

CUBA:

*INTRA-HISTORY.*

AN UNREMITTING STRUGGLE

*RAFAEL DIAZ-BALART*





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Rafael Díaz-Balart

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## INTRA-HISTORY.

*Term introduced by Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno to refer to the inner life that serves as a permanent backdrop to a changing and visible history.*

“In the world there are no perfect men or women, all humans are composed of merits and sins. Likewise there can be no perfect or infallible states or governments. The means to identify perversity and justice is the same in the individual and in the community. He is called just who possesses more merits than sins, and in the perverse the terms are inverted. The same occurs in the state and government. If in the conduct of its members merits exceed sins, justice reigns in that state or government, and if sins exceed merits, there reigns corruption.”

*(Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, “Maimonides,” in his book Mishneh-Torah, Conitron Section)*

## PROLOGUE

By Lincoln Diaz-Balart

**M**y father wished he had completed his memoirs in free Cuba. But after 46 years in exile, he died in Miami on May 6, 2005. He had suffered from a controllable bone marrow disease. However, in April 2005 the disease turned into an aggressive leukemia that put an end to his life in three weeks. Doctors said they could prolong his life for a few months but with invasive treatments. He rejected them: “In life there are only two things one has to know,” he said “how to live and how to die. I have been able to live with dignity; I want to die with dignity.” He told his doctors, now his friends, that “getting sick has been worth it; it gave me the opportunity to meet you.”

When facing death, Rafael Diaz-Balart taught us what was perhaps his most important lesson: how to die. “This is harder for you than for me,” he told us. His tenderness, together with his impressive personal courage, his respect for others and his love for Cuba were never greater than during the last days of his life. In one of our last conversations, he asked me to read for him the letter from José Martí to Doctor Ramón Emeterio Betances, in which Martí asked the distinguished Puerto Rican physician to represent the Cuban Independence Movement in Paris. Rafael Diaz-Balart died with great faith in God and deeply convinced that Cuba would one day be free.

The political program of “The White Rose,” written by Rafael Díaz-Balart, is reproduced here.

Rafael Diaz-Balart was an extraordinary man, with admirable qualities, including a unique generosity. He was never afraid of fighting for what he considered just, without worrying about the possibility of success. More than once he faced the world to denounce evil. In spite of having lived more than half of his life physically away from Cuba, he always used to say: "I've never left Cuba." He was a tireless learner until the final moments of his life. His constant compass was his love for Cuba and his desire for freedom for all Cubans. But his thoughts and ideas evolved throughout his life. For example, he wrote a book on a theory he called "Bi-Americanism." Years later, when I asked him why he never published it, he told me he no longer agreed with it. "Don't forget Abraham Lincoln's words," he used to say, "I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday." What's important in life, my father would say, is to maintain proper conduct; and to do that, many times it is necessary to change attitudes, opinions and even affiliations.

The painful lack of solidarity with Cubans from most governments of the world, especially in Latin America, had great influence on his thinking. What never changed was his love and devotion for Cuba.

The autobiography of Rafael Diaz-Balart published here is only a brief sketch of his life. He wanted to add other anecdotes and experiences to the chapters. And he had other chapters to write. He wanted to tell about his professional experiences in Africa; about the activities of his last years, divided between Madrid and Miami where he was able to work with great friends; about his work on my brother Mario's and my political campaigns and the extraordinary relationship he had with his four sons; about the activities of "The White Rose" during the last decade of his life, including its proclamation as a political party in June 2001 for the democratic Cuba of the future. He also wanted to write about his conviction that every generation of Cubans has the obligation to fight for Cuba's freedom, whether to obtain or to maintain it; and about his unyielding faith in Cuba's young people.

He did not have enough time to do it. But I think it is important to publish what he did write, since he often expressed his desire that future generations of Cubans

be aware of his experiences and impressions, as a contribution to the democratic stability of the future Republic.

It is for those future generations of Cubans, whose freedom was not only the dream but also the ideal of Rafael Diaz-Balart's life, that these memoirs have been published.

## A CUBAN MEMORY

Many friends have asked me to write my memoirs. If I have finally decided to do so, it is because I think they can be useful for the new generations of Cubans from whom their history, among other things, has been taken away. And useful for the future as well, as Cubans will have to rescue the truth of our nation's history from the immense swamp of lies in which they have been submerged by Castroite historiography. In the hands of Castroism, history has become a collection of myths, misrepresentations and poorly constructed legends which have, nevertheless, imposed themselves as truths, even for many true opponents of totalitarianism. And they have, of course, been accepted as irrefutable international dogmas. Future historians will have to unravel tons of lies to bring the truth to light. As a direct participant in my country's history for the last six decades, I have not for a minute stopped thinking about nor loving my homeland. I believe that the memories I keep of so many struggles and events, as well as my reflections, can contribute to the essential task of finding the truth. In these pages I will not go into great detail about aspects of my personal life that are not directly related to my public life. These will thus be political memories and reflections.

I was born in Banes, a small town in what today is the province of Holguín (in the probably arbitrary administrative division of Castroism) on January 17, 1926. Banes was a town with important economic activity that revolved around the former Boston sugar mill, property of the United Fruit Company. In spite of the bad reputation it has had in the press, especially in Central America, that American company paid high wages to its workers in Cuba, complied with tax obligations

(something that many domestic companies did not do) and contributed to the social well-being of the town, by financing, for example, the construction of the aqueduct and the sewer system, not only for the company's workers, but for the entire population.

My father, Rafael José Díaz Balart, worked as a lawyer for United, at the Boston as well as the Preston mills, in the town of Mayarí. He was also president of the city council and mayor of the town as a member of the Liberal Party. I have to say that my father was a man of the most extraordinary integrity and calling for public service I ever met. It is also with great pride that I have some prominent *mambises*<sup>1</sup> among my direct ancestors (their memory highly influenced my love for Cuba). Two great-uncles, Manuel and Rafael Balart, participated with Maceo in the invasion from east to west, from the famous Mangos de Baraguá. Rafael died in a battlefield when he was seventeen years of age in Pinar del Río with the rank of captain, whereas Manuel, a commander in the Liberation Army, was the chief of police of Santiago de Cuba after Independence. My maternal grandfather, Juan Gutiérrez, was held prisoner with his brother Francisco (Pancho) after Pancho's worried wife, looking for comfort, told a Spanish priest during confession that her husband was planning to join along with his brother in the uprising being organized by José Martí. Juan and Pancho were exiled to Ceuta in Northern Africa where they spent years in a Spanish prison before they could escape to Santo Domingo. Pancho opened a dry cleaning business there, where Juan also worked, until they were both able to go back to Santiago de Cuba. After the beginning of the Republic, Pancho became governor of Oriente Province. My mother, América Gutiérrez Vila, who was a teacher, died at age 28 of puerperal fever, shortly after my youngest brother Waldo was born, when I was 5 years old. This family environment in which there were political discussions and a profound respect for public service, as well as the moving memory of the travails of the war for independence, influenced my precocious interest for politics, as I will explain later. On the other hand, the unfortunate experiences my brothers and I had to go through with my father's second wife from the day he brought her to live with us when I was seven,

<sup>1</sup> The term Mambí is used to refer to the soldiers who participated in the Cuban War of Independence (Translator's note)

strengthened my already mature character as I felt the need to protect my brothers and sister as the oldest sibling. Although she never abused us physically, we did suffer from psychological abuse.

I began my studies at a Quaker school called Los Amigos de Banes. I later continued my schooling years at La Salle Catholic School in Marianao, Havana. By then my father had been elected as a member of the House of Representatives so we all moved to the capital. My brother Frank and I became boarders at La Salle de Marianao when my father returned to Banes. We then spent 7th and 8th grades as well as the first two years of high school at the international Baptist school El Cristo, close to Santiago de Cuba. We finished high school at La Progresiva de Cárdenas, a great Presbyterian school. This shows that at least from a religious point of view, I received a strong ecumenical formation. Most of these schools were certainly very good. Private teaching in Cuba had very high standards, but it had a serious flaw: it was racist. The Republic should never have allowed the practice of racism in private schools. Firstly, because it was against the law and secondly, because our nation was and still is a *mestizo* (a racially mixed) country, and was formed from our very foundation by white, black, Chinese and their crossbreeding. It was, then, an unspeakable injustice that in some sectors of society, especially in private education, despicable acts of racism took place. There was a lack of complementary legislation to the 20<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution, prohibiting all expressions of racism. Since 1940, members of the Constitutional convention lobbied during three legislative sessions to have this law passed by the Congress. But it was not approved. I myself, as a leader in Congress, drafted a bill regarding this matter. I did not introduce it. Many friends discouraged me as they were afraid that signing this law could cause difficulties for President Batista. I was always very sensitive to racism and classism in Cuban society. I recall, for instance, a speech (to which I will refer later) that I gave in the north terrace of the Presidential Palace on November 2, 1953, a few months after the events of the Moncada Barracks. In the speech, I publicly told the President: "Batista, don't forget that you were born on a dirt floor, under a *guano*<sup>2</sup> roof with *yagua*<sup>3</sup> walls. Avoid the elegant clubs. You should

<sup>2</sup> The word *guano* originates from the Quichua language of the Andes and means "the droppings of sea birds." (Translator's note)

<sup>3</sup> A type of Caribbean palm tree. (Translator's note)

instead get closer to the people.” The inability to implement the 20th article of the 1940 Constitution was certainly a great flaw of the Republic.

In public education, which also had high standards, that problem did not exist. During the Republic, education in Cuba obtained very important achievements, which placed the country among the best ranked in the Americas, despite having gained independence many years after the other nations in the region.

Cuba’s literacy rate was the second in Latin America; teachers as well as textbooks gained deserved recognition. The reality of education in Cuba during the Republic was far from being the black legend that Castroism has wanted the world to believe to justify its mistakes and horrors. The structural and professional foundation was created so that within a few years the negative aspects of our reality could be overcome. This could have been achieved without having to pay the high price of lack of freedom and the economic and social disaster of Castroism. I remember that Andrés Rivero Agüero, elected president in the last and very complex elections of 1958, after having appointed me as secretary of education, asked me to come up with a plan. In few years, illiteracy, which in 1958 already was at less than 20%, would be eradicated from Cuba, with lower rates even than Costa Rica, which is now recognized as a model for education in the Americas.

Going back to the start, as I have mentioned, I had an early curiosity for politics. My first memories are related to the dramatic events that followed the fall of President Gerardo Machado in August 1933. Despite being only seven years old, I remember what happened very vividly. My father was at the time, as I mentioned earlier, the mayor of Banes, representing the Liberal Party, the party of President Machado.

The revolution that caused Machado’s fall was followed by countless bloody events, like the lynching of many of Machado’s collaborators and followers. Some Liberal Party mayors of towns close to Banes were persecuted and even assassinated. My father, on the contrary, remained in town and was even asked to continue in his position, but he refused on the grounds of political ethics. He suggested Miguel Ángel Tamayo, a prestigious pharmacist, who was appointed. Those were

difficult and convulsed times. During the first days, the most important *bateyes* of the island, which are the places surrounding the sugar production centers where the workers would live, were controlled by Communist Party committee posts, some were even named “soviets.” I have never forgotten the communists singing those days in the streets: “Long live communism and freedom, look for a couple of pesos and give me half of them.”

In August 1933, Machado’s government was overthrown by the well-known American “mediation,” conducted by Sumner Welles and supported by the Platt Amendment. This occurred on August 12 and the following days. But it was not until September 4 that truly revolutionary forces appeared on the political scene. The mediation government, presided by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, son of the *Padre de la Patria* (Father of the Fatherland) and a renowned career diplomat, was overthrown. The council of students, which among its leaders were Professor Ramón Grau San Martín, and students Carlos Prío Socarrás, Tony Varona and Antonio Guiteras, who came from Joven Cuba, all of them supported by the class movement and soldiers led by a sergeant named Batista, put an end to the Mediation Government imposed by Sumner Welles, and the Pentarchy Government assumed command. On September 10, due to its evident inoperability, the Pentarchy was dissolved and Grau took command as president, appointed by all other members of the government and supported by Batista, who in turn, was designated colonel-in-chief of the Army. Until then, the Army was highly prestigious, but it was characterized by an extraordinary classism. The chief of the Army was Julio Sanguily y Echarte, who belonged to the high bourgeoisie as his father and uncle had been among the few officers of the Mambí Army with great “social relevance.”

Batista was appointed colonel-in-chief of the Army, against the wishes of the high command’s officers, who refused to negotiate with the government, since they had the support of Sumner Welles and American warships anchored in Havana Bay. Finally, the troops loyal to the government and to Batista, surrounded the National Hotel and forced the surrender of the officers who had taken refuge there under the protection of Sumner Welles. It was then, with Grau as president and Batista as colonel-in-chief of the Army, that the Revolutionary Government was officially

installed. A great portion of society was astonished. New and strange names started to appear in the front pages of newspapers indicating that a deep change was taking place. Fulgencio, Ruperto, Eleuterio, Ulsiseno were names of humble and peasant origin. And the most surprising fact for everyone was that the leader, aside from being of humble origin, was a *mulato*.

This caused a reaction incited by factors that had great impact in the political destiny of the nation: classism and racism, which whether in an open or hidden manner have been present until today. As a matter of fact, there is a great historical injustice around the historiography of these events. I am referring to the often-mentioned decrees signed by Grau-Guiteras, responding to popular demands. These measures were rejected by many sectors of society and were only possible due to the support given to them by the military led by Batista. It would be fair to call them Grau- Guiteras- Batista decrees. After the one hundred days of the Grau-Guiteras government, overthrown by Batista and the Council of Students when the revolutionary forces became divided in 1934, not one of these decrees was revoked, but many with clear social connotation, were improved. As I have said, this happened despite extraordinary pressure from powerful sectors of society. Likewise, the historiography of those years tends to unjustly ignore the great achievement of the abrogation of the “Platt Amendment,” achieved by President Carlos Mendieta in May of 1934 with the firm support of the colonel-in-chief of the Army.

All these events occurred before my eyes as a child and teenager. I know them first hand and I also have many direct sources, including my own father, especially for the following years that I call the great democratic transition, which culminated with the Constitutional Convention, the approval of the Constitution and the exemplary elections after which Batista handed power to the opposition, on June 1, 1944, known as the *jornada gloriosa* (the glorious day).

Those were stormy years. I must say that Batista, who was the strong man behind the scenes, had to face great resistance for the programs he put into place to improve society. An example of this was the 1938 decree instituting a paid weekly day of leave for domestic workers. In Batista’s speech given to commemorate

September 4, he explained how he asked his friend, the then President Federico Laredo Bru, an honest and able man, to carry out this measure. Laredo did approve the decree, but the movement against it, accusing the president and Batista of being communists, was so strong, that he finally decided to revoke it, generating the disagreement of the colonel-in-chief of the Army. Later, Batista would finally implement the controversial decree himself as President after his election in 1940.

In the meantime, the country struggled toward democracy. In 1936 the first elections after the fall of Machado took place. The opposition candidate was General Mario García Menocal, who had already been president and was a great *caudillo*. Batista, on the other hand, supported Miguel Mariano Gómez, who won the elections thanks to his support and despite the great political power and prestige of his opponent. The chief of the Army based his support of Gomez on the idea of maintaining and developing the social policies that were implemented in previous years.

Once Miguel Mariano was in power, a law calling for a tax of nine cents on each sack of sugar exported was approved. It had the objective of financing the great rural education project Batista had started with rural teachers, rural schools, training primary and secondary students in addition to technicians and professionals, called *Institutos Cívico-Militares*. The law for the financing of rural education was approved in December of 1936 by the Lower House of Congress, with 106 votes in favor (including my father’s, a strong defender of rural education, who also subsequently voted to impeach Miguel Mariano) and 43 votes against. But Miguel Mariano gave in to the pressures against rural education and decided to veto the law. As a result, Congress, with a majority of Batista supporters, impeached him. In the Lower Chamber, there were 111 votes in favor of the impeachment and only 45 against. Batista was then accused of being militarist, in order to hide the illegitimate interests that were behind the opposition to his rural education project. There are many examples that could illustrate the fierce classist and racist reaction that was at the root of Cuban political life, especially against Batista.

In 1939, as an opposition initiative and after a consensus among Batista, Grau and Menocal achieved by Laredo Bru, an election of delegates for a Constitutional

Assembly took place. In spite of my young age, I followed this process with great interest. In those elections, the majority of the delegates elected were of the opposition. There were 41 opposition delegates, including 18 Auténticos, 15 Menocalistas, and 4 of the ABC. The government parties obtained 35 votes, including 16 from the Liberal Party, 9 from former President Mendieta's party and 6 Communists. The assembly's sessions were broadcasted live on the radio and I didn't miss a single session of the debates, which I found fascinating. I recall that in certain occasions I skipped classes to listen to the debates. The transcriptions of those sessions were published in two thick volumes and years later I had the opportunity to study them thoroughly.

I can say that by then I already had political conscience. I was not only interested in what happened in Cuba, but also in the terrible events that initiated the Second World War in Europe. Having studied at El Cristo International Schools also led me to develop a political conscience. I eagerly followed the news about Hitler's unpunished occupation of Czechoslovakia, the subjugation of the Sudetes. I also learned about the conspiracy of Chamberlain, the Munich agreements with Hitler, which, according to the appeasers of the time, would ensure peace for 100 years. Shortly afterwards, Hitler occupied Poland and the war started. All these events, together with Cuba's national problems, were debated at the time. There were defenders of Nazism and Communism, but truthfully, they were not many. I remember defending Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill with great passion; they were my idols. This reminds me that when Fidel Castro and I both started Law School at La Universidad de La Habana, as I will explain later on, he was, as he himself has recognized, completely ignorant of politics and never had these kinds of concerns. I had met him briefly the year before in a basketball game; he played for the team of Belén High School in Havana, and I was part of the team of La Progresiva School in Cárdenas. It was not until the university that he developed his political interests and became an avid reader and admirer of Benito Mussolini and José Antonio Primo de Rivera. This is why I have always said that Castro is a fascist who arrived late to fascism, and became affiliated with a very similar totalitarian doctrine, Marxism-Leninism. But this would happen much later, as an excuse to take total power. Castro's main problem was always power. Without a doubt, it was a problem with psychopathologic roots.

The subject of communism was in vogue at the university, represented by a very small yet very well organized group. They even had presence in the Student Federation (FEU for its initials in Spanish). For example, Baudilio Castellanos, renowned member of the Communist Party and president of the class that followed ours in Law School; Alfredo Guevara, leader of the students of the Faculty of Arts, as well as others who were not students but actively participated in university activities, like Max Martín and Leonel Soto, with whom I had a good relationship, as I also did with Alfredo Guevara. They were very active. The Communists had a very good relationship with Fidel, so much so that he made them responsible for the education of his younger brother, Raúl Castro. When Raul was 14 or 15 years old, he hadn't even finished third grade. His father sent him to Havana, asking Fidel to try to do something for him. The only possible decision was made: to register him in some intensive courses to obtain the basic knowledge required to take the entrance exam for the school of administration at the university, for which a high school diploma was not necessary. Alfredo Guevara and Leonel Soto took care of this matter through party schools. This is how Raúl, a 14 or 15-year-old teenager, without any academic preparation, completely fell into the grasp of communist ideology, and of course, became a sort of communist priest. He was even sent as a representative to an international meeting of communist youth in Czechoslovakia.

Going back to my political interests, I cannot forget my devotion for the history of my country, for the immense civic and moral treasure left as a legacy by our heroic independence fighters: Martí, Maceo, Céspedes, Agramonte. I learned to worship them ever since I was a child. At the El Cristo School, I had the privilege of having an exceptional teacher, Juan Cabrera Polo, who not only played an important role in my patriotic formation, but also stimulated my vocation for politics and public speaking. In patriotic events that took place at the school, I was usually asked to make the commemorative speeches. It is important to mention that during the Republic, in general terms, teachers fulfilled with great dignity the mission of forging the patriotic conscience of the new generations of Cubans.



MY FATHER, RAFAEL JOSÉ DIAZ BALART,  
AS MAYOR OF BANES IN 1933. TO THE RIGHT,  
WITH WHITE SHIRT AND MOUSTACHE,  
MY GREAT UNCLE, MAMBÍ COMMANDER  
MANUEL BALART.



