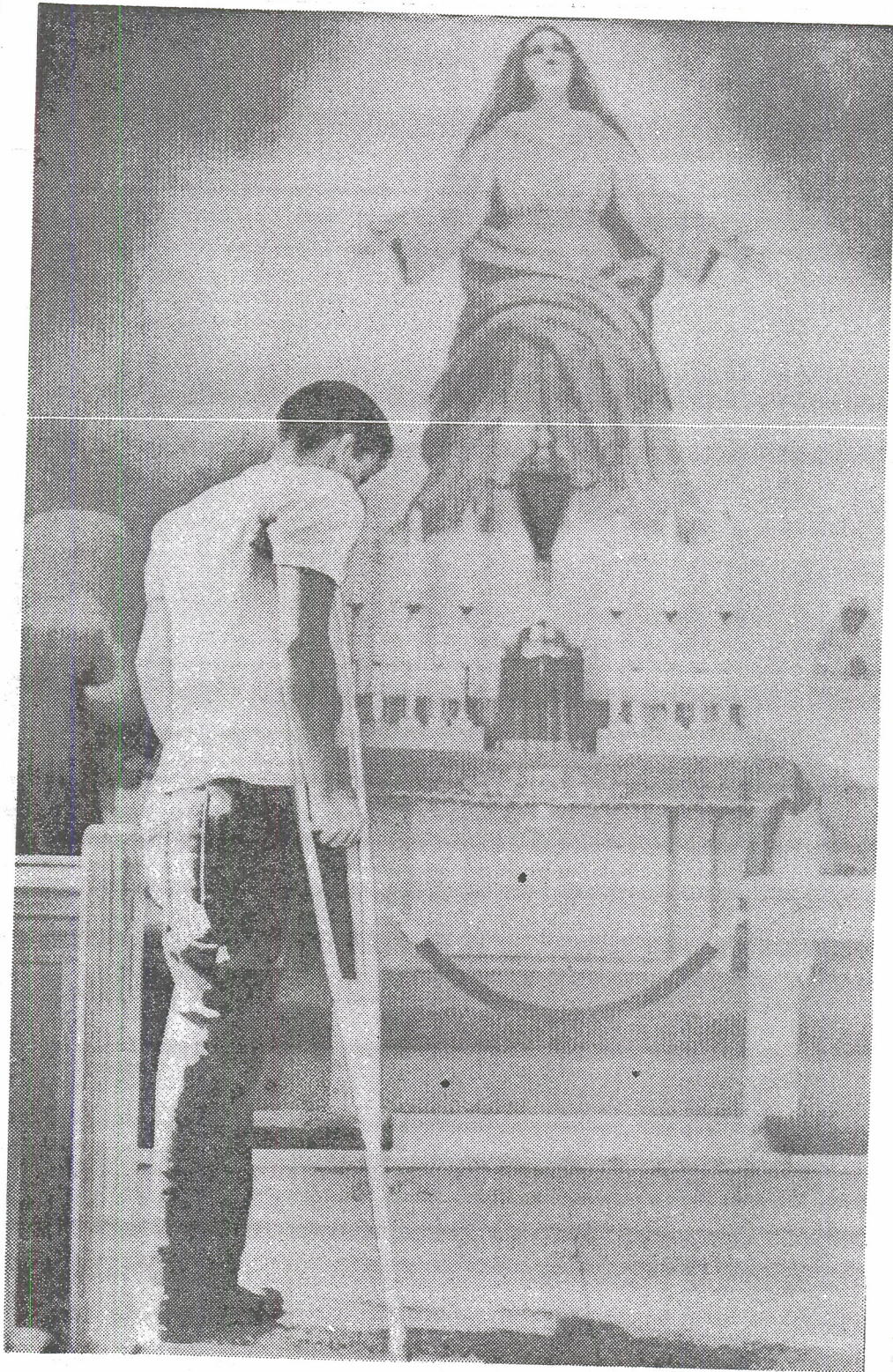
If either the Republican or Democratic conventions move to call for establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Castro's Cuba, Miss Alvarado says, "We will react in a very strong way."

The Abdala members are defensively sensitive to charges that they represent a rightist position. "We don't consider ourselves to be right-wing," said Ruben Lopez, 33. "We consider Castro to be reactionary. Don't lump us with the John Birch Society."

Other groups that form part of what might loosely be called the Cuban underground here are much less fussy about ideological appearances.

Andres Nazario Sargen is a leathery former tobacco farmer who fought against the regime of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba and for the past 12 years has been in Miami plotting to overthrow Castro.

Sargen heads an organization called Alpha 66 that claims a membership of 10,000 in the U.S. and other Caribbean nations—although non-members in the Cuban community here say that estimate is grossly inflated.



INVASION VICTIM—Juan Figueras Valdes, shown here in the Mercy Hospital

Associated Press
chapel in Miami in April, 1962, lost a leg and nearly his life in Bay of Pigs rout.

Dream Dies Hard

"Our task is not to overthrow Castro from the outside, but to organize within," says Sargen. "We are now in the final stage."

Alpha 66, perhaps more than the other exile organizations, emphasizes military operations against Cuba. The last such raid of any size occurred two years ago, when a small force landed, went inland and shot up a few provincial jails.

"That's the kind of thing that renews interest," said an American here, who follows exile activities closely. "After that raid, Alpha was swamped by thousands of people wanting to join and give money. Now it's slowed down again."

Alpha 66 has stayed studiously away from American politics. "All we ask of the United States is that they not try and prevent us from liberating our country," Sargen says. But other groups have been drawn inexorably into taking stands on American issues.

Perhaps the largest Cuban political organization here—relative strengths are hard to estimate because no group will provide realistic membership figures—is something called the Executive Liberation Committee.

A sort of umbrella group incorporating various small factions, the committee is preparing demonstrations at the conventions. It has also supported President Nixon's mining of the North Vietnamese coast and opposed his moves toward better relations with China and the Soviet Union—in contrast, for example, to Abdala, whose members say they support any steps toward world peace.

The committee's leader is Tomas Cruz, a 41-year-old Cuban Negro who served in the army under Batista and later participated in the Bay

of Pigs invasion. He was captured, held for nearly two years, and eventually released.

Cruz says he, like Alpha 66's Sargen, emphasizes military training and recruitment of young Cubans. And it was for the committee that Teresa Torres entered the sport-parachuting class that was to cost her life.

Cruz's color and military background give him a certain cachet in the anti-Castro movement, for although Cuba is a multi-racial society there are few blacks in the exile leadership. But there is a detectable suspicion that he is seeking to use the committee as a vehicle to advance his own political career.

It is this sort of mutual distrust between members and factions of the exile community, many Cubans here say, that discourages them about the prospects of ever achieving unity—and the strength to have any sort of impact on Castro.

Partly for this reason, some of the leaders of the anti-Castro movement of a decade ago have given up politics for business. A case in point is Manuel Artime, the civilian commander of the Bay of Pigs expeditionary force, who is now a wealthy Miami meat importer.

The young members of Abdala view Artime as a man who sold out. But to other Cubans, both young and old, he is simply a realist.

A 25-year-old exile, working in Miami as a radio newsman, sees it this way: "All Cubans here want to go back to Cuba. It's our country and our home. But we know we don't have the power to do anything about it; all we can do is wait, and remember that no regime lasts forever."