

WORDS BY MISS. JUANITA CASTRO, ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE,
WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL, IN NEW YORK, ON THE 20TH OF NOVEMBER 1964

Members of the International
Radio and Television Society:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today you have had the courtesy of inviting to your table the sister of the worst enemy of Freedom of Speech in this continent, Fidel Castro.

I appreciate the gesture with all my heart.

This Sunday we observe the first anniversary of the assassination of the late President Kennedy. He who committed this abominable deed was a self-confessed Marxist-Leninist. The eye that watched through the telescopic sight and the finger that triggered the bullet that murdered one of the greatest figures of this century belonged to a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Fanatics can appear anywhere and under any circumstance but no one can doubt the influence that can be exerted on a sick mind by a constant campaign of villification such as was being promoted daily by the powerful Cuban broadcasting networks - both in Spanish and in English - and aimed at the person of the assassinated First Magistrate.

Millions of Cubans and hundreds of millions of people in all the Americas listened to Fidel call President Kennedy "the illiterate millionaire, " "murderer, " and other infamous phrases which make me blush even to repeat them. If Red Cuba's propaganda is available to anyone, even to those who have no interest in it, just imagine how it must have influenced an active and militant person who distributed pamphlets, maintained a Castroite organization in Texas, and demanded, even in the very heart of his country, a better deal for a government that hopes to inflict the same damage it has brought upon my country, on all of the Continent.

Here, fortunately for all citizens, justice takes care of murderers and genocides. But in Cuba, power is in the hands of such as these.

At present, Cuba stands in the heart of the Caribbean Sea like a sinister rock from which Communism holds the entire continent in its sight. Whether an entire hemisphere is saved or dies depends on the force with which you help us sweep this menace away. It is no exaggeration to repeat that either Cuba is saved or America is lost.

I consider that it is vitally important to the cause of the liberation of my country to bring oppressed Cuba's message to an audience composed of people such as you have in your hands the most adequate means of transmitting the truth daily to millions of homes.

Anyone of the four hundred thousand Cubans who chose liberty when they took the road that led them to exile could come here this afternoon and speak to you about how he suffered and what he saw in Cuba under communist tyranny. He who has lived under the sign of the hammer and sickle always has something dramatically new to relate, even to a chosen, intellectual group such as you.

That is why I do not plan to speak this afternoon of the sinister generalities that Marxism-Leninism has incorporated into the everyday life of my country.

But I, because of my indisputable family ties, am a unique witness of the way that my brother, Fidel Castro, planned and ordered the systematic annihilation of the natural rights that God has bestowed on each man, finally turning my unhappy homeland into a pile of victims and murderers, of the hunted and the hunters, of the hated and of the frustrated.

It is of these things, which are particularly well known to me, that I shall speak at this meeting.

As is true in the case of the immense majority of people who are born to the warmth of a home here in the United States, I belong to a family which was brought up in the strictest of religious and democratic traditions.

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In our home, God was worshipped and we were taught to respect the right that He has given every man. . . that of earning his bread with the sweat of his brow and of bringing up his family with his own beliefs and customs. Our parents also saw to it that we learned how to love one another but. . . above all these traits. . . they inculcated in us faith in God and in humanity, even though not all of us were able to assimilate this lesson.

Both God and Humanity have been ignominiously made mockery of in Cuba today. This has been the most important reason I had in not vacillating to choose between my brother and God. I do not doubt that all of you would have done exactly the same since it is not difficult to choose between oppression and liberty, between crime and respect for the life of others, between a bad brother and good principles.

My brother, Fidel, tried to judge my stance when he said, speaking to a group of foreign newspapermen, "that in Abraham Lincoln's family there also existed some traitors."

This is one of the few truths that my brother has spoken: in Lincoln's family there were some traitors and, unfortunately for Cuba, there are some in my family too.

As all of you know, our little island. . . so close to your great nation, geographically, historically and ideologically. . . also had an Abraham Lincoln, a man who gave his life so that future generations of Cubans could live decorously.

This man, who cast his lot with the poor people of his country, was called Jose Marti and he came to this generous nation to unite the Cubans of those days and to create the conditions necessary to break off the chains that oppressed our people.

He was able to fulfill his dream and from these shores sailed waves of liberators who were to free us from colonial bondage but this vision has now been destroyed. . . belief in God, the unity of all Cubans and sacred respect for the life of others are now objects of scorn to the group which has taken over the island of Cuba as though our country were nothing but a private plantation for the exclusive use of the communists.

You, who have been forged in the hustle and bustle of the most influential organs of communication media, surely are not unaware of the illegal and inhuman methods which are being employed in Cuba to crush Freedom of Speech. But there are some details, of which I was personally a witness, that might considerably deepen your appreciation of the greatest attempt that has ever been made upon the Freedom of Speech in the New World.

In January of 1959, men who had revolted in order to set Cuba right on the path to prosperity were victorious in obtaining the power but, within a few weeks, my brother, Fidel, swept away all clean and democratic revolutionaries thus betraying that revolution and handing it over to a Soviet pro-consul with feudal attributes.

