

Are Miami Cubans Plotting Uprising?

Veteran Staff Writer Jack W. Roberts, whose reporting experience includes "a little bit of everything," makes no claim to being an expert on Cuba or its people. To gather material for this series he simply talked with as many people as possible. They tell the story of what's going on in Cuba and Miami today.



JACK ROBERTS

First In a Series

By JACK W. ROBERTS

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Is Miami the headquarters for revolt against Cuban Dictator Fulgencio Batista?

If this question had been posed six months ago, the Cuban exiles living here would have denied it vehemently.

The more cautious still do, but investigation by The Miami News shows that three of the most powerful groups plotting the overthrow of Batista have organizations in Miami.

Men who may some day fight in the streets of Havana or along the Sierra Maestra mountain ridges with Fidel Castro are being kept in readiness here.

And men who stormed the presidential palace on March 13 in an effort to kill or capture Batista are recuperating from their wounds here.

Money to buy arms for revolutionary groups is being raised among the estimated 15,000 Cubans living here.

These are cautious, off-the-record admissions made by key people in the planned revolt.

Six months ago the same people would have given reporters the "no speak English" treatment.

Demonstrations against Batista here are becoming commonplace, and the demonstrators run the risk of deportation from this country every time they speak out against Batista.

Why, then, is caution being thrown to the wind?

The answer lies with Fidel Castro, a bearded, 31-year-old intellectual who has defied the might of Batista's army.

For months Castro has sat atop a mountain in Cuba's Oriente Province and defied every effort of Batista's men to get him.

It has been a nightmare for Batista, a tough, ex-army sergeant who bullied his way back by force into the presidency of Cuba on March 10, 1952, in a bloodless coup.

To get Castro off his mountain perch would require a major military action. Batista's military leaders have threatened mass annihilation of Castro and the peasants who keep him in supplies with fiery napalm bombs.

There is serious doubt that Batista would resort to all-out warfare, although he does have a large, well-trained force in the field against Castro.

The Cuban people have rallied to Castro's audacity like a mountain stream gathering force as it thunders into the valley.

Killing hundreds, perhaps thousands to get one man would further enflame the anti-Batista forces in Cuba.

And Batista, his government recognized officially by the United States, would run the risk of world-wide condemnation should he resort to wholesale slaughter to get Castro.

"The United States, a democracy, is keeping Batista, a dictator, supplied with arms to crush his opposition," said Eliseo Riera-Gomez, an official of *Diario Las Americas*, Latin and English newspaper in the Miami area.

"This, of course, makes the average Cuban wonder just what in the hell is going on.

"The people who want to overthrow the dictatorship hope, quite naturally, that the United States will stop lending aid to Batista. Recognize him, yes, perhaps we must do that,

Continued on Page 4A, Col. 1

Revolt In Cuba Plotted Here?

Continued from Page 1-A

but to help support a dictator in Cuba is no different from supporting a dictator in Russia."

Riera, who can speak freely without fear of deportation since he is a naturalized American citizen, believes that some dent has been made in the United States official position of supporting Batista.

Other Latin Americans in the Miami area feel the same.

"Batista knows this is true," said one prominent exile who explained that his name could not be used for fear of offending U. S. Immigration officials. "In recent months his henchmen have been denouncing American imperialism."

Who are the leaders of planned revolt in Cuba? The three major groups operating in Miami are:

1. Castro's group, known as the 26th of July movement. The group takes its name from Castro's first military action against Batista, an attack on the Santiago military barracks on July 26, 1953.

2. The Directorio Estudiantil, an organization composed of thousands of students in Cuba and students whose studies were interrupted when they went into exile in Miami.

Prio Most Frequently Blamed

3. The Autentico Party, which is the political faction headed by Carlos Prio Socarras, former president of Cuba and the one blamed most frequently by Batista for revolutionary activities.

Dr. Prio, who has lived in Miami most of the years since Batista took over, returned to his homeland briefly once and came flying back to Miami when things again got too hot between him and Batista.

A wealthy man, Prio is regarded by many as a "typical" Cuban politician. He's smooth, well-educated and a sworn enemy of Batista.

However, there are definite signs that there will be no room for the old line politicians in Cuba if Castro and the students have their way.

"There is a definite rebirth of political ideology in Cuba," said Riera, the newspaper executive. "You must bear in mind that for 400 years under Spanish rule the governors of Cuba systematically looted the island of its wealth.

"Cuba's freedom came only slightly more than 50 years ago, so it was logical that the democratic rulers of the island should think of government in terms of growing personally wealthy.

"But that is changing. The new leaders claim to be interested more in ideals than money. I believe them.

Political Ideology Is Reborn

"Castro, if he lives, will be a powerful political force in Cuba some day. He is maturing. He has great personal charm, like Roosevelt, and he is more concerned with ideals than specific things."

And Riera points out that those who regard revolutions in Cuba as a sort of periodic comic opera are beginning to see that the Batista regime certainly is not funny.

"Many people have lost their lives . . . many people have been tortured . . . you can't laugh at that."