

# Press club backs publisher's rights

The Overseas Press Club expressed support for Antonio de la Cova, publisher of *Crónica Gráfica*, Wednesday in his refusal to appear before the Civil Rights Commission to answer questions on how he obtained the notorious "subversives list."

OPC President Eneid Routte Gomez, in a prepared statement, noted the First Amendment protects journalists and the media, including the socialist weekly *Claridad* on the left and the Cuban exile periodical *Crónica Gráfica* on the right.

"Therefore, the Overseas Press Club supports de la Cova in his refusal to appear before the Commission as it supported the refusal of WKAQ Radio and United Press [to do the same]," Routte Gomez said.

The OPC defends the right of journalists to keep confidential their sources of information and believes the mere appearance of a journalist would have a "chilling effect" on current and future confidentiality of sources, she added.

Routte Gomez noted that asking journalists how they

obtained their information, such as the so-called subversives list, is equivalent to asking them to reveal their sources of information and goes against the Bill of Rights' protection for freedom of speech and the press.

"The press did not invent the list. The press published the lists as informed by confidential sources," the OPC president said. "To investigate the press, under threat of criminal contempt, puts the Civil Rights Commission in the position of treading on some of the rights it has the duty to defend. This is an ominous precedent, a situation we hope will soon be rectified."

In a related development, Sen. Oreste Ramos, NPP-San Juan, filed a complaint with the civil rights commission, asking the organization to hold public hearings on what he called the "other subversives list."

Ramos, in his letter, complained more government employees have filed legal suits contending illegal firing for political reasons since the Hernández Colón administration came to power in 1985 than in any other administration.