

Cuban Exile Group Fears N.J. Slaying May Cause a 'War'

11-27-79-1B
By ILEANA OROZA
Herald Staff Writer

A Cuban exile group, calling for a "thorough investigation" of the shooting death of one of its members, spoke Monday of fears that a "small war" might develop between exile factions in the United States.

And while spokesmen for the Committee of 75 — the group of exiles that participated in the dialogue with the Cuban government — said they were deeply shocked by the death of committee member Eulalio Negrin, other exile leaders spoke of Negrin as "the enemy" and refused to condemn the violence that led to his death.

Negrin, 37, was felled by two masked gunman near his Union City, N.J., home Sunday as he prepared to go out for a ride with his 12-year-old son. He had been the subject of a number of death threats in recent months, and his office had been bombed twice since he participated in the Cuban exile dialogue in Havana a year ago.

MONDAY, his death was being investigated by Union City police.

No arrests had been made in the case. The FBI was called in to assist police.

The Rev. Jose Reyes, president of the Committee of 75, said his group was demanding full local and federal investigations of the incident. He said the group is not satisfied with the response of the authorities to other violent acts against pro-dialogue exiles.

"I worry that this could lead to a small war," he said. "Our philosophy is not one of violence. The Committee preaches peace and love . . . but there are always elements that have a radical way of projecting themselves . . . and that cannot be controlled."

An FBI spokesman in Miami said although the office had no direct jurisdiction in the case, "we are involved in terrorist investigations."

He said the FBI was "devoting a lot of time to [terrorist investiga-

tions] and working awful hard," but added that "for security reasons" he could not say whether or not local surveillance would be increased as a result of the New Jersey killing.

ALTHOUGH Negrin had been active in the work of the Committee of 75 and had made a number of pro-dialogue public statements in the New Jersey area, fellow committee members said he was not particularly outspoken and had not espoused radical pro-Castro causes that might make him a target of extremist groups.

Before the dialogue, he had been active in Republican politics in New Jersey, even making an unsuccessful run for the state Senate.

In the past year, he opened a storefront office to help Cuban refugees, but according to Committee of 75 spokesmen, the work done there was of a "social humanitarian" nature — helping exiles find jobs and housing, they said — and not at all related to trips to Cuba or other dialogue issues.

"I ignore the reasons why he would be singled out," Reyes said. "There are other members that were much more militant."

In militant anti-communist exile groups, however, Negrin apparently had the reputation of favoring Castro and his government. They said Negrin had been one the people who encouraged exiles to join in a welcoming demonstration for Cuban President Fidel Castro when he came to the United Nations in October.

"PEOPLE say he sent information to Cuba," said Andres Nazario Sargen, secretary general of Alpha 66, an anti-Castro exile group. "That's the opinion people have of him. That he was an agent provocateur."

Nazario Sargen said his group had nothing to do with Negrin's death but added that he saw it as "something that had to happen."