MY MOTHER, AMÉRICA GUTIÉRREZ VILA.

## THE UNIVERSITY

In 1945 I started studying at the Universidad de La Habana. That very year Fidel Castro also began his studies. I arrived at the university with the clear idea of studying law, but I was also interested in participating in the political life of the university, which at the time was very intense, very politicized, in fact, violently politicized. I expected it, but reality was much harder than my expectation.

When I arrived at the Universidad de La Habana I thought I was going to find great support for former President Batista, who in 1944, as I have already mentioned, had handed power over to the opposition leader Ramón Grau San Martín, and immediately had to flee into exile. Yes, even at the very moment of the transition of power, when Batista was leaving the Presidential Palace, Grau supporters tried to physically attack him and his followers. This fact is often ignored by historians and analysts. It's true that Grau reached the presidency in a completely democratic way, and therefore had the legitimacy of origin; nonetheless, by persecuting the opposition from the beginning and exiling its leader, Grau wasn't fulfilling the other essential requirement of democracy, the legitimacy of exercise.

Under those circumstances, I thought I was going to find sympathy for the former president, but to my surprise I found quite the opposite. That university, at the time the only one in the country, was exceptionally classist and racist. On campus you could perceive a visceral hatred for Batista, many students calling him a "*negro de mierda*," ("*a full of shit nigger*"), their greatest insult. I was nineteen years old, did not know Batista personally, nor did I have any type of relationship with him, but I

started defending him at the university. I became a Batista supporter *in pectore* (on my own) at great personal risk. Aside from the reasons I have stated, the fact that Batista was recognized as a great democrat in all of Latin America had a big influence on me. He was the man who had refused to deal with Perón or Trujillo because they were dictators; the author of “Sombras de América,” (Shadows of America) a book in which he denounced dictatorships and strongly defended democracy. This occurred in 1945, but it wasn’t until 1948, when I returned from my self-exile, as I will explain later on, that I met Batista, who was also coming back from his own exile.

From the beginning of my university adventure, I had an important friendship with Arturo Zaldívar Ricardo, who had been the leader of the class which arrived the year before I did. He also was a native of Banes and I remember him fondly. His father had been an admired fighter in the Independence War. At the Law School, each class would elect a delegate to the student federation for each of the five subjects taught. So our class had five delegates, and I managed to be elected as the delegate from the General Theory of the State class during my first year, while Fidel Castro was elected for Legal Anthropology. In my case, aside from my calling, my friendship with Arturo was of great help, because a large number of the 500 or 600 students in our first year class failed some of the subjects in the curriculum. Arturo’s help gave me electoral strength, as students from the prior class who had failed a subject could vote for delegates from my class.

From the beginning, my political aspiration went in hand with my brother Frank’s and my training to be part of the basketball team. The coach, “The Gallego Iglesias,” invited us and gave us basketball scholarships, which were almost symbolic, 30 or 40 pesos a year, but that amount was equivalent to a year of tuition at the university. Fidel Castro also obtained a scholarship as a former basketball player from the Colegio de Belén, where he had been one of the team’s stars. It was playing basketball that we got to know each other. We both failed miserably in our attempt to join the university team given the quality of the players that came from public schools. Later, Fidel insisted on other sports, like baseball, failing even more dramatically. I have no idea where the legend came from that he was able to try out for the major leagues. Completely false. In college, he was dead weight in sports.

His failure in sports caused him to transfer his energy and motivation toward politics. His desire for leadership and popularity, which would later become psychotic, made him leap from being totally ignorant and uninterested in politics, to being an activist, unfortunately for Cuba, as I would only later realize. Since we had become very good friends through basketball practices, he asked to participate with me in university politics. I accepted and we made an agreement that he would help me in my aspiration to become vice-president of the Public Law and Social Science Association. He soon broke our agreement. Although it was true that I had the advantage of being friends with Zaldívar, I still needed to work as a typist to cover my brother’s and my expenses, so I could not attend classes regularly. Fidel did not have to work and also had the privilege of being the only one in our class with a new car, which his father had bought for him. He thought this would favor him, so he presented his own candidacy and started campaigning against me. There were three candidacies including the one of another student whose name I don’t remember. About a month before the election, Fidel came to see me again and told me we needed to work together. If not, we risked letting the third contender win. Together, he said, we would ensure victory. And of course, we joined forces.

In our joint candidacy, a brilliant man, Rolando Amador, perhaps the most erudite of all Cubans in exile, was on my list running for sub delegate. He is a man who speaks several languages and is very learned in many topics, especially Eastern philosophy and theology. Just before the election was to take place, and after Easter break, when I was on vacation back home and therefore could not campaign on campus, I nonetheless felt relaxed because our joint candidacy ensured our victory. Rolando Amador found out that our supposed ally was campaigning against me. This was obviously a betrayal, so Amador confronted him, and they even got into a fistfight. When I returned from my vacation and found out what had happened, I responded to Castro’s lack of loyalty (a personality trait) and decided not to give him back a file with information on students that he had put together, considering he had plenty of free time being the son of a wealthy land owner and didn’t have to work. He then came to see me and said that there had been a misunderstanding and asked me for the file. I said I had lost it on the train. A week later, after reconsidering, he came to see me once again. He recognized

his disloyalty and asked to reconcile. We became friends and participated together in many university battles.

By then the university was a political hotbed, and not only regarding national problems. There were, for instance, solidarity committees in favor of freedom for the Dominican Republic, which suffered from the tyranny of Trujillo, and in favor of the State of Israel, among others. I was the head of the Committee for democracy in the Dominican Republic, as well as a member of the Committee for solidarity with the Jewish people. I remember my early sympathy for the Jewish cause, as a result of my father's relations with the Jewish community in Banes, which he represented as their lawyer. Unfortunately, Cuba's vote was the only one in all of Latin America against the recognition of the State of Israel at the United Nations. It was the government of Ramón Grau San Martín, who was somewhat of an anti-Semite. Paradoxically, history depicts this anti-Semite as a great revolutionary. Another paradox: Batista was always pro-Jewish.

Around that time Manolo Castro (not related to Fidel) was president of the FEU. He belonged to the generation of 1930, the one that participated in the Revolution against Machado. Although he was a teacher's aide, he was able to keep his student condition and his control of the FEU by leaving two classes incomplete. It is important to remember that the FEU was a political organization of great importance, and being its president was more powerful a position than being in the presidential cabinet. Manolo Castro had control of the FEU with the support of President Grau. Two of his collaborators were Mario Salabarría and Rolando Masferrer, all of them members of the Socialist Revolutionary Movement (MSR for its Spanish initials).

Fidel and I were against that group from the start. Among other things, we were motivated by the fact that President Grau started destroying the social policies and advancements made by Batista, from the beginning of his government, showing a clear and inappropriate attitude of revenge. For instance, the *Balneario Cívico Militar*, an army recreational center for the poor and orphans of workers and soldiers, was, as strange as it may sound, given to the FEU. The murder of Gustavo Mejías, president of the Public Law and Social Sciences Association, of which I

was vice president, was related to this unjustified event. Grau had also rescinded the budget for the Respiratory Tract Institute that belonged to the university as an autonomous entity. The Institute was directed by Professor Antonetti, with whom Grau had some kind of personal conflict. Fidel and I expressed our opposition to these arbitrary actions at the FEU, which annoyed Manolo Castro, who was committed to supporting the president. He wouldn't even listen to us. I recall his exact words: "We made the Revolution and we are not going to allow these kids who were born yesterday, to jeopardize the conquests of this Revolution." It is interesting how this "revolutionary" rhetoric already existed, and how Castro made it his own and still uses it today. (By the way, it would be healthy to bury the word and concept of "Revolution" in free Cuba). Once the serious conflict between Manolo Castro and Fidel was evident, we had to reflect upon it. Our situation was of clear disadvantage, since Manolo Castro had on his side the MSR, which controlled the university - including the autonomous police - and also possessed guns. We didn't have any means to face that power; that is why Fidel, my brother Frank and I decided to become members of the Revolutionary Insurreccional Union (UIR for its Spanish initials) to garner some support. The main leaders of this organization were Emilio Tro, Vidalito Morales and José de Jesús Ginfaume, among others.

The inflamed political atmosphere of those days was represented by these organizations, all of them of a violent, even gangster-like nature. Aside from the mentioned groups, there was the Revolutionary Guiteras Movement, directed by a man called "the strange one." Many of them, including the UIR, had been created with the express objective of killing supporters of Batista, which they actually did, as Vidalito Morales himself confessed in an interview my son José did of him for his college dissertation. Later, all of these organizations became dedicated to struggling for perks and bureaucratic positions and started killing each other. The UIR had a slogan: "Justice, however delayed, will be served," and would attach a sign with these words on corpses after their murders. The Revolutionary Guiteras Movement, on the other hand, had its own slogan: "May the will of martyrs be done" and also left signs after killing. The state of chaos and political violence during those years was dreadful. And the worse thing was that Grau's government did nothing to put an end to it. On the contrary, it encouraged it.

I remember the events of the Orfila neighborhood as an example of the complicity of the government in this violence. President Grau appointed one of the heads of the MSR, Mario Salabarría, as chief of police, and other members of the organization were named captains and lieutenants. At the same time, he appointed Emilio Tro, from the rival UIR, as commander, and placed them all together in the same building so they would kill each other. In fact they did so, in an armed confrontation in the middle of the city that lasted for hours, and no one intervened. It was a shameful massacre.

In this environment of violence and impunity, it was not possible to be alone. You had to belong to a group to be protected. The only alternative was withdrawing from all student political activity. At the university, the autonomous police would search students for weapons. However, members of the MSR were allowed to carry guns, whereas we were not. The truth is that we were involved in struggles in which there was a permanent risk of killing or being killed.

Killing or dying was always a latent possibility and hurt my sensitivity every day. I confess that I was more deeply worried by the possibility of killing than being killed. If it is sad to be killed, it's even sadder having to kill without knowing who or why. Under those circumstances, they would tell you: "tomorrow we will pick you up in a certain place at a certain time, with your gun and we will go kill a man, we will then tell you who he is." And you were forced to go because you were committed and they were protecting you. In this mad and terrible confusion, Manolo Castro was killed and Fidel was blamed for his death. The truth is that Fidel did not directly participate in this event; he couldn't have, because at that moment, he was somewhere else with my brother Frank, who has always told the truth about this. I remember that in 1948, when Fidel arrived in New York, where I was self-exiled - a period which I will refer to later - he told me that he believed that Rolando Mansferrer should have been killed first and then Manolo Castro; doing it the other way around, as it happened, didn't make any sense, since Mansferrer, who was smarter, would take political advantage of the crime. All this caused the extinction of the UIR, mainly because all its leaders were killed in the Battle of Orfila.

Although I can state that Fidel Castro was not the author of Manolo Castro's murder, I can assert that in many occasions he showed clear signs of a psychopathic and violent personality, developed within the breeding ground of the strong political disease that ravaged university life. One day, during a meeting of the five delegate representatives of our first year law school class at the university, Fidel came up with the surprising idea that we should murder Leonel Gómez, a high school student leader; his proposal was based on the delirious argument that Leonel would end up entering the university, and once there, with the approval of Grau's government, would take control of the FEU. I strongly objected to the proposal and Castro didn't find any support among our group of student leaders. It's not hard to understand how atrocious it was that a group of youngsters were discussing the murder of another young student who had not harmed us in any way and we hadn't even met. Although Castro's proposal was rejected by four delegates of our class, sometime later Fidel did shoot the poor soul from behind. Another day, as we were in his car driving through Belascoaín Street, when we stopped at a red light, we saw that next to us was the car of Fabio Ruiz Rojas, the national chief of police, who was a good person and was traveling alone with his driver. Castro proposed killing him right there. Are you crazy? I replied. Fortunately, a green light foiled the attempt.

## A DE FACTO COUP

The country was in a generalized, an institutionalized, state of violence from the very first day in which Grau San Martín assumed the presidency of the Republic. In fact, the persecution of opponents, including the exiling of the head of the opposition and the extraordinary climate of insecurity promoted by the government, constituted a de facto coup against the democratic system. Even the national chief of police, Colonel Fabio Ruiz Rojas, was so fearful for his life that he left his office one day and went directly to the airport and into exile, still wearing his uniform. His name had appeared on Commander Emilio Tro's tomb, allegedly as one of those responsible for Tro's death. The name of Congressman Alejo Cossío del Pino, who was murdered in the streets of Havana days before the coup of March 10, 1952, also appeared on the tomb before his assassination.

It is a historical fact that, after the adoption of the 1940 Constitution -approved by a completely sovereign Constitutional Assembly- in which most of the delegates elected were members of parties opposed to Batista, general elections took place and Batista won the presidency freely and fairly. There was peace in Cuba during his government, and the country was unmistakably democratic until 1944. A good example of this can be seen in the censure vote that the opposition presented against Prime Minister Carlos Saladrigas, in my opinion one of the most admirable statesmen of the Republican era. Although Saladrigas won the vote, in a gesture of greatness, he said: "I have won but I think the spirit of the country is against my government, so I resign." This civic example drastically contrasts with one that occurred later, in Grau's government, when in a similar situation, but in which the

censure vote succeeded, the “Autentico” leader’s reaction was to promote all his Under-Secretaries to Secretaries, forming what was known as the “Under-Cabinet.” President Grau told the press he had passed by a place with a terrible smell and thought he was near a tannery, but that no, he was near the Capitol building. There were many events that characterized the manner in which Grau constantly mocked Cuban institutions, like the grotesque theft of the Capitol’s symbolic diamond followed by a press conference by Grau where the President explained that the precious stone had inexplicably appeared in his office.

In spite of all this, I respect Grau because of how he conducted himself during the last years of his life. In his wheelchair, he remained in the country after Castro took power. I always remember his praiseworthy attitude when he appeared on television, the only time he was allowed to do so, during the early days of the Castro regime, and was asked: “You can’t deny that these young fellows who came down from the mountains are heroes, can you?” He replied: “Heroes they might be, alright, but they’ll bankrupt the Republic.” How right he was!

## SEARCHING FOR MY CALLING

Since I didn’t want to kill or be killed, or to be part of the groups that killed, I left for the United States after obtaining a scholarship to study theology at the Theological Seminary at Princeton University. I also decided to leave because I was unclear as to my true calling: politics or religion.

Until the last moment before leaving for the United States, I was involved in very dangerous events due to a dispute regarding the election for the presidency of the FEU. This time, Manolo Castro was not a candidate, but, rather, he supported Isaac Arana, at the time the president of the School of Commercial Sciences. Fidel and I supported Humberto Ruiz Leiro, who was the leader of the School of Dentistry. We attended a meeting that took place in a basement. We could have been easily massacred there, since our opponents were armed with machine guns and we were pretty much unarmed. The situation was very complicated, because due to some technical-legal tangle, both groups had the same number of delegates, or votes. At the most tense moment, I took the floor and called for common sense. The move was seconded in a speech by the president of the School of Education, who, defending the other group, was so visibly moved that she almost fainted. She made a desperate call for all of us to avoid confrontation and a certain massacre. A recess was called to find a consensus candidate, Enrique Ovares, the president of the School of Architecture. It was from that meeting that I left directly for the airport, accompanied by some UIR colleagues, including Fidel.

So I left for the United States to study theology at the seminary and to be a teaching assistant in Spanish at Princeton University. In the seminary, I was also asked to work during weekends as a pastor for Puerto Rican immigrants who worked the lands of Mennonite farmers, outside Lancaster, Pennsylvania. After a few months, I was also asked to take responsibility for a Puerto Rican congregation at the DeWitt Memorial Church (today DeWitt Reformed Church) in New York, at 280 Rivington Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. An English-speaking congregation and another one comprised of “White Russians,” as exiled Russians were called, also worshiped there.

In the meantime, Hilda Caballero, my fiancée at the time, and the future mother of my four children, had finished her studies in the United States and we decided to get married. It was March 1948 when we settled in a small apartment in Princeton. Once I finished the course, and having reflected a great deal, I gave up my idea of becoming a protestant minister.

During my year at the Princeton Seminary I determined that my calling was not the church. I was exposed to the entrails of the Protestant ecclesiastical hierarchy, as I had been to the Catholic Church before through my readings. Neither of them satisfied me then nor now. I realized that my true calling was politics and public service, understood -as it should be- as a secular priesthood. But the experience of the seminary was nonetheless very fulfilling.

With the help of Hilda’s aunt and uncle, we managed to rent a furnished room in New York, at 155 West 82nd Street. We arrived there with all our belongings, which fit in two small suitcases. She started working at an office equipment factory and I got a job as a typist and translator from English into Portuguese, without really knowing either of the languages. We tried to save money to go back to Cuba so I could finish studying law and enter politics, my true calling. In the meantime, my sister Mirta married my classmate, Fidel Castro. Since he was the son of a wealthy landowner, they spent their honeymoon at an elegant Miami Beach hotel. An interesting fact is that among their wedding presents, was a lamp and a check sent by former President Batista, then in exile in Daytona Beach, for the daughter of his friend from Banes, my father, Rafael Díaz Balart.

Fidel decided to spend a few days with us in New York, and once there, he insisted on renting a room nearby, to be close to me. Later he bought a car and both couples drove from New York to Miami on our way back to Cuba. On the way we conversed for hours, and I remember some of our talks clearly: “The Al Capone case,” he said, “shows the confusion of people with no superior direction or thought. What was he thinking of, violating tax laws and committing crimes without any consequence other than placing the police in the position of having to stop him? It’s like robbing in a bank,” Fidel Castro added. “It’s absurd. What you have to do is to rob THE bank, so you don’t just become the owner of everything, you also become a respectable bank owner.” A decade later, Fidel Castro would rob every bank and asset in Cuba.

From Miami, we returned to Cuba. My New York self-exile was over. I went back to the university. That same year, Batista also returned from exile and took a seat as a senator, for which he had been elected from his exile. Carlos Prío was the president of the Republic. My father, who had met Batista in Banes when Batista was a soldier, and also knew his family, took me to meet him. My first encounter with the ex-president was almost frustrated. When my father and I arrived at Batista’s property, a *finca*<sup>1</sup> close to Havana called “Kuquine,” there were a lot of people there that night. We arrived at around 8:30 and at 10:00 it didn’t seem like he was going to be meeting with us. So, quite angry, I went to look for a car to leave, but a friend and colleague of my father’s from the 1936 House of Representatives, Mario Abril Dumois, convinced me to stay and wait. Batista finally met with me and we had a long talk. I liked him and agreed to work for the Youth Organization of the new party he had founded, the Unitary Action Party (PAU for its Spanish initials).

<sup>1</sup> In Latin America, a *finca* refers to a piece of rural or agricultural land, typically with a cottage, farmhouse or estate buildings.

## A MEETING BETWEEN CASTRO AND BATISTA

When I went back to the university I found Castro again and we engaged in activities together. He then asked me to take him to meet Batista. It would be the only time they personally met. It was 1950. Fidel was doubtful about participating in the “Ortodoxo” Youth and told me he was considering joining the PAU Youth if Batista was willing to carry out a coup. I took him to Kuquine and they talked for a couple of hours. The meeting took place with Fidel, Rivero Agüero, Batista, and myself. Batista, a very astute man, managed to avoid the subject of the coup during the entire meeting. At the end of the meeting, Fidel blurted out: “General, congratulations for your library. But I haven’t seen a very important book: *Coup D’état: The Technique of Revolution* by Curzio Malaparte.” Batista burst out laughing and did not answer. He would tell me later: “Your brother-in-law is not trustworthy.”

After the meeting with Batista I proposed to Fidel that he join the PAU Youth. I told him he could be a candidate for Congress representing Havana while I ran for a seat in Oriente. But he said, “Listen Rafael, that man is not going to carry out a coup, so I’m not interested in joining you. I have decided to become a member of the Ortodoxo Party, which will elect more representatives than the PAU; moreover, we can always push Chibás around or whatever; something we can’t do with this guy.”

I introduced Fidel to Chibás because at some point I had been fond of Chibás even though I realized he had an unstable personality. That was, in fact, the reason why I didn’t join the Ortodoxo Party.

