

U.S. OPENS DOORS TO MORE CUBANS

Refugees in Madrid Finding
the Way Clear at Last

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MADRID, April 13 — The United States has widened its doors to Cubans and they are pouring through at a record rate after years of waiting in the Spanish capital.

"There are fewer tears and dramatics these days," an American consular official said after reporting that close to 2,000 refugees were being processed each month.

The reason is an "expanded parole program" established last October in an agreement between the State Department and the Justice Department. The Cubans are no longer subjected to numerical restrictions now applied to distinct geographical areas — 120,000 a year for the Western Hemisphere—or to most other immigration limitations. They are admitted as so-called parolees, with immigrant status being granted after their settlement in the United States.

A year ago the Cuban colony here was estimated at 25,000 to 30,000 and was the largest foreign group in Spain. The gathering here of Cubans no longer willing to live under Premier Fidel Castro came about when Cuba cut off direct flights of aircraft from Havana to Miami. They came to Spain since regular flights

between Havana and Madrid continued and the Spanish Government was willing to admit them at least temporarily.

The Long Wait

For the vast bulk of Cuban refugees, Madrid was to have been only a stopping-off point on their way to the United States. But thousands found their way barred by various restrictions and others who did qualify had to wait years for the necessary clearance.

The backlog of Cubans has now been reduced to some 15,000. Consular officials say about 400 a month are continuing to arrive in Spain, considerably fewer than the monthly average of about 1,000 two years ago.

Those who gather early each morning at the embassy gates for admission to the immigration section form a more relaxed group as a result of the brightened prospects for leaving.

It is believed that the change in rules was largely the result of pressure on the State Department from Cubans already established in the United States. Many of them had friends and relatives here and were sending money regularly to help them to subsist.

In an already tight labor market, Cubans have had trouble finding work here because of their temporary status. The Spanish Government has been helping with free meals and medical aid for the first year after arrival, a period often extended.

The consulate has been receiving requests for admission to the United States even from Cubans who had more or less given up hope of emigrating and had settled here. The prospect of relatively high American wages has been a powerful magnet for them and other Cubans.

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