Within a few months, the communist government had taken over thirty daily publications, seventeen weekly ones, five television stations (including a color TV one), one hundred and fifty broadcasting stations and seven newsreel companies. An endless number of private, sectarian communication organs also fell as well as all the municipal and provincial daily newspapers, the exact number of which I do not know.

These news media, stolen from their legitimate owners, represent an average of one million readers and approximately three million listeners.

Before starting to rob people wide in the open, the first measure was to implant a humiliating censorship through which any member of the communist labor union of each workshop was authorized to add an "explanatory" appendix or note of protest to every article, commentary, story, newsreel, radio and television program which might seem contrary to communist indoctrination policies.

Fidel was standing right before me when he telephoned in the order which put into practice this original type of censorship which is an affront to Freedom of Speech. That night was the first time that I heard him say that this would be the first step towards to complete takeover of all of the country's communication media.

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And so it was. Within a few weeks, Fidel was ordering his stooges who worked at the "Avance" newspaper to throw into the wastepaper basket the material written by the regular reporters and to prepare another newspaper, one that would adjust itself to the communist ideology.

"Avance" became the property of the State by the grace and order of Fidel. In its footsteps followed the other newspapers - "Diario de la Marina," "El Crisol," "El País," "Excelsior," "El Mundo," "Prensa Libre," and even the magazine "Bohemia" which had been the most valuable propaganda asset of the revolution which was later betrayed.

At the same time that they were intervening, closing down and appropriating the Press, the hierarchy of the regime did as much for television and radio broadcasting stations and newsreel companies.

But these enterprises did not simply change hands so as to serve the regime. Cuba had begun to contract enormous debts with communist countries and payments to nations of the Soviet block were made in the form of machinery and equipment taken from the above-mentioned workshops, which had been wrenched away from their legitimate owners.

Towards the end of 1961, the machinery of the newspaper "El Crisol" as well as the rotary presses of two other newspapers were shipped to the Soviet Union and to Czechoslovakia. I recall one occasion on which a Soviet television technician became most enthusiastic over a tele-objective that belonged to the CMQ Television Network and Fidel, before more than twenty people, ordered that the lens be handed over to his guest.

With the dismantling of most of these enterprises, thousands of laborers and professionals who had been able to live decorously before the advent of communism in Cuba now found themselves out of work.

Those television and radio workshops and plants that the regime needs in order to propagate its infamies are still functioning and are all guided by the line which is set every day on the pages of the newspaper "Hoy" by the old communist leader, Blas Roca, longtime Secretary General of the Cuban Communist Party and actual director of the newspaper.

All Cuban editors had to flee into exile in order to escape persecution by the Reds. Also into exile have gone all of the most popular newspaper writers and all those professionals who would not lower themselves to the act of repeating, like a broken record, the manufactured news releases which the Soviet directors of Cuba write before events occur.

Many newspapermen, because they dared to disagree with the regime, were severely attacked by the Press and by Fidel himself and many of them ended up in the Marxist-Leninist jails.

At present, thirty two newspapermen are serving terms from five to thirty years for the crime of not being communists.

I remember how, in the first days after the triumph of the revolution, Che Guevara ordered that one newspaperman be condemned to fifteen years in jail because he had openly attacked communism.

On another occasion, friends of mine begged me to intervene on behalf of a young, twenty four year old newspaperman, Alfredo Izaguirre, director and co-owner of the newspaper "El Crisol," who had been arrested illegally.

I called those who were to judge him and even cited families ties in the hope of being able to help these friends of mine but to no avail. Since this, more than three years have passed. A few weeks before I left Cuba I learned, through a friend of mine who had been in jail, that the young newspaperman on whose behalf I had attempted to intercede is gravely ill, suffering from a lung disease which has been produced by the ill-treatment to which he has been subjected at the Isle of Pines prison.

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Among the newspapermen who are also in jail are: Dr. Emilio Adolfo Rivero, who is serving a thirty year sentence; Mario Rivadulla, the tough young newspaperman; a popular photographer, Zenen Carabia; and even a newspaperwoman, Mrs. Floribel Otero, who was condemned to six years in prison.

Well-known radio and television artists who refused to appear on programs which hammered out the well defined communist ideology or who were simply accused of being counter-revolutionaries are now serving sentences and enduring the severity of the worst political imprisonment that has ever existed in the American hemisphere, comparable only to the awesome concentration camps created by the Nazis in parts of Europe and by the Communists in the countries which live under their tyranny.

In the meantime, the Cuban Government is taking advantage of all existing communication media to indoctrinate the citizenry and to encourage subversion and divisionism among all the peoples who have not permitted themselves to be subjected to the Marxist-Leninist line.

Radio Habana Cuba, a powerful short wave transmitter, is completely dedicated to the effort of promoting disorders from Canada to the Argentine Pampas. Night after night, Radio Habana transmits programs in English, featuring the voice of Robert Williams, a fugitive from U. S. justice, who urges all Negroes born in the United States to rebel against the laws of the land. Paradoxically, these who govern Cuba have placed in the country's jails and concentration camps thousands of Cuban Negroes who are guilty of no crime other than having protested in some way against the totalitarian measures of the communist regime.