Fidel and I went to see Chibás at a university rally against a one-cent increase in electricity rates. As it happened the organizers would not let Chibás speak, but Fidel and I insisted. However, an incident that occurred made me feel disappointed in the Ortodoxo leader. I had written a simplistic and bombastic manifesto against the increase and Fidel signed it together with other students. We asked Chibás for four minutes of his half-hour daily radio program to read the manifesto. He told us no but asked us to leave him the text promising that he would mention the issue in his program. However, what he actually did was to start the program reading the entire manifesto, word for word, as if it was his and without mentioning us, the students who had written it and taken it to him.

I became deeply involved in the activities of the PAU Youth. I soon became its president and traveled around all the different parts of the country, creating a thriving organization. I felt proud that among our members we had thousands of youngsters from the most humble sectors of society; many of them were blacks and *mulatos*. Not a single member or leader of our organization belonged to the “elegant clubs” of Cuba.

Our work in opposition to the government of Carlos Prío Socarrás was not easy. Aggression toward those of us on Batista’s side was constant. When Prío assumed the presidency he had promised to lead Cuba to new paths of honesty, stability and peace; three elements that were totally absent during Grau’s government. It was with that objective that Prío promulgated “Law 5” against *gangsterism*, one of the biggest problems of the time. But he didn’t fulfill his objective of bringing peace to the country, something that would not happen until March 10, 1952. Years later, I had the opportunity to become a good friend of former President Prío, when we were both in exile. He was a noble and kind Cuban. He was an admirable man who did not harbor hatred in his heart, a true patriot. When Prío arrived to exile after having lived for some time in Castro’s Cuba, another exiled leader, in fact from his own Auténtico party, made the public remark that the former president had “arrived late.” Prío quickly answered: “I may be late, but I paid for my own ticket.” Certainly, Prío never received favors from anyone nor was on the payroll of any foreign agency.

But going back to the beginning of the 50’s, I think it’s worth analyzing some important events and political realities. In 1948, President Prío gave Batista a full guarantee to return to politics, something that had been denied to him during Grau’s government. Andrés Rivero Agüero, Batista’s best friend in Cuban politics, met with President Prío to talk about Batista’s return from exile. Congressman Radio Cremata was also present in the meeting. Prío, who knew Rivero Agüero from the time they were both students, asked him: “Andrés, what is Batista coming for?” And Rivero Agüero replied: “Carlos, that’s up to you.”

Batista returned and assumed his seat in the Senate, to which he had been elected from exile. He was also allowed a security escort because of his status as a former President. However, President Prío’s government did not permit Batista to carry out the normal role of a leader of the opposition. For example, Batista’s natural leadership of the traditional parties was undermined by government maneuvering. The government used extraordinary economic resources to separate important political leaders from Batista’s side.

Prío appointed to his cabinet two of Batista’s main political allies: Eduardo Suárez Rivas as secretary of agriculture and Ramón Zaydín as secretary of justice, both leaders of the Liberal Party. Even more serious was when the government separated the Governor of Havana Province Panchín Batista from his brother. This created a difficult political situation for the General, who was forced to start a new party.

But something even worse was yet to happen: kidnappings of delegates of our party (PAU). And, without the knowledge of President Prío, the Chief of the Secret Police Eufemio Fernández (linked to the MSR), Rolando Masferrer and others were carefully planning an assassination attempt on General Batista. It was supposed to take place from a property close to Kuquine, with mortar shots that would put an end to his and his family’s lives. The attempt was frustrated thanks to a warning from a former police officer, Policarpo Soler, and the timely intervention of Senator Miguel Suárez Fernández. All this was part of the breeding ground for the March 10, 1952 coup. Later, when Prío and I were both in exile, I thoroughly analyzed this period with him, since we became very good friends. All this uncon-

trolled violence at the time implied, no doubt, a clear rupture of the democratic system and the rule of law. It really was, without seeking justifications that do not exist, the breeding ground for the coup that took place on March 10. The violence against us, Batista's supporters, was at the time so intense, that I was convinced I would not make it alive to the 1952 elections.

Years later, I was able to personally experience the exemplary transition to democracy in Spain, after four long decades of Francoism. During the first democratic elections, after Franco's death, in 1977, former supporters of the dictator won at the ballot box. But in 1982, the opposition (Spanish Socialist Party, PSOE by its Spanish initials, led by Felipe González) won the elections. One of the first measures taken by González was the creation of a new official position, that of Opposition Leader, with its own budget and a very high level in the official protocol, something very important in countries with a long monarchical tradition like Spain. Gonzalez created the prestigious position for the opposition party leader who had won the most votes: Manuel Fraga Iribarne, someone who had never governed Spain. What would have happened in Spain if, instead of honoring the leader of the opposition, he had sent him into exile? And if, through armed groups financed by the government, supporters of the opposition parties had been persecuted and killed? Surely democracy would have ended in Spain at that very same moment.

To be democratic, a government needs to meet two requirements: it must have the legitimacy of origin, obtained through free elections, and the legitimacy of exercise. If the government attacks the opposition with impunity, it loses the legitimacy of exercise and ceases to be democratic, as was the case with Hitler in Germany. This is also how coups originate. It's not only when a government is overthrown. The opposition is as essential a part of any democratic state as is the government.

What is relevant now is not to assign blame or to hide faults, but to analyze the facts and draw lessons for future generations of Cubans in order to ensure social peace, stability, fraternity, and progress for the Republic of the future. Cubans need to learn that we are all responsible for protecting our country. The truth is that two wrongs don't make a right. March 10 was not justifiable, but we cannot point out

one of the wrongs and hide the other, because history is then incomplete. The history of the Republic has been written in a partial, nonobjective manner, seeking to find a single culprit and catalyst for the tragedy that continues to this day. The new generations need to know the complete truth to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

## THE UNITARY ACTION PARTY (PAU). THE YOUTH MOVEMENT. THE RADIO PROGRAM. MARCH 10, 1952

The Youth Movement of the PAU political party would become, in practice, a party within a party. The youth movement managed to have a presence in each of the 126 municipalities of the country. Its members were young people from humble backgrounds. Delegates for the local assemblies, who were elected in every neighborhood, in turn elected their executives and delegates to the provincial assemblies. Likewise, executives and delegates for the National Assembly were also elected, and they chose the national executive and its president. I had the honor of being elected national president. Tens of thousands of humble youth enthusiastically worked in the ranks of the PAU Youth movement, attracted by Batista's extensive social projects to benefit the less fortunate sectors of society.

While all this was happening, the PAU purchased a radio program from a powerful national radio broadcaster that would become the voice of the party. Those days were, as I have explained, extremely difficult for us in the opposition. We were violently harassed and strongly attacked on the radio programs of the other political parties. Those were the circumstances under which Batista appointed me director of the radio program. Justo Luis del Pozo, the national president of the party, was vehemently opposed to the appointment, for reasons still unknown to me. But, to be truthful, I did not really recognize him as the national president of the party. The solution to our differences was to appoint Andrés Rivero Agüero as director of the daily program and me as deputy director. But Rivero Agüero was concurrently president of the party in the province of Pinar del Río and always

extremely busy, so in reality I was in charge of the program. Rivero Agüero and I were close friends, so I was able to work effectively and the program obtained excellent ratings. This allowed me to become nationally known, and I was elected to the House of Representatives in 1954.

Ever since General Batista took power on March 10, 1952, I continued to work intensely to organize the PAU Youth movement, as I have already mentioned, but I was also involved with the government. I was appointed Undersecretary of Interior (Security) with Ramón Hermida as the Secretary. Hermida had been a prominent member of the ABC, one of the principal parties during the 1933 revolutionary struggles. He was a man of great integrity and noble character, but he did not like politics. In general, we had a relation of mutual respect, but we also had some conflicts. I remember an especially irritating episode when Secretary Hermida visited the Moncada Barracks assaulters who were being held prisoner at The Isle of Pines, after they had been sentenced by an entirely independent civilian court of three magistrates who had not been named by Batista, with full due process as called for by law. During his tour of the prison, Hermida received a visit request from prisoner Fidel Castro; the Secretary accepted and the event received significant news coverage. I was extremely angry when I found out that my boss, the Secretary, had visited the leader of the attack on a military base in which dozens of Cubans had died. I publicly denounced Hermida, and, of course, immediately submitted my resignation.

Hermida also felt obliged to resign. The President rejected both resignations and called us to a meeting to resolve the dispute. We remained friends. However, another unpleasant incident would cloud our relationship. Instigated by her husband, Fidel Castro, my sister Mirta made enraged statements to the press against Hermida. The Secretary's response was simple but devastating: "I'm surprised that Mirta Díaz-Balart attacks me so fiercely being, as she is, my employee." The reaction of Castro, feeling ridiculed, was to declare that everything was a maneuver to discredit him. The truth is that Castro had abandoned my sister and their young son, and that because of their compelling situation (she could not even pay her rent), I had given her a position in my office without demanding daily attendance. This happened shortly after I became Under Secretary and long before Castro at-

tacked the Moncada barracks. As is logical and obvious, Castro was aware of the situation and knew perfectly well how the expenses of his family were covered. He even personally received checks each month from the Interior Ministry, made out to Mirta, from the hands of my personal assistant, Liberato Vega. In other words, Fidel Castro was for a long time, Batista's *botellero*<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the main cause of his divorce from Mirta was to save his political career by means of the separation. Even today he still denies knowing about the origin of the money that arrived at his wife's house and with which the household's bills, including his, were paid.

During the years that Castro and I were friends, from the time that we started at the university, I got to know him closely enough to gauge his total lack of morality and scruples. I can illustrate my assertion with multiple anecdotes. For example, toward the end of President Prío's government there was a violent incident close to the university between students and the police, in which a student was killed. Fidel Castro publicly accused Lieutenant Rafael Salas Cañizares of being responsible for the death. Salas Cañizares was my friend, so he called me to say that my brother-in-law was falsely accusing him. To prove it, he gave me the day's agenda of his precinct, which noted that he was on duty on the day of the events, making it impossible for him to leave his police headquarters. I immediately personally informed Castro, who said he could care less, that he accused Salas Cañizares because he couldn't stand the guy and that he would continue to do so. I told him I would let Salas Cañizares know.

A few months later, on March 10, 1952, I showed up early in the morning at the house where Castro and my sister lived together with my brothers Frank and Waldo, Raúl Castro and my paternal grandmother. I woke Fidel up and gave him the news that Batista had taken power. Fidel reacted with resignation but somewhat angrily for not having foreseen the possibility during the meeting we both had had with Batista in which, as I have recounted, he tried to convince the former president to lead a coup. But I immediately told him what was really important for him to know, that Lieutenant Rafael Salas Cañizares had been appointed chief of

<sup>1</sup> In Cuba, *botellero* is someone who lives off the government without working. In other words, Castro was living off of Batista. (Translator's note)

the national police. And although Batista had given strict orders that no official was to be involved in any type of repression, I thought that Castro should know. He turned pale and asked me to take him to his sister Lydia's house where he could hide for a while until the situation settled down. I did so, together with my brother-in-law Juan Caballero Brunet and Eduardo Borrel Navarro.

Coups cannot be justified, even though some may be explained. The coup that occurred on March 10, 1952 was one of those without justification but explainable. The Republic went to bed with Carlos Prío Socarrás as president and woke up with Fulgencio Batista with de facto power. But I think it is important to highlight that nobody was hurt. Lieutenant Negrete, a supporter of Batista's, tried to take the presidential palace together with a soldier named Guillermo Escanaverino. The security forces protecting the palace opened fire, causing Negrete's and Escanaverino's deaths. When the guards opened fire, Negrete and Escanaverino had shot back and Sergeant Rosendo Hernández, one of the palace's defenders, was killed as well. After General Batista and his supporters took power, however, no charges were filed against the palace's defenders.

Nobody was imprisoned. Navy Captain Blanco detained former president Grau. But when Batista found out, he immediately ordered Grau's release, who was offered all kinds of apologies. Likewise, when the new Secretary of Interior Ramón Hermida and I as Undersecretary learned that National Chief of Police Salas Cañizares had detained opposition leaders Roberto Agramonte, José Pardo Llada and Juan Amador Rodríguez, we immediately went to the Bureau of Investigation where they were being held, and ordered their immediate release. Since there were journalists there, some photographs were taken and one of them is included in this book. I would also like to emphasize that there were no expropriations, not a single house, company, farm, factory, car, or bicycle. This, in spite of the fact that we had received all types of aggression during the previous eight years when we had been in the opposition.

A few days after March 10, already as Undersecretary of Interior, with my bodyguard very early one morning I passed by the office of the "Pueblo" newspaper,

which was then on Zanja Street, and saw several police cars and national police officers surrounding the building. I stopped and went in. There were various journalists detained by the police and one of them shouted: "Rafaelito, run to Luis' office because they may kill him." I went up to the office of Luis Ortega Sierra, director of the newspaper. I found a police captain with a gun in his hand who had just hit Luis. I vigorously addressed the captain: "Put your gun away and tell me what he is accused of." He answered: "I have orders from the National Chief of Police, General Salas Cañizares, against this scoundrel." I said: "If there is an accusation against Ortega, present it in court." "This is none of your business, nor a matter for civilians. I follow orders from the chief of police," he replied. I then said: "As Undersecretary of Interior, I am the chief of the chief of police, and I'm taking the journalist with me. If there are accusations against him, as I said, they should be presented in court." I took Luis Ortega where he asked me to take him, to the Journalists Association of Havana. I later found out there were personal problems between Ortega and Salas Cañizares, but fortunately the incident did not go any further.



THE PAU YOUTH MOVEMENT WOULD BECOME, IN PRACTICE, A PARTY WITHIN A PARTY. THE MOVEMENT MANAGED TO HAVE A PRESENCE IN EACH OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX MUNICIPALITIES OF THE COUNTRY. OUR MOVEMENT WAS MADE UP OF YOUTH FROM HUMBLE ORIGINS.



WHEN I LEARNED, ON MARCH 11 1952, THAT THE NEW CHIEF OF POLICE, RAFAEL SALAS CAÑIZARES, HAD DETAINED OPPOSITION LEADERS ROBERTO AGRAMONTE, JOSÉ PARDO LLADA AND JUAN AMADOR RODRÍGUEZ, I ORDERED THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. THIS PICTURE IS OF MY VISIT TO SALAS CAÑIZARES, WITH THE NEW SECRETARY OF INTERIOR RAMÓN HERMIDA.

## HEADING TO CONGRESS

After March 10, I was involved in frantic political activity. Aside from my duties as Undersecretary of Interior, I also led the PAU Youth Movement and was the spokesman of the party on a daily radio program that was broadcast nationally. Additionally, I was in charge of a Sunday television program with my law school classmate Rolando Amador, who would later be my partner in the law firm we founded with my father on Obispo Street. All these activities gave me a level of national notoriety, so it was logical that I would be considered as a candidate for Congress. When the November 1954 elections were called, it would have been natural for me to present my candidacy from the province of Havana, where all my activities were based. However, the party's leaders in the capital province and municipality, Alfredo Jacomino, the Secretary of Agriculture, and Justo Luis del Pozo, the Mayor of Havana, did not agree. Therefore, with the approval of Anselmo Alliegro, the Party leader in Oriente Province, I presented my candidacy from that province. I accepted the move, taking into account that I am from Banes and that my father had been a Representative from Oriente after the 1936 elections, after he had been Mayor of our town. I continued as the party spokesman on the daily national radio program, and, at the same time, I traveled across all the municipalities of Oriente province, even to the most remote towns and neighborhoods. Several times, while I was visiting a village, my voice was being heard on the radio. I would often announce beforehand my visit to a municipality, and activists would receive me with great affection and enthusiasm. The fact that my father had carefully maintained his many political contacts since the thirties in all the municipalities of Oriente also helped me a great deal.

During the 1954 electoral campaign I visited all the municipalities of Oriente Province. One night, following several political events in the city of Holguín, I was on the road and at around one o'clock in the morning, near Bijarú, a great number of people were waiting for me with a banner that read: "Díaz-Balart, we want to speak with you." I stopped to talk to them and they told me that there were many school-age children in the area, but there was no school. The neighbors had decided to pay for a teacher and they had set aside a space where a school functioned provisionally. "Here we are," they said "men and women of all or no political parties, who have decided to trust you and ask you for a school if you are elected to Congress."

I thanked them for their trust and told them: "I can't promise I will get you the school, but I can promise you I will do my best to get it. And I promise you something else: If I am elected, I will send the entire monthly salary for your teacher from my own pocket until the official budget for the school is obtained." I was elected. And starting with my first paycheck, I sent the salary for the teacher every month; I was also fortunate enough to be able to include the school for Bijarú in the education budget of the Republic. The next time I visited the town I was taken to the school, where they had placed a sign that read: "Rafael Díaz-Balart School." Many years later, the teacher, who was very dedicated to her students, Mrs. Vilma Ojea, sent me a picture of the school along with a poem she wrote. She is now living in exile in Miami.

During the intense campaign for the 1954 election, it became evident that I was going to be one of the highest vote getters, if not the highest. This did not make the provincial leaders of my party happy. Some were afraid that if these projections came true, my position, of certain independence, would get stronger. My political message was bothersome to some politicians even within my party, since it was clearly serious and addressed the deepest needs of the people. My message especially connected with young people of humble origins throughout the country. During a meeting between the provincial leaders of the party and President Batista, Alliegro expressed, with some cynicism, that even though I started campaigning late, it looked like I was going to be elected. I answered that, according to my impressions and information, I could be the winner of the largest number

of votes. I also said that if I came in last I would accept it, but that if I was number one in votes, I would not accept being declared number two. But political maneuvering continued against me. The president of the party in Banes, Lalo Arbucias, informed me that during a meeting, Alliegro, provincial president, had given instructions that my vote total be trimmed. Lalo, a man of integrity, would not hear of it and clearly expressed his support of my candidacy. Despite dark maneuvers against me, some of them broken up by leaders of the PAU Youth movement in various precincts, I received the most votes of any candidate for Congress.

I then participated in an inconceivable event. Without taking into account my position as Undersecretary of Interior on electoral license, I called a press conference in Banes, where I denounced the corruption that had taken place in the election in Oriente province. As was to be expected, the press conference was covered by every national newspaper. Here was a renowned member of the government denouncing corruption in the elections. When I returned to Havana, I was immediately called by my friend Rivero Agüero, who had been elected senator from the province of Pinar del Río, to a meeting at his house. He told me that the President was extremely upset with me, to the point that I should consider leaving the party. Rivero Agüero, however, who was a good friend of the President, convinced him to receive me by appealing to Batista's devotion to his friends, and the incident did not have further consequences.



THIS IS THE SCHOOL IN BIJARÚ THAT I WAS  
ABLE TO BUILD AFTER BEING ELECTED TO  
CONGRESS IN 1954. IN THE CENTER IS VILMA  
OJEA, THE WONDERFUL TEACHER WHO SENT  
ME THIS PHOTO ALONG WITH A BEAUTIFUL  
POEM THAT SHE WROTE.

THERE ARE DEAR AND UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES FOR ME,  
ONE OF THEM IS OF MY SCHOOL  
BUT FIRST I WANT TO MENTION  
THAT IF I CHOSE THIS CAREER  
IT WAS BECAUSE OF MY INFINITE DESIRE TO TEACH

FROM PESTALOZZI AND HIS TEACHING METHODS  
FROM HIS BLESSED SCHOOL MODEL I LEARNED A GREAT DEAL  
AND FROM WORTHY TEACHERS WHO HIGHLY INFLUENCED ME

AND SO I SPENT THOSE YEARS OF LEARNING  
UNTIL ONE DAY A BIG SUPRISE I HAD  
MY NEIGHBORS KNOCKED AT MY DOOR  
FILLED WITH JOY AND HOPE  
SEEING IN ME THE TEACHER THEY LONGED FOR  
A NEW SCHOOL WOULD OPEN ITS DOORS  
IN A HUMBLE AND POOR VILLAGE

WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOY  
THOSE FACES REFLECTED  
WHEN THEY SAW THEIR DREAM COME TRUE  
IT WAS A GREAT NEED  
SINCE THOSE POOR CHILDREN HAD TO WALK FOR KILOMETERS  
TO REACH THE CLOSEST SCHOOL

EVERYTHING WAS RESOLVED BECAUSE SOMEONE PASSED BY  
WHO WITH LOVE UNDERSTOOD THE GREAT NECESSITY  
SINCE IN HIS SOUL HE CARRIED AN IDEAL  
THE IDEAL HE LEARNED FROM MARTÍ

I WAS EAGERLY THERE AND THE COURSE STARTED  
FOR THOSE WHO WERE SO IN NEED OF INSTRUCTION  
WHEN HE WHO PROMISED WITH LOVE FULFILLED  
AND WHO STRONGLY FOUGHT FOR OUR PERMANENT SCHOOL

PARENTS, NEIGHBORS AND I, DEEPLY MOVED BY HE  
WHO WITH GREAT HONESTY RESPONDED  
AND FULL OF GRATITUDE BECAUSE WE WERE SO APPRECIATIVE  
WE NAMED MY SCHOOL, OUR BELOVED SCHOOL  
RAFAEL L. DÍAZ BALART

I HOPE THAT ONE DAY I CAN TELL MY BELOVED ONES  
NOW I AM HERE TO OFFER MYSELF AGAIN

WITH THIS BLESSED WORK OF OUR REDEEMER

THIS POEM WAS SENT TO ME BY VILMA OJEA, THE  
TEACHER IN BIJARÚ.

