

ADDRESS OF DR. MANUEL ANTONIO DE VARONA
COORDINATOR GENERAL OF THE CUBAN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY FRONT
ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1961,
BEFORE THE WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF WASHINGTON D.C.
ON CUBA'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE COMMUNIST TYRANNY
OF FIDEL CASTRO

I am honored by your kind invitation to address this group of distinguished members of the Women's City Club of Washington, and I thank you for this privilege.

It is my purpose to bring to you some of the truths concerning the reign of terror under which the people of Cuba are struggling today in order to throw off the shackles of red enslavement imposed upon them by the communist regime of Fidel Castro.

Then, I would like to impress upon you the mortal dangers which we face, you and I, and all other democracies of this hemisphere, by the presence of international communism in an established beachhead at the portals of this great nations.

You are familiar, I am sure, with the historical facts leading up to the betrayal of the people of Cuba by Fidel Castro's communist tyranny. Castro had pledged himself to the restoration of constitutional law and free elections, once the dictatorship of Batista was overthrown. Not only did he betray the aspirations of the people, but he failed to comply with his official commitments with the other revolutionary groups who had initiated opposition against Batista, and who were largely responsible for consolidating his (Castro's) position as head of the movement which took over the reigns of government.

You, who are blest with freedom of the press and other forms of communication are aware of the terror existing in Cuba today, with the tragic balance of 5000 executions by firing squads, more than 25,000 political prisoners, tortured and humiliated, and upwards of 60,000 families in exile in this United States. Most of these families are located in the south, Florida area.

There is wide-spread confusion concerning the previous economic or social status of these thousands of refugees, and it is commonly thought that they are composed, in the majority, of people who belonged to the richer more privileged classes. Let me assure you that this is not entirely true.

As General Coordinator of the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front, an organization composed of the six strongest anti-Castro groups, representing the people of Cuba in their struggle for freedom, we are closely in contact with members of our clandestine forces inside of Cuba and with the exiles as they arrive at these hospitable shores. Therefore, I can speak with exact knowledge of the true economic status of these refugees.

The wealthy families, relatively few when compared to the overwhelming large middle class, have taken exile, but it is no less certain that this latter important segment of our population constitutes the vastly superior numbers of refugees and composed of professionals, businessmen, laborers, students, small business owners, clerks, government employees, chauffeurs, fishermen and others.

Our society was accustomed to certain appraisals by the populace in general which determined a man wealthy if he owned a car, a truck, sent his children to private schools, purchased a home through mortgage facilities or indulged in an occasional form of recreation with his fellow-men. Fidel Castro, aware of this form of thinking exploited it to the fullest in order to promulgate his Urban Reform Law which confiscated the properties of thousands of middle class families who have had to flee their country.

Through these families we read the pages of stark terror, depicting broken homes, the separation of families, incarceration, persecution and all the attending evils of Communist oppression.

Children of school age are being sent to this country and placed in the hands of strangers rather than have them exposed to daily communist indoctrination which commences in the kindergarten classes. The teenagers are inducted into militia groups and taught the use of arms, under the malicious guise of preparing them to defend their country against a trumped-up Yankee Imperialist invasion. This indoctrination teaches the children how to spy upon their elders and associates reporting them if their beliefs are contrary to the regime. They are taught to believe that this is a civic and patriotic duty to their country.

The recently publicised children's centers functioning in the rural areas, place children under the care of teachers, women who three months ago were domestic servants, while the fathers and mothers are sent to work in the factories and in the fields. The parents as well as the children are separated and this disintegration of the family and destruction of homelife is just another well known Marxist method for communizing a nation through the destruction of its spiritual values.

There is wide-spread persecution of the faith. The word God was stricken out of the Constitution and care has been exercised in the preparation of the obligatory textbooks for schools to see that all reference to any spiritual philosophy is eliminated.

Cuba is predominantly a Catholic country and the Church and its clergy are undergoing the bitterest persecution ever known on this Continent. Religious organizations have been intervened, the lay membership and priests persecuted, imprisoned and sentenced to as many as 30 years for the simple performance of a Christian duty of taking food to a person in hiding. Catholic publications have been seized and banned and there is a project to nationalize the church under the direction of a renegade clergyman.