This broadcasting station is also used: to send subversive coded messages to Venezuela; to instruct the Premier of British Guiana, Cheddi Jagan, a man in whom my brother, Fidel, has a very special interest, on the methods he should employ to maneuver his play for power; to twist the facts and confuse voters in Chile, miners in Bolivia or the plateau Indians of Peru.

The stolen presses are constantly printing millions of copies of the most important communist literary works, communist pamphlets and leaflets inciting subversion and more than a hundred sectarian publications, all of which are transported via the Cuban Embassy, Legation or Consulate diplomatic pouches, thus inundating all the Americas with communist ideology. In places where Red Cuba does not have diplomatic representation or where local authorities are vigilant against this type of intrusion, contraband planes or submarines are given the task of placing this dose of ideological venom which is printed in Cuba in the hands of local communists.

Many of your television and radio broadcasting stations have sent special correspondents to Cuba and I have seen how Fidel himself would plan, with his closest collaborators, the list of "chosen" sports to which the foreign visitors could be taken as well as the long list of things which, under no circumstance whatever, could be shown to the professional eyes of a good newspaperman or cameraman.

Right in my presence was given the order directing the provisional transfer of farm machinery and technical equipment from different parts of the country to a certain farm located a few miles out of Habana so that it could be shown to the foreign correspondents.

Right in my presence was given the order to publish several small items which they called "auto-criticisms" so as to satisfy a query of a group of European newspapermen who, according to one of the interpreters, were asking why it was that not one thing against the government ever appeared in the local newspapers.

Right before me, Mrs. Celia Sanchez, Minister of the Presidency and Fidel's private secretary, ordered that some thoroughbred stock be transferred to a dairy to which Fidel had invited a photographer and a reporter of a well-known New York newspaper to breakfast.

Before my eyes, on innumerable occasions, orders were given to situate communist fanatics or well-indoctrinated children along pre-determined routes where my brother Fidel was to pass with American or European reporters, cameramen or photographers so as to acclaim, hug, kiss and caress him.

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The dramatic state of persecution and misery which Cuba is suffering does not mean that the things that happen there and the things that are commented there are not newsworthy. Therefore you, and many other radio, press and television directors, continue to send your keenest reporters to my country so as to keep your people well-informed. Because I know so well each and everyone of the evils which the communist regime of Cuba has provoked on that island, I strongly suggest that you see to it that your reporters and cameramen are well-informed so that they may not be misled by the theatrical farce that the Cuban regime maintains for its publicity value.

When you go to Cuba and are taken to a rice field, to a sugar-mill or to some factory, ask about production figures before and after the communist takeover, salaries before and after communism, the way of life . . . and specifically the diet . . . of the workers before and after the advent of communism.

When you go to Cuba, ask them to show you the Isle of Pines prison or the gloomy "Principe" Castle in Habana or the Boniato jail in Santiago de Cuba or any one of the many concentration camps where thousands of my fellow-countrymen daily meet their death or are victims of the worst imprisonment in the history of America.

When you go to Cuba, ask Fidel why he said that all who wanted to leave could do so while every day a powerful team of Russian PT boats and helicopters murders dozens of Cubans who try to flee to liberty across the waters of the Caribbean Sea and of the Gulf of Mexico via the well-named death alley.

When you go to Cuba, ask Fidel why he has sent thousands of fellow-countrymen to the "wall" and why he has created the hated mobile courts that judge and execute any poor, unfortunate soul accused of being a counter-revolutionary, on the very spot that he is arrested.

When you go to Cuba ask about the thousands of children who have been ripped from their mothers' breasts only to be handed over to the Russian, East German, Czech, or Red Chinese bosses who, in far off indoctrination centers, poison their young mind so that they may return to the Cuba of tomorrow as fanatics or as ruthless instruments of agitation and death.

When you go to Cuba ask about printing installations, about radio and television equipment and about the newspapers which have disappeared so as to satisfy foreign commitments.

I know that you are enterprising people, and that, after years of struggling or a life of working to serve your fellowmen, you have succeeded in creating something which is of benefit to the entire community. Well, in my country, men such as you were stripped of that which was quite legitimately theirs and are now living in exile or are striving to reorient their lives in other nations.

This has been the tragic outcome faced by a small but beautiful nation where each citizen used to work and live to satisfy the worthiest desires of his children. Whether or not Fidel is able to continue fooling thousands of naive people is up to men such as you, you who are the forgers of public opinion. And it is also up to you to see that the world is presented with a true picture of what Cuba is . . . the Cuba of the "wall" . . . of the 75,000 political prisoners and almost half a million fugitives.

Because I am tormented by the tragic destiny which has befallen my country and because I am an active and militant supporter of the democratic system, I appeal to your hearts and common sense and urge that you investigate the truth of the accusation I have just made. You can render powerful aid to the cause of Cuba's liberation. Each one of you must remember that the life which today is rescued from the communist claws tomorrow may well be the life of one of your children. Thank you very much.