HAY RECUERDOS GRATOS E INOLVIDABLES PARA MÍ  
Y UNO DE ELLOS ES EL DE MI ESCUELA  
PERO ANTES QUIERO MENCIONAR  
QUE SI ESTA CARRERA ESCOGÍ  
FUE POR TENER UN DESEO INFINITO DE ENSEÑAR

DE PESTALOZZI DE SUS MÉTODOS DIDÁCTICOS  
DE SU BENDITA ESCUELA MODELO MUCHO APRENDÍ  
Y DE DIGNOS PROFESORES QUE TAMBIÉN INFLUYERON EN MÍ

Y ASÍ PASÉ AQUELLOS AÑOS DE ESTUDIOS  
HASTA QUE UN DÍA SORPRENDIDA FUI  
TOCARON A MI PUERTA Y ERAN MIS CONVECINOS  
LLENOS DE JUBILO Y DE ESPERANZA  
BUSCANDO EN MI LA MAESTRA TAN ANSIADA  
PARA UNA ESCUELA QUE ABRIRÍA SUS PUERTAS  
EN UNA HUMILDE Y POBRE BARRIADA

CON PALABRAS NO PUEDO DESCRIBIR LA ALEGRÍA  
QUE EXPRESABAN AQUELLOS ROSTROS  
AL VER HECHA REALIDAD LO QUE TANTO AÑORABAN  
POR SER DE UNA GRAN NECESIDAD  
KILÓMETROS TENÍAN QUE CAMINAR AQUELLOS POBRES NIÑOS  
PARA PODER LLEGAR A LA ESCUELA MÁS CERCANA

Y TODO SE RESOLVIÓ PORQUE PASO POR ALLÍ  
QUIEN CON AMOR COMPRENDIÓ LA GRAN NECESIDAD  
POR LLEVAR EN SU ALMA EL IDEAL QUE LO MUEVE  
EL IDEAL QUE LO ENVUELVE QUE ES EL IDEAL DE MARTÍ

HICE ACTO DE PRESENCIA Y EL CURSO COMENZÓ  
PARA AQUELLOS QUE TAN NECESITADOS ESTABAN DE INSTRUCCIÓN  
Y EL QUE PROMETIÓ SIEMPRE CON AMOR CUMPLIÓ  
Y PARA QUE QUEDARA LA ESCUELA PERMANENTE MUCHO QUE LUCHO

LOS PADRES VECINOS Y YO CONMOVIDOS  
POR EL QUE CON TANTA HONESTIDAD ACTUÓ  
Y LLENOS DE GRATITUD PORQUE SABÍAMOS APRECIAR  
LE PUSIMOS A MI ESCUELA A NUESTRA QUERIDA ESCUELA EL NOMBRE DE  
RAFAEL L. DIAZ-BALART

ESPERO QUE ALGÚN DÍA PUEDA DECIRLES A ESTOS QUERIDOS MÍOS  
AHORA AQUÍ ESTOY PARA OFRECERME DE NUEVO  
CON ESTA BENDITA OBRA DEL REDENTOR



## MAJORITY LEADER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE MAJORITY CAUCUS

Taking as a point of reference the large number of votes I received in the election, I declared to the press that I would run for Speaker of the House of Representatives, although I knew that Batista supported the candidacy of Gastón Godoy y Loret de Mola, an eminent jurist who had been president of the Bar Association of Havana and who had also served as President of the Colonos (Sugarcane Growers) Bank. After seeing my statement in the press Godoy thought I had the support of the president, and told him that, if that was the case, he would withdraw his candidacy. Batista, a man of his word, reiterated his support for Godoy. The president asked me to see him in his finca to inform me about his decision. I told him I would comply with it, but I asked for his support for my candidacy for Majority Caucus Chairman and Majority Leader. He accepted, but not without warning me that the position was even harder than that of Speaker and that there were other members with more experience. My response was the usual one for me at the time: there is always a first time for everyone. Even counting with that support, I had difficulties in my own party in Oriente. A difficult hurdle was caused by Alliegro, president of the provincial party. In Oriente, 18 Representatives, including myself, had been elected by our party. Alliegro, in a very astute move and without following the formal rules, proposed the creation of a Caucus of all the Representatives of the party elected from Oriente (the “Oriente Caucus”), with the public aim to better represent and defend the interests of the province in Congress. In a clear attempt to derail my candidacy for Majority Leader and Caucus Chairman, he nominated Professor Alberto Varona, who had received the second number of votes after me, to be Chairman of the “Oriente

Caucus.” The intention was clear: How could someone who could not even be elected Chairman of his provincial caucus, aspire to lead the national caucus? I immediately asked for the floor and gave my enthusiastic support to Varona as Chairman of the provincial caucus and the proposal was unanimously approved. I then asked for the support of the Oriente Caucus for my candidacy for Majority Leader. Alberto Varona asked for the floor and passionately urged the Representatives from Oriente to support me unanimously as well. I therefore received Oriente’s decisive backing for my candidacy to be Majority Leader.

## IN CONGRESS

Without a doubt, parliament is the most beautiful of institutions in a democratic system. The four years I was Representative, Chairman of the Majority Caucus and Majority Leader were truly fruitful years, not only because of the great number of laws we were able to pass in favor of the Cuban people, but because of the energetic, honest and cordial manner in which parliamentary tasks were carried out by the different political groups. Four political parties supported the government in Congress, each one with a parliamentary caucus in the House as well as in the Senate: The most numerous party, Acción Progresista (formerly known as Acción Unitaria); the Liberal Party; the Democratic Party and the Radical Union Party. The opposition was represented by the parliamentary caucus of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Auténtico) whose leader in the House was a brilliant lawyer, Facundo Hernández, with whom I had a great friendship despite our heated debates. The independent parliamentary caucus, whose leader was the journalist Juan Amador Rodríguez, a fighter for noble causes and notable Member of Parliament, also belonged to the opposition. I had passionate debates with him as well, but we also had a deep friendship.

The House of Representatives, presided at the time by Gastón Godoy, was an exemplary institution in which the national interest always prevailed. The atmosphere was always democratic and all topics were debated in complete freedom. Among various measures and laws that were passed, I will never forget the creation of the National Carlos Saladrigas Prize, which I proposed in memory of the distinguished statesman and Prime Minister during the first presidency of Batista

and Labor Secretary in his last government. The prize was granted annually to the student with the best academic average in labor law, chosen among the best students of public and private universities in the nation, who were to be examined by a special ad hoc committee created for the purpose. The prize included a generous sum that covered tuition and expenses for the winner in any foreign university. The funds came from the House of Representatives' own budget. In other words, it was created by a contribution from all the members of the House of Representatives. This was an exceptional case, not only in the history of the Cuban Parliament, but also perhaps in the entire world.

Among many other laws which I achieved passage of, I have to highlight the increase of the retirement pension for sugar workers and for members of the armed forces, as well as the decrease in national electricity rates. Unfortunately, some other proposals did not pass, like an employment and education law to promote vocational training for new generations that would facilitate their entry into the labor force.

In every democratic parliament, different and adverse political forces are represented. Debates always take place and some proposals are accepted while others are rejected, depending on the circumstances and interests that obtain a majority of the votes. This is part of the democratic system and must be followed by everyone. But if there was a law passed in those years, against which I was one of the few to speak out, it was one that would bring terrible consequences for Cuba. The law was introduced in the Senate by Auténtico Party Senator Arturo Hernández Tellaheche and in the House by opposition leader Juan Amador Rodríguez, and in May 1955, provided a wide amnesty to those who had attacked the Moncada Barracks twenty-two months earlier, causing more than one hundred deaths and many more injuries. After that bloody event, Fidel Castro and his followers had been judged by an independent court and sentenced to different terms in prison that ranged from two to 15 years. The longest sentence was for the leader.

A great mobilization of national public opinion was carried out in favor of the Amnesty Law. There is no doubt that, despite probable good intentions, it constituted

an extraordinary political mistake, a dramatic example of collective blindness, as history has shown. I have the honor of having stood practically alone against it. In the first place, I knew that granting an amnesty only twenty-two months after the fratricide constituted an affront to the judiciary and to the decisions made by its independent courts, while also comprising a grave danger for the stability of the republic. It also constituted a provocation to the armed forces and a serious danger of social agitation, since Fidel Castro and his group, even from within prison, did not hide their intentions of continuing to plan violent, terrorist actions against society. I brought up the issue several times with the president, and confirmed that he was leaning against granting the amnesty; however, the media, newspapers, radio and television, as well as the American Embassy, carried out a vigorous campaign in favor of the proposal. This greatly affected President Batista, who was always sensitive to the opinions expressed in the national press. Some government leaders, such as Prime Minister Jorge García Montes, had a decisive influence on the president's decision. Some advisors worked to undercut my opinion, arguing that my judgment was clouded by supposed personal problems with Castro. Others had a more naive view: if Castro were released, he would be just another "comemierda."<sup>1</sup> Finally, the principal leaders of the government, in the Congress and its parliamentary groups, were called late one night to the president's finca, Kuquine, where he told us, without any room for debate -something unusual for him- that Prime Minister García Montes would instruct us of the government's position with regard to the Amnesty Law. The parties that supported the government would approve the amnesty. *Allea jacta est.*

My words during the debate about the Amnesty Law that day in May 1955, were the following:

Mr. Speaker and Distinguished Colleagues:

I have asked for the floor in order to explain my vote, because I want to make it clear to my fellow legislators, to the Cuban people and to go on record, as to why I so vigorously oppose the amnesty which has just been granted by this body.

<sup>1</sup> This is an insult somewhat equivalent to "asshole."

I have not been convinced in the least by the arguments espoused by practically the entire House.

I want it to be perfectly clear that I firmly support all measures in favor of peace and fraternity among Cubans, of any party or of no party, supporters, or opponents of the government. And in that spirit I would support this or any other amnesty. But an amnesty must be an instrument of reconciliation and of fraternity, it should result from a process of disarmament of passions and hatreds. It should be a way for creating rules of the game that are well-defined, accepted directly or indirectly by all who are protagonists in the process which a nation is living.

However, the amnesty which we have just voted to approve has unfortunately been just the opposite. Fidel Castro and his group have repeatedly declared, from their comfortable prison, that they will only be leaving prison in order to continue plotting new acts of violence and whatever it takes to achieve the total power which they seek. They have refused to take part in any type of peaceful settlement, threatening both members of the government and of the opposition who support electoral solutions to the country's problems.

They do not want peace. They do not want a national solution. They do not want democracy, nor elections, nor fraternity. Fidel Castro and his group seek only one thing: power, and total power at that. And they want to achieve that power through violence, so that their total power will enable them to destroy every vestige of Constitution and law in Cuba, to institute the most cruel, most barbaric tyranny--a tyranny that would teach the people the true meaning of tyranny --a totalitarian regime, a corrupt and murderous regime that would be very difficult to overthrow for at least twenty years. This is because Fidel Castro is nothing more than a psychopathic fascist, who could only choose to align himself with communism, because fascism was defeated in the Second World War.

It is unfortunate that there are those who, in our own government, also do not want democratic and electoral solutions, because they know that they could not even be elected councilman in our smallest municipalities.

But I do not want to tire my fellow Representatives. The public opinion of

the country has been mobilized in support of this amnesty. And the principal figures of our government have not had the vision nor the firmness to see and to decide what is best for the President, for the government and above all, for Cuba. I believe that his advisors are poorly serving President Batista by not standing firm before the pressures of the press, the radio and television.

I believe that this amnesty, so imprudently adopted, will bring days, many days of mourning, of pain, of bloodshed and of misery to the Cuban people, even though those very people do not see it that way at this time.

I ask God that the majority of the people and the majority of my fellow Representatives present here are the ones who are right.

I ask God that I be the one who is mistaken. For Cuba's sake.

Years later, in exile, I learned that Prime Minister García Montes, very well connected to American interests (he was the Chase Manhattan Bank's lawyer in Cuba) had been notified by the U.S. ambassador that his government wanted the Cuban government to pass the Amnesty Law with its parliamentary majority. And of course, what I could not have imagined at that moment, even though I knew that the Department of State directed U.S. policy regarding Cuba, was that the person in charge of the Department's policy toward Mexico and the Caribbean, who called himself William Weyland, was in fact Guillermo Arturo Montenegro Weyland, a dual-nationality Cuban-American, who had been a member of the Cuban Communist Party many years before.

## A STORY THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MYTH

It is well known that William Weyland, in his position as director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs at the State Department in Washington in the late fifties, was an important factor in the United States' decision to embargo the arms that the Cuban government had purchased in that country, as well as in negotiations with other governments to get them to also stop selling arms and ammunition to Batista. The U.S. arms embargo against the Cuban government had a demoralizing effect, truly devastating for the Batista government. Weyland was in those days the "cubanologist" *par excellence*, and informed everyone who had a question about the Cuban crisis that its only solution was to be the "Robin Hood of the Sierra Maestra."

Well, according to what Rolando Masferrer told me in exile, when Sumner Welles had been in Cuba in 1933, he met a young American-Cuban journalist from an English-language daily published in Havana: Guillermo Arturo Montenegro Weyland. Welles, who years later would be fired by President Roosevelt from his position in the State Department due to repeated sexual scandals, developed an intimate relationship with Montenegro and took him to Washington when Welles returned to Foggy Bottom. Using his second last name, Weyland began working at the State Department. Twenty-five years later, Weyland was director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs. Masferrer, years later in exile, informed the FBI about Weyland's background. He had recognized William Weyland in a newspaper photo as Guillermo Montenegro, the Cuban who had been part of Masferrer's three-member cell in the Cuban Communist Party.

As I understand it, Weyland was removed from his position after U.S. intelligence confirmed what Masferrer had disclosed. It was then announced that Weyland was to be appointed to a lower position – a consular position, I believe - after being removed as head of the “Cuba desk.” But I recall watching a televised press conference by President John F. Kennedy, when a shrewd journalist, distinguished for her acute questions to the president during press conferences, asked him: “How is it possible that you have appointed William Weyland to a new position, being, as he is, a well-known security risk?” Kennedy lost control and his response was evasive. I do not know if William Weyland was finally appointed a consul. But I do know that he lived his remaining years in isolation, refusing all press interviews. And I also know that the damage this sinister character caused to Cuba, was already done.

## THE FRUSTRATED ELECTIONS OF 1956

When the amnesty of Fidel Castro and the other attackers of the Moncada barracks was being carried out, the option of convoking partial elections in 1956 was concurrently discussed within the government. Cuban electoral tradition established that after general elections, like the ones that took place in 1954, mid-term elections should be celebrated two years later, to renew half of the House of Representatives, municipal governments, and other positions. However, when general elections were held in 1954, after the coup of 1952, the issue was not clear, so legislation regarding mid-term elections was necessary.

I worked with full dedication and emphasis in favor of mid-term elections in 1956, but Justo Luis del Pozo, president of the majority party (Acción Progresista), and in those days the mayor of Havana, vehemently opposed convoking them. He obviously preferred serving his four-year term without having to face new elections. I must say here that Justo Luis was a great mayor, in my opinion the best one that Havana ever had, the only one who solved the water problem, building an aqueduct to take water from the so-called South Basin. His administration was, in addition, transparent, with budget surpluses year after year. He left a great hospital for the city’s low-income residents, with the latest advancements in modern medicine as well as comforts.

But in spite of all this, Luis Justo was a bad candidate. He was what in Cuban terminology we call “pesado” (“dense”). He was also known to be “feo” (ugly), cer-

tainly not an attractive person, and this constituted a disadvantage for electoral campaigns. Perhaps it was because he knew himself to be a bad candidate that he opposed mid-term elections. In my opinion, this constituted a disservice to the Republic. It was especially regrettable, because -after the 1955 amnesty- mid-term elections would have unquestionably created a healthier political atmosphere. I confronted Justo Luis vigorously on this matter, but I lost the battle. I think not calling for those elections was a serious mistake made by Batista.

## A VISIT TO CHIVIRICO ON THE FLANKS OF THE SIERRA MAESTRA AND MY PROPOSAL TO BATISTA

Rolando Masferrer, senator after the 1954 elections, and I decided to go to the flanks of the Sierra Maestra and organize a public demonstration to challenge Fidel Castro and his men who were armed in those mountains, rebelling against the government. We arrived with about a hundred members of the PAU Youth and some others who belonged to Masferrer's group. We set up several loudspeakers, placing them on trees, and opened a tribune. Representative Esteban de Varona was with us, as well as Congressman Quique Masferrer. We were there for hours rebuking the rebels of the Sierra Maestra and inviting them to confront us with weapons.

After I returned to Havana, without having been able to get a reaction from Castro and his men, I went to see Batista and told him that Masferrer and I believed that the only way to solve the problem was to confront the rebels and finish them off. I proposed an expedition, for which I was offering five thousand men from the PAU Youth, for a public announcement that we were going to celebrate a public rally at the Pico Turquino, the highest peak of the Sierra Maestra: "The Masferrer people and the PAU Youth that will come with us will have to be well armed, since we will be fighting Castro's people. If they fight, we will finish them off since we will be numerous; if they don't fight, we will have our rally at the Pico Turquino, and with journalists from all over the world we will make Castro and his group look like fools." I continued telling Batista: "I propose the creation of a militia of 100,000 armed men to defend the peace and our nation's stability." I also said, "The government should buy uncultivated *fincas* (lands) in the Sierra Maestra and divide them among the local farmers. This would be the most appropriate way to defend that

area against the rebels or any others with similar ideas in the future.” I informed Batista that there was a fund of approximately a million pesos (equivalent to dollars) in the Agriculture Department precisely to buy such lands. Batista said he liked my ideas and appointed General Martín Díaz Tamayo to supervise and train the militia, and his Chief of Staff Andrés Domingo to manage the acquisition and distribution of the lands for the local farmers. However, as the days went by, I found out through Andrés Rivero Agüero that Batista was convinced by the highest levels of the armed forces to withdraw his support for the creation of the militia since it would create a significant risk to his regime, and Andrés Domingo had convinced Batista of more attractive ways of using the money. The truth is that Batista ended up not supporting my ideas, and that my project to eliminate Fidel Castro militarily and to distribute land to local farmers died.

## THE MEDIATION OF THE “AMIGOS DE LA REPÚBLICA” (FRIENDS OF THE REPUBLIC) AND DON COSME DE LA TORRIENTE.

The political situation had gradually become poisonous, especially due to the increasing terrorist activity in cities and the actions of the so-called “guerrilleros” in the mountains. There was a spiral of violence that ended in a virtual state of war, with the excesses that unfortunately accompany these events.