Our hearts bleed for these hundreds of thousands of Cuban mothers who have not the means or the opportunity to take exile and place their children in security from the ravages of Communist exposure which is inimical and incompatible with their Christian faith and democratic principles.

The gravest threat of Communist Cuba, however, is no longer confined to our ravaged country. Castro's sympathizers and Communist groups labor

endlessly

endlessly throughout the Americas to undermine the free democratic system of government of this hemisphere. They are supplied with ample economic resources from their Sino-Soviet allies to carry on the dissemination of their Godless Communist doctrine.

Cuba is only the platform from which Communist agitation and subversion is wreaking havoc throughout Latin America. This propaganda is spear-headed by the slogans "Yankee Imperialism", "Yankees, No!" and in general, "Hate the U.S.A." We are faced with combatting Sino-Soviet Imperialism in its most aggressive, decided and violent form, the phase referred to by Lenin, in his dictus, not to declare war against the United States, but to surround them with political and military bases, and "they would fall into our hands like a ripe apple". With the domination of Latin America, your country, the last bulwark of freedom, would be faced with the inevitable danger of the fulfillment of this prophecy by the great agitator.

What, then, is the solution of this grave, urgent problem? It is imperative to tell the people of the United States and of all the Americas that the precise, undeniable answer to this problem lies in the Inter-American judicial system established by the Organization of American States, in the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, the Declaration of Caracas, signed in 1947 and in 1954, to the effect that it is THE OBLIGATION OF ALL THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS to take collective action in defense of any aggression against an American State in order to ARREST AND IMPELE COMMUNIST INFILTRATION, which constitutes a threat to the security and peace of this hemisphere. This collective action assumed by all the American Republics as established in existing treaties, offers the only urgent, just, democratic and legal solution of the Cuban crisis and a formula acceptable and feasible in this tragic hour.

What I am telling you now, at this very moment, delegates and representatives of the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front are saying the same thing throughout Latin American Republics. This collective action of the Organization of American States will save Cuba and America, because it will overthrow a Communist satellite 90 miles from your shores, thus severing their lines of easy communication with the rest of the Continent and the disappearance of Communist directed Cuban Embassies in the capitals of American Republics from whence this widespread subversion is being channeled.

The role that patriotic, well informed women play in the destiny of their countries can never be overstated and the pages of history bear testimony to my words. Therefore, I entreat you to help make America aware of the imminent dangers of international communist, with one foot already in our door and poised to deliver the death blow.

In closing, I thank you for the opportunity and attention you have given me which I deem a signal honor. I enjoin you to remember my people in your prayers in beseeching the Father of all men to hasten the moment when the glorious light of freedom will again bathe the rich verdent hills of our beloved country and Cuban women may extend their hands across the seas in a warm clasp of traditional friendship which has always bound your country and mine.

Manuel Antonio de Varona
Coordinator General of the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front

Brief Political Background

Member of the Student Revolutionary Directory of 1930, Dr. Manuel Antonio de Varona is one of the leading men of his generation that carried out the struggle of the Cuban people against the dictatorship of General Gerardo Machado, who finally was ousted in 1933 after five long years of suffering and bloodshed.

Founder of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano Autentico (the biggest political party of Cuba that came into power after the presidential elections of 1944), Speaker of the Congress and Prime Minister of the Republic until 1952 when the Constitutional Government of Cuba was overthrown, Dr. Varona remained in the battle to rescue the democratic institutions during the seven years of the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar.

When the regime of Fidel Castro seized power in January of 1959, Dr. Varona was the first political figure to understand the dictatorial intentions and communist objectives of that regime. As a consequence of having criticized publicly Fidel Castro during a television program several weeks after Castro arrived in Havana to take over the Government, he was forced to leave Cuba again into exile.

Today, he is the Coordinator General of the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front, a group of the principle organizations opposed to the regime of Fidel Castro and the only figure that maintains latent the freedom flag inside and outside of Cuba, with the only ambition of seeing his country once again under the frame of liberty and justice.