Many civic institutions made efforts to mediate the conflicts between the government and the opposition. Among those efforts, an important one was the *Diálogo Cívico* (Civic Dialogue), proposed by the organization “*Amigos de la República*” (Friends of the Republic) and its war of independence veteran leader, Colonel Cosme de la Torriente. The government appointed its representatives to the commission that would include representatives of the opposition and the mediation of the “*Amigos de la República*.” The national press published multiple opinions accusing the government of having appointed “hard-liners” belonging to the anti-electoral sector of the regime, called “tanquistas.” Batista reacted quickly and increased the government commission, naming the leader of the so-called “*electoral sector*” (“electoralista”) Andrés Rivero Agüero, and I, who also formed part of the sector. We all met several times. In the last session, when the members of the government responded to the proposals of the opposition’s commission, we accepted practically all of them. We had received instructions in that regard directly from Batista. The government brought to the table a far-reaching proposal: a call for a new Constituent Assembly and, as a logical culmination, the celebration of general elections, in which Batista would not be a candidate under any circumstances.

That was the civic and peaceful way to end the bitter and profound political conflicts that kept the Cuban nation in bewilderment and confrontation.

When the session was over, one of the leaders of the opposition commission, Tony Varona, told me that he believed that we were going to be able to reach an agreement that could be announced in the next meeting. But, to our general surprise, the *Diálogo Cívico* ended with a negative response from the opposition. It became known that the group known as the “26 de Julio” (26th of July), led by Castro, had warned the members of the opposition commission that they would be subject to attacks and assassination if they accepted an agreement with the government. Tony Varona personally told Rivero Agüero and me that he was not afraid of the threats (Varona was a man of extraordinary courage), but that was not the case with the other members of the commission representing the opposition. Thus, the terrorist, violent group led by Castro imposed its totalitarian point of view at gunpoint upon the democratic opposition. The peaceful, democratic and civic solution to the dispute was made impossible.

However, I think it is important to make clear that many leaders of the opposition and a large portion of the press actively worked against any negotiated solution. In opposition to the posture adopted by the government, which not only sat at the negotiation table, but also accepted most of the proposals of the opposition and stated that the people should democratically decide the way to solve the conflict, there were many - first of all, of course, Castroists - who refused to accept a negotiated solution. The position of the “26 de Julio” toward the mediation of the “*Amigos de la República*” was the beginning of something that has never changed: the position of a tyrant who has always refused to negotiate a democratic solution and has persisted in prohibiting any movement toward free elections.

## THE GENERAL STRIKE OF APRIL 1958. THE LAST ELECTIONS. RIVERO AGÜERO, THE “CUBAN ZEDILLO” WHO WAS NOT ABLE TO GOVERN.

The national situation was deteriorating by the day. However, the support Fidel Castro would receive from the upper classes had not yet been manifested in the radical and even suicidal way that it would in the near future. The popular classes, especially the working class, opposed the insurrection. This was in part because Cuba’s social legislation was one of the most developed in the world, and the national economy was strong and prosperous despite the fact that the island was a young and small country of six and a half million people. The national currency, the Cuban peso, was one of the strongest and healthiest currencies in the world, trading on par with the American dollar. There also was free foreign currency exchange.

It will likely be very difficult for future historians to explain the clear contradiction that existed between the state of the economy and the degree of social development of Cuba on one hand, and the political violence that overtook society. Despite the violence, key economic indicators were strong and the social condition of workers, even in the agricultural sector, was superior to the island’s geographic, historical, and cultural neighborhood.

Poor areas still existed, especially in remote rural regions, but data from international organizations of the era confirms that the standard of living, prosperity, health, and education of Cubans during the fifties could compete with the most developed societies of the time. There were no economic or social reasons to explain the violence and extremism that Cuban society had to endure and that would lead to disaster for the nation.

Fidel Castro called for a general strike in April 1958, a strike that resulted in an extraordinary failure for the opposition, since the labor unions and masses of workers simply did not support it. Almost nobody went on strike. It is interesting to observe that there was just one sector of the working class that partially supported the strike; bank workers, white-collar workers, who obviously represented the most “managerial” sector of Cuba’s labor force. This provides further evidence of the classist and racist roots of yet ignored, key points of our national history.

Accompanied by constant upheaval and unrest, the government called for elections again in November 1958; I was then elected Senator for Oriente province, the youngest Senator in Cuba. The elections had been scheduled to be held before, in June of that year, but after the fiasco of the “April Strike,” Batista made the mistake of feeling so strong that he postponed the elections until November. Many important opposition leaders, such as Carlos Prío Socarrás, abstained from the elections. Electoral abstentionism was a weapon which was used since the beginning of the Republic, always with disastrous results. Even during the first elections of the Republic, Bartolomé Masó, the candidate who was opposing Estrada Palma, called for abstention, alleging that the support Máximo Gomez was giving to Estrada Palma, together with other important factors, prevented an impartial election. However, Salvador Cisneros y Betancourt, the leader of Bartolomé Masó’s party in Camaguey province, did not follow Masó’s guidance. He participated in the elections, and won the province.

In the last elections held in the Republic, in November 1958, the candidates for president were Andrés Rivero Agüero for the four parties of the government, Carlos Márquez Sterling, and Ramón Grau San Martín.

In the provinces of the eastern region, the situation was one of factual civil war and obviously, under the circumstances, voter turnout was very low, but nothing compared to the election when President Abraham Lincoln was reelected during the American Civil War, in which voter turnout was approximately 10%. Government workers and their relatives constituted an important voting bloc, as well as members of the armed forces, and Andrés Rivero Agüero was elected.

The election obviously took place under extraordinary circumstances. But Batista’s term of office was ending and a new government would be inaugurated on February 24, 1959. Batista had informed the president-elect that he would be traveling to Europe immediately after handing over power and would be out of Cuba for no less than a year. Rivero Agüero announced that he would call new elections within two years.

But most of Cuban and international public opinion described Rivero Agüero as Batista’s “puppet,” and argued that he did not deserve the opportunity to be inaugurated. History showed us years later in Mexico, how, after seven decades of “rotating dictatorship” by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), President Salinas de Gortari imposed Ernesto Zedillo on his party and on the entire country following the assassination of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. And President Zedillo ended up being the great figure of Mexico’s democratic transition. Following Zedillo’s term of office, Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) candidate Vicente Fox assumed power following exemplary elections. I am convinced that Andrés Rivero Agüero could have been the great “Cuban Zedillo.” He was a true democrat, but, unfortunately, the story ended up very differently for Cuba. I feel profoundly sad when I realize how right I was to oppose Castro’s amnesty. The future possibility of the frustrated “Cuban Zedillo” is, as every future possibility, impossible to prove, but it is also part of the deep sorrow I feel when I think about the Cuba that could have been.



DURING ONE OF THE LAST RALLIES OF MY  
SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN. GIBARA, ORIENTE  
PROVINCE, OCTOBER 1958.

## CLASHES WITH THE GOVERNMENT

In 1958, the people in Oriente province experienced a civil war in which those traveling on roads were always threatened by *guerrilleros*, and it was very difficult to hold normal elections. The Castroists carried out a systematic campaign to confiscate voter registration cards from the voters; if they did not hand them in, they were simply killed. These terrible events are never mentioned by historians – another unjustified omission in our historiography.

The government called a meeting of the four presidents of the parties in Oriente that supported it: César (Lulú) Camacho, from the Liberal Party, Rolando Masferrer, from the Radical Union Party, Anselmo Alliegro, from the Acción Progresista Party, and myself as president of the Partido Demócrata (Democratic Party), which I had joined, under the leadership of the governor of Havana, Panchín Batista. The meeting was presided by President Batista and presidential candidate Andrés Rivero Agüero, and included Batista's Chief of Staff Andrés Domingo y Morales del Castillo. The rules of the game for the election in Oriente province were established during that meeting: the candidates for Congress (Senate and House of Representatives) of the four government parties would collect the voter registration cards of those voters who wished to vote for them in the elections, but were afraid to go to the polls due to the threats of *guerrilleros*. Votes for Senators and Representatives would be awarded to each candidate in proportion to the number of voter registration cards that voters voluntarily handed to each candidate.

Immediately after that meeting, I called all Congressional candidates of my Democratic Party and let them know the rules of the game. Some candidates accepted the task at hand with great enthusiasm and personal risk. Among them were Representatives Esteban de Varona, José Antonio Moralejo, and Gustavo Cowley Gallego. Some other candidates did not visit Oriente province during the campaign, or did so very sporadically.

The President of the Senate, Anselmo Alliegro, who was also the President of the Acción Progresista Party in Oriente province, declared to the press that some Congressional candidates of the Democratic Party would be elected due to being “notable” characters on the national scene. This violated the previously established rules.

When the election results were announced, five Representatives were elected from the Democratic Party in Oriente, and the first three in order of voter registration cards obtained were Esteban de Varona, José Antonio Moralejo and Gustavo Cowley (the other two were the re-elected Representatives Marta García Ochoa and José Milanés Tamayo). Andrés Rivero Agüero came to see me and told me that Anselmo Alliegro was pressuring President Batista to alter the results of the election for Representatives of the Democratic Party in Oriente. I told him that I would not accept even the slightest violation of the rules or of the electoral results of my party within my province. Rivero Agüero knew me very well and was aware that I am capable of going to extremes in order to defend my principles and my word, and the government accepted the correct results. Serious consequences were avoided had the government decided otherwise.

I had other major as well as minor conflicts with my own government. One was caused by the invitation I made to the ambassadors of the United States and Guatemala for a Sunday television program I hosted. The subject was the armed conflict led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas to overthrow the pro-communist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. The ambassador of the United States did not attend the program and asked to be represented by an embassy attaché. I refused, stating that my invitation was for both ambassadors. The ambassador of Guatemala did come to the program and of course argued in favor of his gov-

ernment. Immediately after the program, the ambassador of the United States complained by phone to President Batista about the fact that one of his government’s leaders had opened his television program to the pro-communist ambassador from Guatemala. After a strong message over the phone transmitted to me by General Francisco “Silito” Tabernilla (head of Batista’s personal military guards at the time) and my equally strong response, President Batista invited me and my wife to dinner the following weekend at his *finca*, Kuquine. Once again, differences were overcome.

Before that incident, I had organized and led a big march of the PAU Youth on November 2, 1953 to show our support for Batista a few months after the attack on the Moncada Barracks. Most of the cabinet members were not pleased by the fact that the march was to take place. But since my father was Secretary of Transportation at the time, they were not able to block the means of transportation from the provinces to the capital for the march. In every province, the youth of my party responded to my call with great enthusiasm and the march in front of the presidential palace was an extraordinary success, with more than 100,000 young people marching for hours in support of the government.

However, the Interior Secretary, my immediate boss, Ramón Hermida, ordered the Director of the Transportation Secretariat within the Ministry, Saluctio Tozo, to prevent the march. I took the President a resignation letter as Undersecretary so I could publicly denounce Secretary Hermida. The President did not accept my resignation, and called Hermida and me in for a meeting in which we agreed that the plans for the march would not be hindered.

In spite of this, certain events occurred on the day of the march that could have been very serious. I had given orders that only marching band music was to be allowed and forbade alcoholic beverages. I also ordered that the banners not mention any names, only the slogans for the cause, specifically: “We ask for administrative honesty,” “The land is for those who work it,” “Integral Agriculture Reform,” “Let’s Deepen Democracy,” “Help for small businesses,” “Participation of workers in companies,” etc.

However, upon approaching the palace terrace where the President, his cabinet, and I were watching the march, a group of friends of Batista's chief of staff, Andrés Domingo, lifted a banner congratulating him. I immediately gave the order that the banner be destroyed, and it was, in front of us all. When the march arrived at the corner of Prado and Neptuno Streets, in front of the Central Park, the traffic officer switched the traffic light to red, thus breaking up the march, leaving about 100,000 young people behind, separating them from us, members of the presidency who had already passed. I then approached the police officer and told him that the march had permission to continue without interruption to the presidential palace and asked him to turn the light back to green again. The officer replied that he would not do so, since he had orders for the light to be red. I immediately went to the light switch and personally turned it to green, but a transit police captain appeared and told me that I could not direct traffic. I showed him a copy of the permit authorizing the march and told him I had the right to ask for the green light so the march could continue without interruption. The police captain asked me in full voice: "Who do you think you are to take these liberties?" I replied: "I am the Undersecretary of Interior of the country." He then yelled at me, close to my face: "What you are is a piece of shit," but he obviously finished the sentence on the ground following the blow to the head that I gave him. The captain, still on the ground, reached for his weapon, but my brother Waldo, risking his life, stopped him. I asked the captain and all my friends to stay calm since the situation was extremely tense and dangerous. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, Police Colonel Lutgardo Martín Pérez appeared with his staff and escorts in many police cars. He practically picked the captain off the ground and put him in one of his police cars, apologized to me, and continued marching alongside me until we reached the palace.

## ON MY WAY TO EXILE WITHOUT KNOWING IT

After the last elections of November 1958, the President-elect Andrés Rivero Agüero told me confidentially that I would be his Secretary of Education. By then, I had worked for more than a year from my law firm, Díaz-Balart, Díaz-Balart and Amador in Havana creating a Cuban company to build a national fleet of passenger ships and had hired an important firm in New York that administered passenger ships in the Mediterranean Sea in those days. With the technical support of that American firm, the National Bank of Cuba and its president Joaquín Martínez Sáenz agreed to finance this project that was to start with the construction of two passenger ships in French shipyards; they would be decorated in Italy, include luxury casinos and would be paid for in seven years. Rivero Agüero was enthusiastic about the project due to its significance for the prosperity of the Cuban economy. When the loan was repaid after seven years, two new ships would be ordered successively every seven years. It is easy to imagine that the Cuban company would have had no less than a dozen luxury cruise ships employing thousands of Cubans.

After the elections, and as the Christmas holidays were approaching, I prepared a trip to France and Italy, to complete the hiring of the French and Italian firms to build and decorate the first two ships. I told the President-elect, and asked him to inform President Batista about my trip. Rivero Agüero called me a few days later to tell me that Batista did not want me traveling abroad in such tense moments. I replied that I had meetings scheduled in France and Italy and had already purchased my airline tickets. Then Rivero Agüero told me to write a letter to Batista and that

he would hand it to him while I was away, for he was sure that Batista was going to understand that my trip was important to the national interest. I thanked the President-elect, reminding him that I would be back before January 15th.

So on December 20th, 1958, I left Cuba with my wife Hilda and my two sons Rafael and Lincoln, ages eight and four, respectively (José and Mario were born in exile). I was also accompanied by my law partner Rolando Amador, my brother Frank, his wife Alina, and the assistant that helped my wife with the children, Mirta Batista (who was of no relation to the president).

We left Cuba for New York on December 20th and from there traveled to Paris on December 24th, arriving in that beautiful city on Christmas Day, December 25, 1958. There I met a man who would become my savior of sorts, Sergio Cifuentes, a distinguished Spaniard who had lived in Cuba for many years and was married to a Cuban. Cifuentes had a high position at the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Spain. The Cuban Ambassador, who had introduced me to Cifuentes during one of the many receptions he organized in my honor after my arrival, was completely devoted to me and my wife during those days, until the news that Batista had fled Cuba, and he stopped taking my calls.

The very first day of the new year, Sergio Cifuentes came to visit me at my hotel to tell me that I had full guarantees to establish myself in Spain, to validate my lawyer's license and start a new life. We booked our flights to travel to Madrid on January third. Cifuentes said he could not go with us because he had to visit the Spanish Embassy in Germany, but would be back in Madrid on the sixth. He gave me a hand-written note addressed to Colonel Molina, Chief of Security at Barajas airport in Madrid, so that we would not have problems with our entry into Spain using the Cuban diplomatic passports we were traveling with, which obviously were not valid anymore.

We arrived at Barajas airport on January third and I asked the first police officer I found for Colonel Molina. He said the colonel was off that day. When we handed our passports to the immigration officer that corresponded to us, he looked at all of us and said, "Welcome to Spain." Cifuentes was back in Madrid on the sixth and immediately visited us to reiterate his invitation for me to remain in Spain, validate

my law license, and start a new life. I will never be able to thank Sergio Cifuentes enough for all he did for my family and me in Spain.

The news of Batista fleeing Cuba (something that I never thought possible, I certainly thought we could die in the fight, but never thought Batista would flee) and Castro's taking over impacted me deeply. The sensation I felt realizing that I was exiled is something I do not wish upon any human being. The Romans used to say that exile was worse than death, because you die only once, but when you are an exile, you die a little bit each day. My pain was even deeper since I knew that Castro was going to destroy Cuba and create a monstrous totalitarian tyranny in my country.

I imagine that the reasonable course of action would have been to accept Sergio Cifuentes' protection and validate my lawyer's license in Spain. But I had other plans, other preoccupations, and most important of all, what I considered a sacred responsibility: to fight for the liberation of Cuba and against the barbarians that were going to destroy my country. So, the first thing I did in Madrid, as soon as the stores opened after the holidays, was to buy a portable typewriter and write a document denouncing the gangsters who had taken over Cuba. It was a document that, as could be expected, nobody published. Then I spoke by telephone with my friend Victor L. Anfuso, U.S. Democratic Congressman from New York, who had become a close friend during his numerous trips to Cuba as a member of the Agriculture Committee of the U.S. Congress.

Anfuso invited me to go to the United States, even though the American government did not want to let me in. Nonetheless, on January 15, 1959, I traveled to New York with my wife and sons, where Congressman Anfuso was waiting for us at the airport, but immigration officers were also waiting to send me and my family back to Spain on the first possible flight. After hours of tense and disturbing discussions, Anfuso brokered an agreement with the Immigration Department of the United States: they would allow us entry into the U.S. in a conditional and provisional way, on parole, and my wife and I had to personally check in every day at 9:00 in the morning at the central immigration office in New York, located at 70 Columbus Avenue.

## JANUARY 1959 AND ITS ORIGINS

What happened in January 1959, and its origin, deserves special reflection. The attitude toward the opposition shown by Fulgencio Batista and his followers in March 1952 was not adopted by those who won in January 1959. My house and many others were looted and burned on January 1, before, by the way, the Communist Party ruled Cuba. On January 12, in Santiago de Cuba, more than seventy Cubans were executed without trial and thrown into a mass grave. Among them were two cousins of mine, the Olea Gros brothers (the third one would be killed a few days later). In exhumations, some of the bodies were found with burned hands, after having been buried alive.

In the province of Las Villas, National Police Colonel Cornelio Rojas was murdered, and in Oriente province, without any kind of trial, army lieutenant Enrique Despaigne was murdered as well. Hundreds of Cubans suffered a similar fate. A group of air force pilots were judged in Santiago de Cuba by Fidel Castro's "Rebel Army" court and were found innocent in a unanimous decision. From Havana, the then new tyrant, via radio and television, ordered a second trial that condemned the pilots to long years of imprisonment. A multitude at the Sports Stadium (Palacio de Deportes) in Havana, engaged in a true "Roman circus" to judge, torture and order the death of Commander Jesús Sosa Blanco, who did not deserve to be treated in such a way, even if he had been the worst of all men, which he was not. In the fort of "La Cabaña," a grotesque and despicable foreigner who called himself "Che" began executing Cubans without trial, shooting them in the back of the head, as was the case of Captain Castaño, whose only crime was to know by

heart the names of the main communist leaders in Cuba and Latin America. This was the only time in Cuba's history when a foreigner was imported to murder and torture Cubans. Before that, some notable foreigners had gone to Cuba to fight for Cuba's freedom alongside Cubans fighting Spanish forces, such as the Dominican Generalissimo Máximo Gómez; General Juan Rius Rivera from Puerto Rico, General Carlos Roloff from Poland, and the Italian lawyer and Colonel of the Mambí Army, Orestes Ferrara.

Beginning in January, 1959, the so-called "revolucionarios" subjected Cuba to the brutal treatment of a band of pirates who converted the Republic into a simple horde for bandits. They did not even follow the requirements of international treaties and agreements, such as the 1948 Geneva Convention, which binds foreign occupation forces to certain conduct.

The behavior of Castro and his followers was as cynical and sadistic as that of an army of occupation. I will mention two concrete examples since I personally know the people involved. The first one refers to Roberto Agramonte, who had been the presidential candidate of the Ortodoxo Party in 1952, with the slogan "Dignity versus Money," whom I released immediately when Salas Cañizares arrested him on March 11, 1952, and who was at that moment, January 1959, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the new government. He went to the Chilean Embassy in Havana to discuss with the ambassador a group of Cuban men and women who were refugees inside the Embassy's residence. Mr. Agramonte saw a new car parked outside the embassy and asked the ambassador to whom it belonged, since it did not have diplomatic plates. He was told it belonged to Marta Gutiérrez de Vidal, daughter of the former Minister of Finance, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and wife of Manuel Vidal, who were refugees in the embassy. "Ambassador" - said the new Foreign Minister Roberto Agramonte - "tell Mrs. Gutiérrez to give me the car keys because the revolution needs that car." Mrs. Marta Gutiérrez, who was my friend, as I was of her husband's, replied that she would not give him the car. Agramonte then requested to see her personally, and told her that if she didn't hand him the keys, he wouldn't give her safe-conduct to leave the embassy and Cuba. The Chilean ambassador intervened and through kind persuasion, convinced Marta to

give the keys to the minister, who left the embassy in his new car. Two years later, Marta Gutiérrez Vidal ran into Agramonte, then also exiled in Miami, and uttered the harshest words a decent lady can say to a man. It was Marta Gutiérrez Vidal who told me this story personally, together with her husband Manolo Vidal, and her sisters, María and Berta.

Another day in January 1959, so-called "Commander" Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo passed by the building where Almeida González and her husband, Liberato Vega, my former chief of staff, were living. A new car was parked outside and Gutiérrez Menoyo, after finding out who it belonged to, asked for the keys because "the revolution needed the car." Almeida came down from her apartment and asked him for how long the revolution would need her car. He replied that for around three or four weeks. After a month, Almeida went to see Gutiérrez Menoyo in an office he had established in an also confiscated office space. "Commander," she told him, "it's been more than a month, when will you give me my car back?" "Madam," he replied, "your car now belongs to the revolution. If you don't like it, file a police report and see what happens." And that's how they continued. In an orgy of blood and theft, the pirates who took over Cuba in January 1959 carried out thousands of executions without trial or after judicial farces; they stole properties, first from those related to the previous regime, then from foreigners and finally from anyone who had even the smallest possession. In January 1959, a regime of gangsters, by gangsters and for gangsters, directed by a gangster in chief, was established in Cuba.

Cuban civil society at that time, including the Catholic Church, gave itself up in body and soul to the gangsters, the new owners of Cuba, in a sort of collective suicide. The Federation of University Professionals, with the exception of the Cuban Bar Association, published a statement at the end of January supporting the executions, and the Catholic magazine "La Quincena" also published an article by its director Father Ignacio Biaín, where he stated, among other things, and I quote: "The people of Cuba, deeply Christian, have not objected to these killings. Cuban women, so sensitive to justice and cruelty, have witnessed these punishments in sober and saintly silence." This collective suicide might seem inexplicable to future historians, Cuba being a nation with such a brilliant history, whose great patriots,

some of them rich men, offered everything in the past, their lives and fortunes, at the altar of the nation.

An unprecedented explosion of emotions covered the island, reflected, for instance, in the cover of the most important magazine at the time, "Bohemia," with a revealing text:

"Honor and glory to the national hero," and next to the text a huge photograph of the new "national hero," tall and messianic.

The situation before January 1959 was not like many books and publications have described it, that is, with a dictator hanging on to power with no intention of leaving and a liberator seeking to assume power. Batista had announced that he was leaving Cuba on February 24th. On the other hand, Fidel Castro's history in the university, was known enough for the influential classes throughout the country not to join in the explosion of emotions in favor of a leader who, since his adolescence, had participated in gangster-like acts.

There simply is not a reasonable explanation for those demonstrations of unlimited adhesion and enthusiasm in favor of the leader of the 26 of July movement, until we scratch the surface of the situation and factors such as racism and classism make their presence. The son of a Spaniard, white and tall, had overthrown a mulatto from the most humble sectors of society. The phrase that was repeated in "elegant clubs" during the Batista regime is extremely illustrative: "The nigger must leave, even if he is replaced by chaos." Racism and classism are the great, ignored keys to our history.

If we were to study the historical background of the creation and consolidation of our national identity, we would see, in fact, that the victory of the heroic people of Haiti, the first country in Latin America to obtain its freedom, at the beginning of the XIX century, had an important effect on our process of national independence. For instance, liberator Simón Bolívar, who considered freeing Cuba, wrote a letter to General Santander in 1926 saying he would not invade Cuba because

"the freedom of Cuba can wait; we have enough with one Haiti in the Caribbean." Likewise, many wealthy Cubans were frightened by the idea of a Cuban liberation that would be dominated by black and mestizo Cubans. The Autonomist Party (Partido Autonomista) founded after the "Zanjón Pact" (1878) although it had older roots, also utilized the issue of race to its advantage. A great portion of the fighters for independence, who despite not representing a majority of the population, came from the most humble sectors of Cuba, was made up of black and mulatto men and women. But when the Republic began in 1902, the first cabinet of Tomás Estrada Palma was mainly formed by autonomist leaders recycled as independentistas. In fact, the first cabinet included notable autonomist leaders such as Leopoldo Cancio, Diego Tamayo, who was a member of the 1901 Constitutional Assembly and Interior Secretary, as well as Emilio Terry and Carlos de Zaldo, Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Justice, respectively. Among other important, formerly autonomist members: Eduardo Yero and Carlos Fonts Sterling, Vice-President of the first House of Representatives of the Republic; José del Cueto, who occupied the Presidency of the Supreme Court; Rafael Montoro, the first Cuban ambassador in London and candidate for Vice President of the Republic with Menocal, in 1908. Montoro was also Chief of Staff when Menocal was President. Ricardo Dolz, Vice-President of the Senate and advisor to Estrada Palma, as well as author of the Electoral Statute after the fall of President Machado, was also part of the cabinet.

It is important to mention that, at the same time, during Estrada Palma's government, at the beginning of the Republic, the great Mambí general, Quintín Banderas, (the only general who served our country during four wars for independence 1851, 1868, 1879 and 1895), was offered a position as a street sweeper in Havana ("trash foreman"), and was later murdered, after having survived hundreds of battles in the manigua redentora<sup>1</sup>. As Tomás Savignon, Quintín Banderas' biographer, wrote in 1948 in *Quintín Banderas, El Mambí Sacrificado y Escarnecido*: "For the brave Mambí, immune to the Spanish iron and the brutality of the guerrillero, there exists in free Cuba, only fratricidal iron and lead that destroy their flesh and take away their lives." Racism and classism raised their destructive heads since

<sup>1</sup> In the Cuban countryside, where important independence battles took place.

the beginning of the Republic, even though Cuban historiography has ignored them until today.

The Autonomist Party always favored Spain. It sought “gifts” from the colonial mainland, but always under Spanish sovereignty. For example, that’s where the tacky (or *picúo* as we say in Cuban colloquial language) name of “Mother Country” (*Madre Patria*) comes from, because although Spain is a fraternal country, it obviously cannot be “motherland” nor “*patria*” since there is only one mother and one *patria*. It is odd, for example, that nobody has ever thought of calling Nigeria, our *Madre Patria*, despite it being the origin of many of our ancestors. These issues, always silenced, as I keep insisting, are found in the historic origin of our ills as a nation. The heroic Mambises, freedom fighters for our independence, were ignored, excluded and discriminated during the Republic, whereas the elite, those men who had been autonomists, who had so fiercely fought against independence, together with the Spaniards, who together were owners of the nation’s wealth, continued to be the wealthy owners of the economy and were protected by the perverse 1898 Treaty of Paris. It was through politics that the Mambises and their descendants, the great majority living in poverty, started to gain influence within the Republic, until the hero of those who despised politics took absolute power in 1959.

To analyze the origins of what happened in January 1959, I think it is also important to reference the great book, “The Cuban Adventure,” written by the Bolivian economist Julio Alvarado, who worked in the Finance Ministry during the administration of President Prío and kept his job in Batista’s government. His boss during this last period was Secretary Gustavo Gutiérrez. When Castro’s “revolutionaries” took power, Alvarado formed part of a group who worked under the orders of the impostor and murderer who used the pseudonym of “Che.” It didn’t take long for Alvarado to find out that the so-called “revolutionaries” were going to destroy Cuba and impose communism.

When he was able to travel abroad, Alvarado managed to take his files with him and went into exile in Spain. There he published his great work “The Cuban Adventure,” (*La Aventura Cubana*) in which he explains in detail how the national-

istic measures taken by Batista’s government bothered American legislators and lobbyists who repeatedly complained to President Eisenhower. Measures like the substitution of Cuban rice for rice bought from Louisiana and other states. This was considered an unfriendly act by American economic interests and certain sectors of the U.S. Congress.

Another example was the tender carried out to select a company for the construction of the tunnel underneath Havana Bay, won fairly and squarely by the French company *Le Grand Travaux de Marseilles*, which, as we all know, did a great job. Some American companies and lobbyists who had also presented bids, considered the event another *unfriendly act*, and let President Eisenhower know. In the same way, the Cuban purchase of locomotives from West Germany was another *unfriendly act*. The same thing happened with the prohibition against buying lard from the United States if it didn’t comply with the requirements imposed by American sanitary agencies for consumption by the U.S. population, taking into account that a study done by the Lions Club in Havana had determined that the lard being imported from the U.S. was not fit for human consumption and was causing multiple cases of hepatitis. This incident even motivated an absurd “verbal note” in which the American Embassy claimed that the lard should be able to be sold, to which Secretary Gutiérrez replied that it would be, once it was also being consumed by humans in the U.S. Another *unfriendly act*.

Alvarado explains how these actions led President Eisenhower to issue an order that in the official language of Washington is known as a “finding.” “Get rid of Batista and install a friendly government in Cuba.” The presidential order was given to the American bureaucracy, including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, a great anti-communist who was, in those days, fully devoted to conflicts in the Middle East and other disputes across the planet; also had fallen deathly ill with cancer. Dulles, as expected, passed the note on to Roy Rubottom, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, who, in turn, passed it on to William Weyland, who was, in practical terms, the one in direct charge of executing the order on a day-to-day basis. To accomplish his task, Weyland enlisted the invaluable help of New York Times journalist Herbert Matthews.

It was not until mid December 1958, according to documents recently “declassified” by the American government, that President Eisenhower gathered his main intelligence advisors in the White House on the issue of Cuba. They informed him that Castro would take power and that his movement was infiltrated by communists. “Why wasn’t I informed before?” asked an angry Eisenhower.

In the chapter of the “The Cuban Adventure” entitled “Eisenhower’s Knock-Out Punch to Batista,” Alvarado wrote: “We were tired of a dictator called Batista,” Eisenhower said in 1961, implicitly regretting his policy against the government of Cuba in the period 1956-1958. Those words suggest that Washington’s attack against Batista had as its motive the defense of democracy in the hemisphere. But the following question is begged: Why didn’t Eisenhower apply similar policies against Trujillo and Somoza, who reigned as dictators for five decades in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua? Eisenhower was not honest when he made that statement in 1961, when Fidel was already considered a relentless enemy of the United States. The true cause of Eisenhower’s policy to overthrow Batista was economic.”

It is interesting to note that until Fidel Castro founded his political movement and called it “26th of July,” there had only been one movement named after a date in Cuba: “4th of September.” All the other political parties and movements had names like Liberal, Conservative, Democrat, Authentic, Orthodox, etc, and the movements Joven Cuba, ABC, ABC Radical, etc. So the fact that Castro imitated Batista, naming his movement after a date, reveals admiration and envy. Castro would have given anything to be able to say that his father had been a member of the Mambí Army, and was ashamed that, on the contrary, his father had been a soldier of the Spanish “butcher” Valeriano Weyler. Castro would have given anything to be able to say that he was born in a bohío<sup>2</sup> with dirt floors, yagua walls and a guano roof; but the one who was born in those conditions was Fulgencio Batista and not Fidel Castro. Likewise, the word “Revolution” and the concept it carries were not Castro’s ideas. When we arrived at the university, in one of the first meetings of the Student Federation (FEU), the president, Manolo Castro, told us he was not going to let us jeopardize “the conquests of the revolution.”

<sup>2</sup> Type of hut made of wood, straw and mud with no windows.

## THE CREATION OF THE “WHITE ROSE.” ITS FIRST YEARS AND ITS FIRST PRESIDENT, DOMINGO GÓMEZ GIMERÁNEZ

In 1959, exiled in New York, aside from the reports I received from Congressman Anfuso on the attitude and position of the United States government regarding the new Cuban political situation, there were also the articles in the international press, including U.S. publications, enormously favorable to the gangster who had already become absolute ruler and owner of all the lives and properties of the largest island in the Caribbean. I immediately realized that, once more, destiny imposed on me the ungrateful duty of acting “against the current.”

In 1960, the U.S. government began contacting Cuban leaders who had supported Fidel Castro but did not want to continue backing the atrocities he committed from the first moment he took power. But in January 1959, the support and the applause were unanimous for those who converted Cuba into a pirates’ booty, unscrupulously killing and stealing without limit. I called my dear friends Andrés Rivero Agüero and Gastón Godoy, who were in the Dominican Republic with former president Batista and other former leaders of his government. I told them of my intention to form the first movement to oppose the barbarity that had taken over Cuba. Rivero Agüero and Godoy spoke with Batista and he let me know his opinion: it was not the time for a man of the former regime to create an organization to attack the new situation. Maybe he was right, but I knew that if I did not denounce the murders of Cubans that Castro was perpetrating daily, nobody would. Moreover, I was profoundly disappointed with Batista, because I always believed that a captain must be willing to go down with his ship during a storm. I must say that if I feel proud about anything in my life, it is having made the decision to

confront the entire world on January 28, 1959 and form the first organization to fight barbarism in Cuba.

The U.S. authorities did not like my decision one bit. An FBI agent, whose name I recall, Frank O'Brien, was ordered to maintain surveillance over me almost full time, which he personally informed me of. Agent O'Brien always behaved like a gentleman with my family and me.

I immediately began to prepare the founding meeting of "The White Rose," that would take place on January 28 of that year, 1959, at the old Belmont Plaza, (today the W Hotel) in New York, located at Lexington Avenue and 49<sup>th</sup> Street, together with Cuban immigrants in New York, such as Pedro Peña Góngora, and George Fernández who worked at the hotel's cafeteria. That day, 15 Cubans gathered, willing to confront the entire world to denounce the barbarity, outrages, crimes, theft and infamy of the thugs who were destroying Cuba. I said a few words on that occasion and remember very well having announced a long battle, a war that could last generations. As I had predicted four years earlier in the Cuban Congress during my speech against the law which amnestied Fidel Castro, the darkest of nights had descended upon Cuba. I knew that Fidel Castro was going to install the most brutal, unscrupulous, and destructive of all tyrannies in the history of the American continent, and that to get rid of him, weapons and the support of friendly nations would be needed. And I did not see the possibility of obtaining any solidarity to overthrow Castro's tyranny.

So, while other Cubans thought exile would be short, I emphasized the fact that the struggle would be long. Our duties in forming The White Rose included the preparation of our successors, so that the struggle would be ensured after the physical lives of those who were there founding the movement, until Cuba was free and able to reemerge from its ruins.

There were at the time a great many Cubans in New York who lived and worked in the city and supported the 26th of July Movement, aside from a large number of Latinos who also sympathized with the new Cuban government. From the begin-

ning, Fidel Castro's regime engaged in gangster-like ways. The Cuban consulate in New York was turned into an office to coordinate aggression against those of us who had the audacity to denounce the new "heroes." Our public events were systematically attacked by armed groups with chains, sticks and baseball bats. We were lucky to have the support of the administrator of an apartment building located on Broadway and 149<sup>th</sup> Street, a Cuban patriot named Leon, who became a member of The White Rose and lent us the building's basement for our meetings. The basement became symbolically known as "The Catacombs."

In April of that year I wrote and published the first Cuban exile newspaper, called *Fraternidad*, using the pseudonym Abraham de Moya.

When there are many men without dignity, there are men who have the dignity of many men, said our apostle José Martí. Domingo Gómez Gimeráñez was certainly one of those exceptional men who demonstrated, during the saddest and most somber moments of our history, that he possessed the dignity and patriotism that many others did not.

In January 1959, Gómez Gimeráñez became a professor at New York University and was in charge of a department dedicated to the research of his own doctrines on mathematic and other formulas to explain the functioning of the human body, especially the cardiovascular system. A selected group of medical researchers from the United States and Latin American countries worked with him as disciples.

The biography of this Cuban wise man seems to come from a fairy tale. He was born in the Cuban countryside, in the municipality of Remanganagua, in the Escambray mountains, province of Las Villas, in the center of the island.

From a humble family, he worked in the fields since he was a child, without being able to go to school. At the age of fifteen he was still illiterate, but he managed to learn to read and write. He had an enormous intellectual curiosity and a deep love for Cuba. He read every newspaper he came across and enlisted in the army for greater chances of self-improvement. He became a corporal and was known for

his devotion to service and to study. One day he read in the press an announcement from the French Embassy in Havana offering a few scholarships for Cuban students to study in Paris. With great effort and the help of the army, he went to Havana, took the exams at the embassy and earned one of the scholarships. He then moved to Paris, studied high school and earned exceptional grades, allowing him to enter the prestigious Sorbonne University, and graduated as a doctor in medicine, math and sciences. Impressed by his ability, medicine and mathematics professors chose him as an assistant, since he was already carrying out research on medicine through mathematical formulas. His goal was to turn medicine into an actual science, beyond empiricism, essays and statistics. And he was succeeding at it.

When the Germans invaded and occupied France, they tried to recruit him as a collaborator, offering him all kinds of benefits to join Nazi research teams. Gómez Gimeránez not only refused these offers, but also rejected the extraordinary pressures which were placed on him. He received help from the Cuban embassy and escaped to Havana. There he was given the opportunity to create an institute for cardiovascular research, while he validated his certificate of medicine from France. That is how he started to practice his profession and to carry out scientific research.

It is worth mentioning that in the United States many important figures admired him, such as Albert Einstein, who considered him for a position in the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton University, New Jersey.

Truth be told, the creation of the Research Institute of Cuba confronted many problems. Envy and mediocrity opposed it, and after many years, when it was finally a reality, the barbarians of the so-called revolution arrived and tried to imprison the greatest Cuban scientist of the 20th century. But Gómez Gimeránez made it to New York, where he had several pending offers from universities. He had also received invitations from other universities in the United States as well as Europe, all related to the research of his theories, which were already known through the books he had written.

However, Domingo Gómez Gimeránez was, above all, a patriot, with a newly obtained professorship at New York University in January 1959. Under his direction, physicians of different countries, including the United States, studied his doctrines related to the cardiovascular and physiologic fields.

By then, my brother Frank, an electrical engineer, was a friend of Gómez Gimeránez', and as soon as we arrived in New York Frank contacted him and asked me to invite him to join our efforts in organizing The White Rose and combating the new Castroist tyranny. I must admit having had doubts about whether that prestigious wise man would risk his position, his tranquility and his life to join The White Rose. Nevertheless, when I went to see him, he embraced me and said: "Castro and his thugs are going to completely destroy Cuba; they are already murdering and plundering. When our country is suffering we cannot just sit back. We have to try and do something right now, because tomorrow will be too late. You can count on me." I asked him to lead The White Rose, adding that I was aware of the great risk for him that decision implied. He smiled and said: "I love Cuba deeply; forget about the risks." He was with us from that moment, with great modesty but extraordinary determination and strength. He went to all our meetings in "The Catacombs."

Gómez Gimeránez had to teach regularly, so we had to ask some of our men to voluntarily accompany him, due to the constant aggressions we faced from Castroists in New York.

We organized a press conference, with Gómez Gimeránez as our president; we made it clear we would not accept the decisions that had been announced about appointing a known Cuban diplomat in Santo Domingo as the president of a provisional government of Cuba. The White Rose publicly designated Gómez Gimeránez as Provisional President of Cuba.

Even with all his glories, degrees, books and lectures, I believe that this was Gómez Gimeránez' most glorious moment.

Years later, when I spoke at his funeral in New York, I said, among other things: “If he would not have been an exile engaged in the struggle for freedom in Cuba, Gómez Gimeráñez would have received the Nobel Prize in Medicine.” When the ceremony was over, a distinguished-looking, white-haired man came up to me and said: “I am Severo Ochoa, I have worked with Gómez Gimeráñez and know his scientific work. You are right, he should have received the Nobel Prize before me.”

Cuba must never forget Gómez Gimeráñez, and I am certain it will not.

On January 28, 1960, we convened a public demonstration where The White Rose would place a floral offering next to the monument of the Apostle Jose Martí, located on the south side of Central Park. We obtained the necessary permits for the event.

That day, in the morning, approximately a hundred twenty members of The White Rose marched to the Martí statue with our offering. As we neared the statue we saw around 350 or 400 Castroists waiting for us. I soon realized that many of them were armed with baseball bats and thought it was interesting to see that the police were allowing it. Physical aggressions against us soon started taking place, but we insisted on reaching the statue and placing our offering there.

Various police officers approached me and asked me to accompany them to the police station to file charges, so the aggressors could be prosecuted. I said I had no problem in doing so, but that my brothers Frank and Waldo would go with me. The police first said no; I needed to go alone. But upon my insisting, they accepted, and into the police vehicle, together with my brothers and me, went George Fernández, Juan González and Jose Maceo.

We were taken to a police station, where the policemen present offered us coffee and kindly asked us to sit down and wait. A few minutes later, Fidel Castro’s Consul General in New York, accompanied by the New York City Police Commissioner, walked in the room where we were and walked into the personal office of the chief of the police station.

After what seemed like hours, the Consul and the Commissioner came out of the chief of police’s office, and before leaving the room, the Commissioner loudly yelled to the police officers who were there: “Book them!” George Fernández, who spoke English well and had lived in the United States for years, said to me: “Rafael, we’re going to jail.” I told him he was wrong, using words that cannot be repeated here.

Sure enough, at that moment, in an aggressive and rude manner, the same officers who had been kind to us, threw us up against the wall, searched us, handcuffed us, and took us to jail.

After hours of being held with dozens of common criminals, I was lucky enough to be able to ask a police officer who walked by our cell to please call the home of Congressman Victor Anfuso at a phone number I knew by heart and recited to the officer. I told the police officer that if Anfuso’s wife Frances answered the phone, to please ask her to inform her husband that Rafael was in jail.

Fortunately, the police officer made the phone call. A few hours later, late at night, the six of us were taken before a judge. We were told we would be sentenced to a minimum of six years. Among the charges facing us were “aggravated battery against law enforcement officers” and “battery against protesters.” I asked if I had the right to a lawyer. The answer was yes, but that then I would have to be in jail for months while I waited for my trial and I would then be sentenced to twelve years, not six.

At that moment, Victor Anfuso Jr. came into the courtroom. He was also a lawyer, like his father the Congressman, who had not been at home when Frances received the call from the policeman, but she had been able to contact her son. The young Anfuso immediately asked the judge for a “continuance” and made himself personally responsible of our physical presence in the trial. That is how we were able to get out of there.

That night we had organized a meeting commemorating the first anniversary of the founding of The White Rose, at the Belmont Plaza hotel. Around three

hundred members of our organization attended in spite of the larger number of Castroists who were demonstrating outside the hotel and had attacked many of the people who had gone to our event. Coincidentally, that night, a high-school “prom” dance for a New York school was also being held at the hotel, and a young student who was accompanied by his girlfriend, and who had a white flower in his lapel, received multiple injuries to his head from the pro-Castro demonstrators.

We arrived around midnight to the event we had organized at the Belmont Plaza. I explained the essence of the philosophy and doctrine of The White Rose that night, which is at the very root of our name. “We have decided,” I said in those moments of horror and mourning, “when the darkness of the anti-Cuba has taken over our country, to rescue the doctrine of our apostle José Martí from the depths of studies, libraries, meditations and speculations, and apply it to our own lives. We have decided to extract his simple yet beautiful and profound verses from poetic anthologies and intellectual reflections and make them our compass, our emblem and our flag. That is why The White Rose is called The White Rose, because we want to confront the darkness of hate and envy with the light of love and patriotism. It was not a coincidence that the only nation in the world whose main leader called for war with love, is our nation, the Cuban nation. Let us honor Martí by putting his doctrine into practice. Martí’s secular gospel and mandate of light in this moment of extreme darkness:

I cultivate a white rose  
 In June as in January,  
 for the true friend  
 who offers me his hand of loyalty.  
 And for the cruelty which tears out  
 the heart by which I live,  
 thistle nor thorn do I cultivate,  
 I cultivate The White Rose.

“We Cubans,” I continued in that public meeting on January 28, 1960, “cannot live our lives killing one another. In the free Cuba for which we fight and will always fight, we must establish a legitimate Rule of Law and justice, and not be governed by vengeance and the lowest of passions. We must run away from those who preach the barbaric gospel of hate. There are two dimensions of forgiveness, institutional forgiveness, which must be the province for legislators; and the personal one, which is the privilege, or not, of every human being, to follow the most profound commands of their heart.” And I ended by saying: “Our country requires and will continue to require a great dose of love and forgiveness.”

At that moment, Juana Gros de Olea, a relative of mine, stood up. Just a year before, three of her four sons, who were police officers, had been executed without trial in Santiago de Cuba. I honestly thought that “Chicha,” as we called her, would absolutely destroy my theory of love for Cuba, but I will never forget her words as she wept: “Yes, Rafael, you’re right. We have to learn to love each other. I don’t want any other Cuban mother to have to live one single day with the suffering I will have to endure for the rest of my days.”

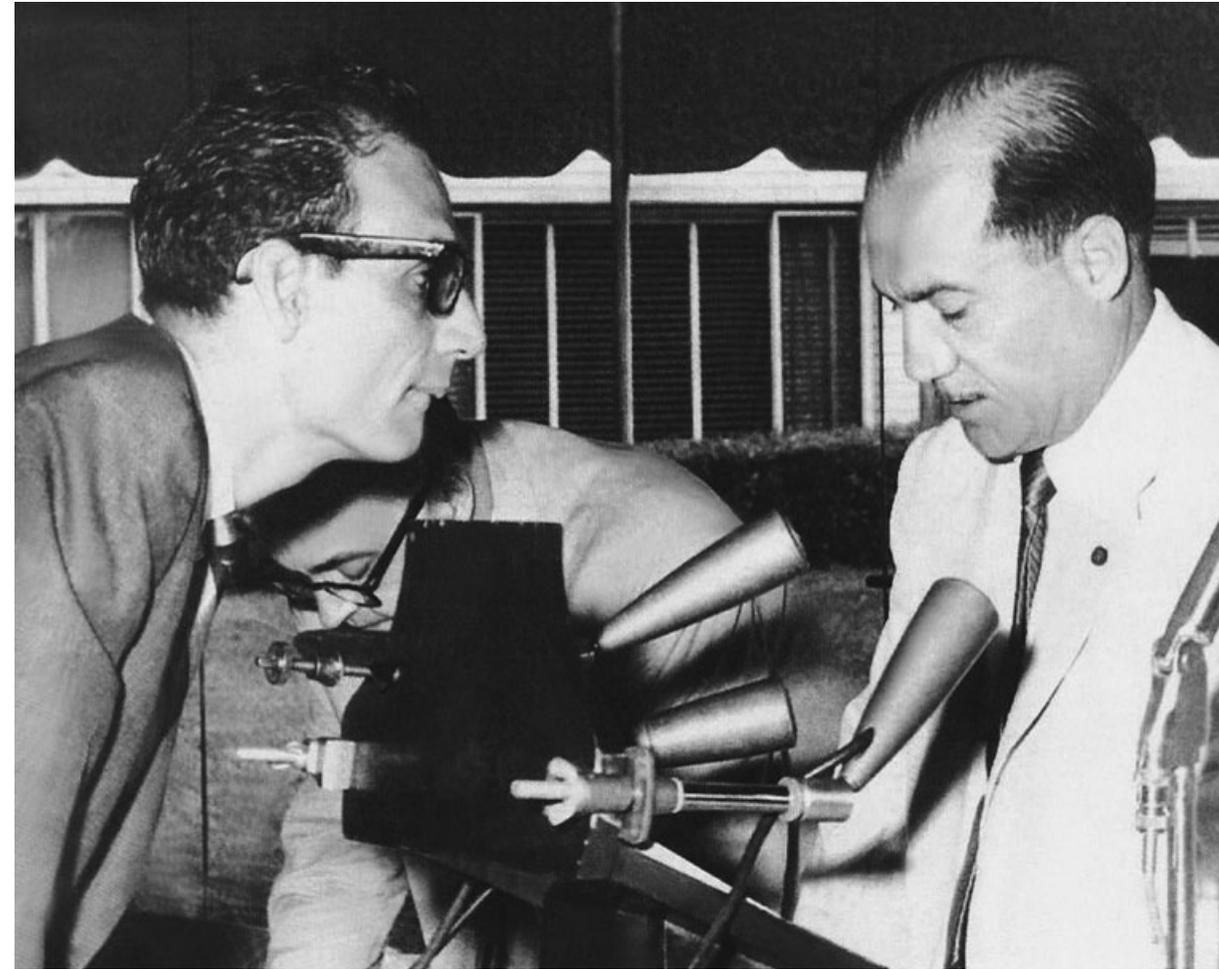
During those months, The White Rose was forced to register as a “foreign agent” by the Department of Justice of The United States. When I asked who we were supposed to say we were agents for in the registry papers, they told us to write that we were agents of The White Rose of Cuba. No other Cuban exile organization has ever been required to register as a foreign agent by the American government.

Months later, in mid 1960, when it was already too late, the United States stopped supporting Fidel Castro. In The White Rose, we immediately felt the difference caused by the change of policy in Washington. The prosecutor’s office in New York informed Victor Anfuso that they had filed charges against an equal number of Castroists, six, (with identical charges to ours), and that the twelve cases were being dropped.

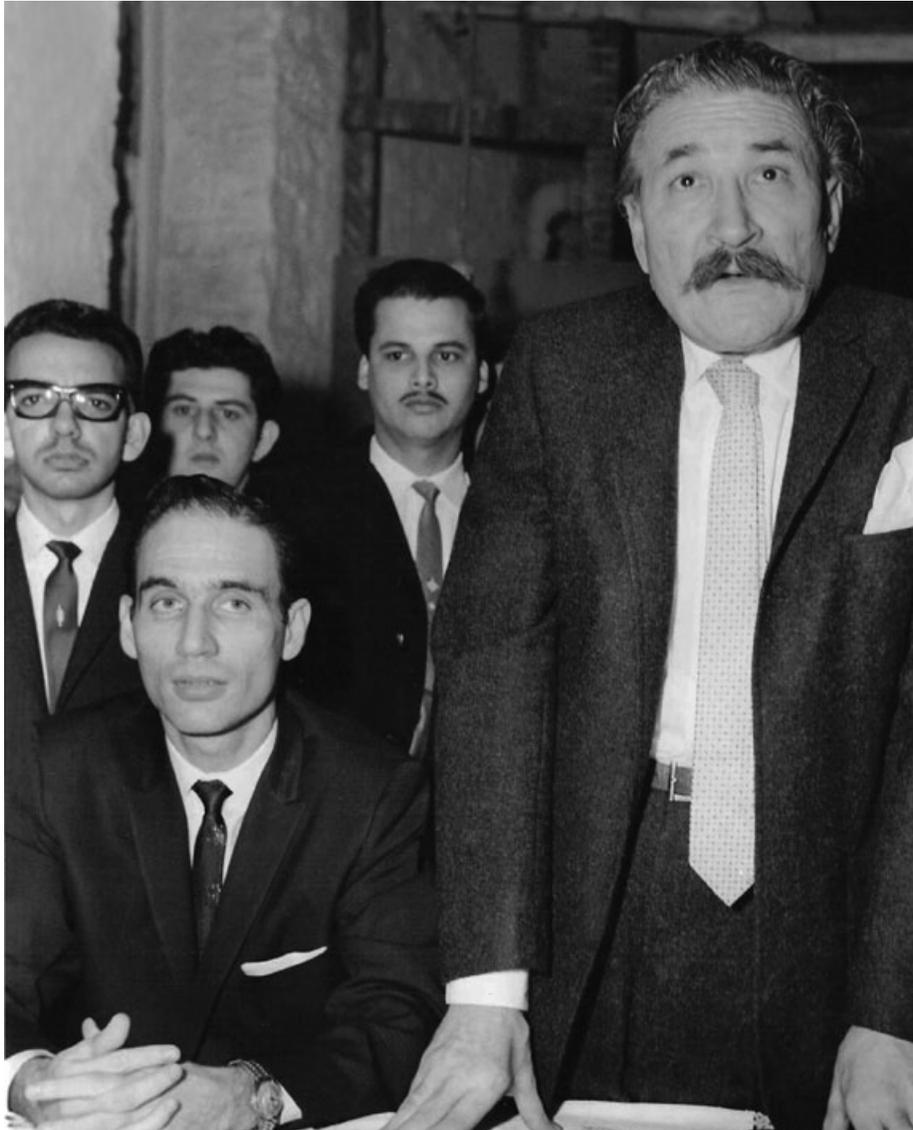
When the first Cuban leaders supported politically and financially by the United States started arriving into exile, Victor Anfuso asked me to help unite them, since

he was certain I was not fighting to gain prominence but to serve my country. Following his advice, I moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida with my family. It was there that I founded The White Rose radio program, on August 6, 1960, on WMIE in Miami, located at Northwest 36th Street and 14th Avenue. In October of the same year, I also started a program called "Noticiero Independiente," at 11:00 PM together with my friends the Cuban patriots Ramón Jiménez Maceda and Luis González Lalondrí.

The Cuban people will never be able to sufficiently thank U.S. Congressman Victor L. Anfuso for his work in favor of Cuba's freedom. When former President Carlos Prío arrived in exile, I had the honor of introducing him to Anfuso, and at the Congressional Hotel in Washington Anfuso gathered the most important exile leaders of those early days of the struggle to liberate our country. Among Anfuso's many acts of solidarity and support was the introduction of a Resolution in Congress asking the United States to recognize a Cuban government in exile, with the belief that Prío could preside it.



MOMENTS BEFORE A PRESS CONFERENCE  
OUTSIDE THE CONGRESSIONAL HOTEL  
IN WASHINGTON, 1960, WITH MY FRIEND  
CONGRESSMAN VÍCTOR L. ANFUSO.



DOMINGO GÓMEZ GIMERÁNEZ, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE WHITE ROSE, SPEAKING DURING ONE OF OUR MEETINGS IN "THE CATACOMBS." NEW YORK, 1960.



FRATERNIDAD, WITH THE HEADLINE "NEITHER BATISTA NOR FIDEL", PUBLISHED BY THE WHITE ROSE, WAS THE FIRST NEWSPAPER OPPOSING CASTRO'S TYRANNY. IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN APRIL 1959.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
70 COLUMBUS AVENUE  
NEW YORK 23, NEW YORK

PLEASE REFER TO THIS FILE NUMBER

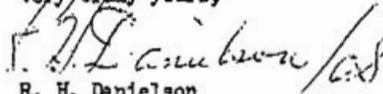
August 5, 1959

Messrs. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart &  
Juan Caballero-Brunet  
9 Kilmer Road  
Larchmont, New York

Gentlemen:

Permission is hereby granted for you to make your trip to Washington, D.C. and return to New York. It is understood that you will be gone for five days and in Washington you will be residing at the Congressional Hotel, Washington, D.C. You will then contact the Immigration Office upon your return to New York City.

Very truly yours,



R. H. Danielson  
Chief, Seaport Section

"PERMISSION" TO TRAVEL FROM NEW YORK  
TO WASHINGTON FOR A FEW DAYS, GIVEN  
BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
JUSTICE, 1959.

9 Kilmer Road  
Larchmont, N.Y.  
October 2nd, 1959.

Mr. Nathan B. Levin, Chief Registration Section.  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division Office.  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Levin:

I have received your letter of September 28th, which I desire to give a prompt reply.

We have not inscribed our organization "LA ROSA BLANCA" (The White Rose) in your department, fundamentally because after reading the forms and the text of the act provided by you, we have come to the conclusion that "La Rosa Blanca" is not the agent of any political movement, of any kind, outside the United States. "La Rosa Blanca" was founded in New York City, N.Y. and its leaders reside in the United States.

All the chapters that at present exist in Cuba, or that may be formed in the future, (in Cuba or any other country) receive their directives from us. They are -as we understand those things- our agents, and not the other way around.

Moreover, we have never received any financial or economical aid of any kind from any source outside the United States. Besides that, we are not engaged in any belic activity whatsoever, our principal aim is the propaganda and difussion of an idea that we deem adequate for solving Cuban political problems: peace and love instead of exaltation of hatred; close ties with the United States instead of apparently neutral positions that only succeed in undermining the solidarity of the Western hemisphere against the advances of Communism.

Notwithstanding, if after this exposition of facts, you consider that our way of interpreting the act is not right and that consequently, we are under the obligation fo inscribing our organization, please write us at your earliest convenience and we will submit our application for inscription ~~to~~ your department, in a matter of hours.

Thanking you again for the kindness you have shown us,

I remain,

Faithfully yours,



Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart.

THE WHITE ROSE REGISTRATION  
DOCUMENTS AS A "FOREIGN AGENT" IN THE  
UNITED STATES. NO OTHER CUBAN EXILE  
ORGANIZATION IN HISTORY WAS FORCED  
TO REGISTER.



Address Reply to the  
Division Indicated  
and Refer to Initials and Number

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

OCT 26 1959

Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart  
4 Miller Road  
Larchmont, New York

Dear Dr. Diaz-Balart:

We have carefully considered your letter of October 2, 1959, which expressed the opinion that the White Rose organization would have no obligation to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, since it was allegedly organized within and is presently directed from the United States.

Before making a final determination in this respect, we shall appreciate it if you will furnish complete information on the following items: The jurisdiction within the United States where the White Rose was organized whether it is an incorporated organization; the method by which its present officers were elected or appointed as well as the manner provided for the election of future officials; the general financing of the organization within the United States; a detailed description of its present and proposed activities within the United States including fund raising and propaganda activities. It is also requested that you provide a copy of the constitution and by-laws or articles of incorporation of the organization, as well as any official literature published or disseminated within the United States.

This matter will be given further consideration upon receipt of the requested information.

Sincerely,

J. WALTER YEAGLEY  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division

By: *Nathan B. Levin*  
NATHAN B. LEVIN, Chief  
Registration Section

Larchmont, N.Y.

November 27, 1959

Mr. J. Walter Yeagley  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division

Attention:  
Mr. Nathan B. Levin, Chief (or Miss Green)  
Registration Section,  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

The most careful consideration has been given to your letter of October 26, 1959, in which you requested information pertaining to the organization and activities of the "White Rose", ("La Rosa Blanca").

We have the honor of answering each one of the points of inquiry in an orderly manner:

1.- The White Rose was organized in the City of New York (Borough of Manhattan), State of New York, on January 28th, 1959, anniversary of the birthday of the Cuban patriot and thinker, José Martí.

2.- The White Rose is not an incorporated organization.

3.- The first officers of The White Rose were its founders, who were elected to the different positions of a central executive committee. For the future, the Secretary General was granted the power of accepting resignations, appointing new officials and making substitutions, with the proviso that the other officers, by absolute majority, approve the said actions.

4.- The financing of our organization is through the voluntary contributions of its members.

5.- The activities of the organization within the United States are circumscribed in favor of our democratic and anti-communistic ideals, through the publication of our newspaper FRATERNIDAD (Fraternity), press conferences, statements and interviews to newspapers, news agencies, radio and television stations. In the future we are planning to publish more regularly our newspaper FRATERNIDAD, and also brochures, pamphlets, booklets, and maybe books on the Cuban situation and our proposed solutions to it.

As for fund raising, we are not planning any specific campaign, but will consider any voluntary offer of contribution to the organization.

-2-

6.- We do not have written constitution or By-Laws up to now, been ruling ourselves by the procedure verbally agreed among us, as stated above (Number 3).

7.- The White Rose organization does not work for any foreign government or foreign political party, nor does it collect funds for transmission to any political party or foreign government in Cuba or elsewhere.

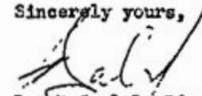
8.- We are glad to enclose herewith the three issues of our paper FRATERNIDAD, the only ones that we have published up to now.

To the extent of our knowledge, this is the best answer we can give to your request.

Please do not hesitate in asking us any other questions that may be of interest to the purposes of your department, since we are extremely eager to fulfill always all and every one of the laws of this country.

Waiting your further instructions, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Rafael L. Díaz-Balart

9 Kilmer Road  
Larchmont, N.Y.

December 17, 1959

Mr. J. Walter Yeagley  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division

Attention:  
Mr. Nathan S. Lenvin, Chief  
Registration Section  
Internal Security Division  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lenvin:

In regard to your letter dated December 9, 1959, requestion information about the White Rose organization, I am glad to inform you the following facts:

The White Rose organization or any of its members do not collect information for or report information to any foreign principal.

With my best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Rafael L. Díaz-Balart



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEB 10 1960

Address Reply to the Division Indicated and Refer to Initials and Number

Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart  
9 Kilmer Road  
Larchmont, New York

Dear Dr. Diaz-Balart:

In connection with our previous correspondence concerning the possible obligation of the White Rose organization to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, I suggest that a personal conference will be more beneficial in determining this matter than continued correspondence.

I expect to be in New York City on the 25th of February on several other matters and at that time I would like to discuss this matter with you. I will therefore appreciate your advice as to the most convenient time for you to meet with me on this date. Congressman Anfuso has kindly offered the use of his Office at 11 Broadway for this meeting.

Sincerely,

J. WALTER YEAGLEY  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division

By: *Nathan B. Lenvin*

NATHAN B. LENVIN, Chief  
Registration Section



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 9 1960

Address Reply to the Division Indicated and Refer to Initials and Number

Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart  
c/o Mr. Leon  
601 West 149th Street  
(Basement Apartment)  
New York, New York

Re: La Rosa Blanca (The White Rose)  
Registration No. 1336

Dear Dr. Diaz-Balart:

This will acknowledge the receipt of the registration statement submitted on behalf of La Rosa Blanca (The White Rose) for filing pursuant to the provisions of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended. This statement has been given Registration No. 1336 and all correspondence relating to this matter should contain some reference to that number.

The statement was received for filing on March 8, 1960, and therefore the first six months supplemental statement will be due within thirty days after September 8, 1960. Forms for filing that statement will be sent to you in advance of the due date.

Sincerely,

J. WALTER YEAGLEY  
Assistant Attorney General  
Internal Security Division

By: *Nathan B. Lenvin*

NATHAN B. LENVIN, Chief  
Registration Section

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Foreign Agents  
Registration Act of 1938, as Amended

1. (a) Name of Registrant.

"La Rosa Blanca" (The White Rose)

(b) All other names used by Registrant during the past 10 years and when used.

None

(c) Address of principal office.

601 West 149th Street, New York, N.Y.

(d) Name of person or persons in charge of principal office.

Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart

2. (a) Date when Registrant was organized or created.

January 28, 1959

(b) State or other jurisdiction in which organized or created.

New York, N.Y.

(c) Type of Registrant's organization.

Committee ..... Voluntary group ..... Association X ..... Partnership .....  
Corporation ..... Other type (specify) .....

3. If Registrant is a nonbusiness membership organization, state:

(a) Approximate number of members in the United States. 200

(b) Approximate number of members outside the United States. Several thousands.

(c) If more than one class of members, specify classes and approximate number of members in each.

(d) Who may be members and on what terms and conditions.

Any Cuban or friend of Cuba willing to help the Cuban people in its efforts toward liberty and democracy, against Communism and dictatorship, and to expose the danger of Communist penetration in the Western Hemisphere, at the same time working with a doctrine of fraternity and love for the progress of Cuba and friendship among the American Republics.

4. All partners, officers, directors, and similar officials of Registrant.

Name and address of official	Position, office, or nature of duties
Dr. Rafael L. Diaz-Balart 11 Broadway, N.Y.C. Room 1512	Secretary General
Pedro Pena	Member, Executive Committee
Alberto Alonso Martinez 730 East 133rd St., Bronx, N.Y.	Director of Information

5. All branches and local units of Registrant and all other component or affiliated groups or organizations.

Name and address of branch, unit, group, or organization	Nature of connection with Registrant	Name and address of person in charge
Miami Group	Branch	Juan Garcia, Apartado No. 3691, Miami,
Union City Group	Branch	Charles Seidenari, 915 Grand Av. North Be New Jersey.

6. Name and principal address of each foreign principal of Registrant.

Name of foreign principal	Principal address
"La Rosa Blanca" (The White Rose)	Havana, Cuba
Underground movement	

7. State the nature and purpose of Registrant's representation of each foreign principal named under item 6 and describe fully all activities of Registrant for or in the interests of each such foreign principal.

The White Rose groups in the U.S.A. do their best to expose through legal propaganda to the public opinion of the continent the Communist nature of the Cuban dictatorship and its inhuman brutalities against the Cuban people and the real danger that such a Russian satellite represents for the security of the Western Hemisphere and U.S. in particular. All legal ways of propaganda may be used by us according to our economic possibilities.

3 FORM FA-4

8. Describe briefly all other businesses, occupations, and public activities in which Registrant is presently engaged.

None

9. All employees and other individuals, except those named under item 4, who render any services or assistance to Registrant, with or without compensation, for or in the interests of each foreign principal named under item 6.

Name and address of employee or other individual	Nature of services or assistance rendered
None	

10. Furnish the following information as to Registrant's receipts and expenditures during the 3 months preceding the filing of this statement. The information may, if Registrant desires, be furnished for Registrant's latest fiscal quarter or other latest fiscal period of not less than 3 months.

(a) All amounts received during the period directly or indirectly from each foreign principal named under item 6, itemized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Date funds received	Name of foreign principal from whom funds received <sup>2</sup>	Purposes for which received <sup>3</sup>	Amount received <sup>4</sup>
None			

<sup>1</sup> Include all amounts so received, whether received as compensation, loans, contributions, subscriptions, fees, dues, subsidies, or otherwise.  
<sup>2</sup> Receipts from a person amounting to less than \$100 for the period may be combined with other like amounts, provided the source of the funds is clearly indicated.  
<sup>3</sup> Where funds were received for various purposes, such purposes shall be listed in reasonable detail.  
<sup>4</sup> Show separately the amount received for each purpose listed under the preceding column.

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(b) All amounts received during the period from other sources to be used directly or indirectly for or in the interests of any foreign principal named under item 6, itemized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Date funds received	Name of person from whom received <sup>2</sup>	Purposes for which received <sup>3</sup>	Amount received <sup>4</sup>
The only money used for this organization has been received from voluntary contributions of the members of the organization within the U.S.			

(c) All expenditures made during the period directly or indirectly for or in the interest of each foreign principal named under item 6, itemized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Date payment was made	Name of person to whom payment was made <sup>2</sup>	Purposes for which payment was made <sup>3</sup>	Amount of payment <sup>4</sup>
The money gathered have been used in the propaganda material and other activities of the organization.			

<sup>1</sup> Include all amounts so received, whether received as compensation, loans, contributions, subscriptions, fees, dues, subsidies, or otherwise.  
<sup>2</sup> Receipts from or payments to a person amounting to less than \$100 for the period may be combined with other like amounts, provided the source or disposition of the funds, as the case may be, is clearly indicated.  
<sup>3</sup> Where funds were received or paid, as the case may be, for various purposes, such purposes shall be listed in reasonable detail.  
<sup>4</sup> Show separately the amount received or paid, as the case may be, for each purpose listed under the preceding column.  
<sup>5</sup> Include all transfers of funds to any foreign principal.

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11. (a) Speeches, lectures, talks, and radio broadcasts arranged or sponsored by Registrant or delivered by officials or employees of Registrant, during the past 3 months.

Date delivered	By whom delivered	Where delivered <sup>1</sup>	Kind of audience	Subject matter discussed
Jan. 28, 1960		Belmont Plaza Hotel	Cubans & Americans	Cuban Situation
" " "	Dr. R. Balart	" "	" "	" "
" " "	Alonso Martínez	" "	" "	" "

(b) Publications prepared or distributed by Registrant, or by others for Registrant, or in the preparation or distribution of which Registrant rendered any services or assistance, during the past 6 months. (Indicate each type of publication by an "X".)

(1) Press releases . . . . . X	(8) Circulars . . . . . X	(15) Lantern slides . . . . .
(2) News bulletins . . . . .	(9) Form letters . . . . .	(16) Still pictures . . . . .
(3) Newspapers . . . . .	(10) Reprints . . . . .	(17) Posters . . . . .
(4) Articles . . . . .	(11) Copies of speeches, lectures, talks, or radio broadcasts . . . . .	(18) Photographs . . . . .
(5) Books . . . . .	(12) Radio programs . . . . .	(19) Charts . . . . .
(6) Magazines . . . . .	(13) Radio scripts . . . . .	(20) Maps . . . . .
(7) Pamphlets . . . . .	(14) Moving pictures . . . . .	(21) Other publications . . . . . X

(c) Preparation of publications referred to in answer to (b) above.

Number checked under (b)	Description of publication	By whom written, edited, or prepared	By whom printed, produced, or published
1	Press release. The White Rose.		Xeroxograph The White Rose.

(d) Distribution of publications referred to in answer to (b) above.

Number checked under (b)	Name of distributor	Methods and channels of distribution	Classes or groups of persons to which distributed
0	The White Rose.	Mail	General.

<sup>1</sup>In case of radio broadcasts, identify the stations from which the broadcasts were made.

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12. (a) Registrant's affiliations, associations, or other connections, not fully described above, with foreign governments, foreign political parties, or officials or agencies thereof.

Name of government, party, or official or agency thereof	Nature of Registrant's connections therewith
None	

(b) Registrant's pecuniary interest in or control over partnerships, corporations, associations, or other organizations or combinations of individuals, not fully described above.

Name of organization or combination	Nature of Registrant's ownership or other pecuniary interest	Nature of any direction or control exercised by Registrant
None		

13. (a) Ownership of, or supervision, direction, or control over, Registrant by all organizations, groups, or individuals.

Name of organization, group, or individual	Nature of ownership, supervision, direction, or control
None	

(b) Any subsidy or other financial assistance received by Registrant directly or indirectly from—

Any individual who is a citizen of, or resides in, a foreign country.

Any organization created in, or under the laws of, any foreign country or having its principal place of business in a foreign country.

Any foreign government or foreign political party, or any official or agency thereof.

Name of person from whom subsidy or financial assistance received

Nature and amount of subsidy

None

14. File the following exhibits with this statement:

**Short Form Registration Statement**—File a Short Form Registration Statement, on the printed form provided therefor, for each person named under items 4 and 9.

**Exhibit B.**—File a copy of the agreement, arrangement, or authorization (or if not in writing a written description thereof) pursuant to which Registrant is acting for, or receiving funds from, each foreign principal named under item 6.

**Exhibit C.**—File an Exhibit C, on the printed form provided therefor, for each foreign principal named under item 6.

**Exhibit D.**—If Registrant is a nonbusiness organization, file a copy of its charter, constitution, bylaws, or other instruments of organization.

**Exhibit E.**—File copies of all printed matter referred to under item 11 (b), except photographs and moving pictures.

**Exhibit F.**—File a copy of the agreement or arrangement (or if not in writing, a written description thereof) between the Registrant and each business firm or other organization named under item 11 (c) or (d).

The undersigned swear(s) or affirm(s) that he has (they have) read the information set forth in this registration statement and the attached exhibits and that he is (they are) familiar with the contents thereof and that such contents are in their entirety true and accurate to the best of his (their) knowledge and belief, except that the undersigned make (s) no representation as to the truth or accuracy of the information contained in attached Short Form Registration Statements, insofar as such information is not within his (their) personal knowledge.

(Type or print name under each signature)

*Rafael*  
 RAFAEL L. BALART  
*Pedro F. Gomis*  
 PEDRO F. GOMIS  
*Alberto A. Alonso Martínez*  
 ALBERTO A. ALONSO MARTÍNEZ  
 (Signature)

(Both copies of this statement shall be signed and sworn to before a notary public or other person authorized to administer oaths. The statement shall be signed by the Agent or, if the Agent is an organization, by a majority of those partners, officers, directors, or persons performing similar functions who are in the United States. If no such person is in the United States, the statement shall be signed and sworn to by the duly authorized representative of the Registrant.)

Subscribed and sworn to before me at NEW YORK CITY

this 2nd day of MARCH, 1960

*Guillermo Medina*  
 (Signature of notary or other officer)  
 GUILLERMO MEDINA  
 Notary Public, City of New York  
 New York County Clerk's No. 13  
 Commission Expires March 10, 1961

My commission expires March 10, 1961

Dudget Bureau No. 42-R218 S  
Approval expires 1-31-58

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

EXHIBIT C  
TO REGISTRATION STATEMENTS

Under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, As Amended

Furnish this exhibit for each FOREIGN PRINCIPAL of the Registrant.

THIS EXHIBIT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR FILING UNLESS IT IS REASONABLY COMPLETE AND ACCURATE.

1. Name and address of Registrant.  
"La Rosa Blanca" ("The White Rose") 601 West 149th Street  
New York, N.Y.
2. (a) Name of Foreign Principal.  
"La Rosa Blanca" ("The White Rose")  
(b) Principal address of Foreign Principal.  
Havana, Cuba
3. If the Foreign Principal is a foreign government, state the following:  
Branch or agency thereof represented by Registrant Name and title of official with whom Registrant deals
4. If the Foreign Principal is an individual (natural person), state -  
(a) All present business and residence addresses not given under item 2(b).  
(b) Citizenship or nationality:  
(c) If an officer, employee, or agent of a foreign government, foreign political party, or any official or agency thereof, state -  
Name of such government, political party, official, or agency Nature of Foreign Principal's office, employment, or agency Nature of any subsidy or other financial arrangement
5. If the Foreign Principal is not an individual (natural person) or a foreign government, state the following:  
(a) Type of Foreign Principal's organization.  
Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Voluntary group \_\_\_\_\_ Association \_\_\_\_\_  
Partnership \_\_\_\_\_ Corporation \_\_\_\_\_ Foreign Political Party \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (specify) Underground movement ("The White Rose") in Cuba  
(b) Date and place of organization.  
January 28, 1960, New York, N.Y.

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- (c) All partners, officers, directors, and similar officials of the Foreign Principal.

Name and address of official

Position, office or nature of duties

For reasons of security, it is not possible to give names and addresses inside Cuba.

- (d) List, if any, all of the Foreign Principal's branches and local units and other component or affiliated groups or organizations in the United States and elsewhere.

Name and address of branch, unit group, or organization

Nature of connection with foreign principal

Miami branch. Apartado No. 3691,  
Miami, Fla.

Branch.

Union City branch.

Branch.

- (e) Branch or group, if any, represented by Registrant.

Everyone.

6. If the Foreign Principal is not a foreign government but is supervised, directed, or controlled by a foreign government, foreign political party, or an official or agency thereof, or by any other person or persons, state -

Name of such government, political party, or other persons

Nature and extent of supervision, direction or control

7. If the Foreign Principal is not a foreign government but is financed or subsidized in any way by a foreign government, foreign political party, or an official or agency thereof, or by any other person or persons, state -

Name of such government, political party, or other persons

Nature and extent of such financing or subsidization

8. If the Foreign Principal is not a foreign government, state nature of all its businesses, occupations or functions:

The underground movement of "La Rosa Blanca" ("The White Rose") inside Cuba works for the liberty of the Cuban people, against the Communist dictatorship of Castro, in order to establish a democratic system and a government that works for the progress of the Cuban people and the friendship with U.S. and the other sister American republics.

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DURING ONE OF OUR MEETINGS LED BY GÓMEZ GIMERÁNEZ IN "THE CATACOMBS" IN NEW YORK, 1960.



Cuando los miembros del 26 de Julio arrebataron la corona a los rosablanqueros liderados por New York que pretendían hacer propaganda de falso salter mariano, reafirmaron el propósito revolucionario de defender a Cuba no sólo alejando a los maleantes de sus zonas administrativas, sino también cerciondoles el paso a la bulingueria patriótica con qué suele encasillarse a los extranjeros que no nos conocen a fondo. El día a la revista revolucionaria de los compañeros del 26-7 en New York, lo dieron aquí Fanillo Aragonés Machado, Carlos Olivares Sánchez, Heriberto González, Manuel Sarrate y otros, recibiendo la corona que se les envió por avión, todavía saliendo de estado de la lucha por quitarla a los asesinos.



ENTERING THE POLICE VEHICLE IN NEW YORK, SUPPOSEDLY TO SIGN THE PAPERS TO FILE CHARGES AGAINST THE CASTROISTS WHO HAD ATTACKED US, JANUARY 28, 1960.



CASTROISTS STEALING THE FLORAL OFFERING THAT WE HAD PLACED NEXT TO JOSÉ MARTÍ'S MONUMENT IN CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK, JANUARY 28, 1960.



Nada como el fuego para destruir la corona con la que el desecra bandada de criminales y ladrones quiso engastar a los rosablanqueros en el natalicio del Apóstol. El fuego, para que todo vestigio de la insolencia quedara disuelto en polvareda hasta desaparecer. Y ningún lugar mejor para el desagravio al Maestro que el de frente a su monumento en la Plaza Cívica. Así la corona de los bastardos y susidantes que se robó en New York, después de haberse arrebatado de a hombre por los hombres del 26 de Julio, fue traída a Cuba y reavergüada quemada, tras un desfile imponente, una caravana de automóviles, omnibus, motocicletas y el grito asomaba de todas partes e iba acompañándose con insólito fervor.

CUBAN PRESS REPORTS ON THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR FLORAL OFFERING AS REPORTED IN HAVANA.

Mayo 1960

WARNER, BIRDSALL & ANFUSO  
COUNSELLORS AT LAW  
11 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 4, N. Y.  
WHITEHALL 4-0900

February 2, 1960

The White Rose Organization  
601 West 149th Street  
New York City

-to-

WARNER, BIRDSALL & ANFUSO

For professional services rendered  
in defense of the following members  
of the above organization for alleged  
acts committed on January 28, 1960 at  
a Wreath-Laying Ceremony to Jose Marti:

- 1. Dr. Rafael Diaz-Balart ..\$250.00
- 2. Waldo Diaz-Balart .....\$250.00
- 3. Frank Diaz-Balart .....\$250.00
- 4. Jose Macao .....\$250.00
- 5. Juan Gonzalez .....\$250.00
- 6. George Fernandez .....\$250.00

Total            \$1,500.00

5/8/60

*Attestacion general de  
Rafael Diaz Balart como  
de suma de 1500 pesos  
a la organizacion de  
New Blanca*

2/2/60

BIRDSALL & ANFUSO  
11 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 4, N. Y.

RECEIPT FOR LEGAL FEES PAID FOR THE  
DEFENSE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE WHITE  
ROSE ARRESTED JANUARY 28, 1960.



VÍCTOR ANFUSO INTRODUCED ME TO  
VICE-PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON IN 1962.

## THE VETO AGAINST OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION

After U.S. policy turned against Fidel Castro in 1960, Washington started training a group of Cuban refugees to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. A coalition of Cuban organizations was formed under the name “Democratic Revolutionary Front” and hundreds of brave Cuban patriots were trained in Central America for the invasion. Later, other Cuban refugee organizations supported by the United States were drawn together and formed the Cuban Revolutionary Council. José Miró Cardona, a prestigious Cuban jurist, was appointed its president.

On several occasions I tried to join the force that was being prepared to liberate Cuba. I had many personal conversations with Miró Cardona, obtaining each time nothing more than silence as a response. The veto came from American authorities, Congressman Anfuso personally explained to me.

Various members of The White Rose were informed that “their lives would not be guaranteed in the training camps”, such as my dear friend Orestes Fernández Font, who heard those words from the military chief of the recruitment office of the “Front” in New York, Lieutenant Rodríguez, who, years before had been an assistant to Aureliano Sánchez Arango during the government of President Carlos Prío.

As Cuban historian Enrique Ros explained in his book “Girón, The True Story”, as ordered by Washington, the military Chiefs of Staff of the invasion focused to a great extent on “preventing people who could be considered supporters of Batista from forming part of the liberation forces”. Despite Washington’s veto, certain

members of The White Rose were able to join the ranks of the invasion force, but those of us who were its leaders were denied entry.

Aiming to clarify the truth for posterity, and perceiving the imminence of the invasion, I prepared a motion and traveled to New York to ask for its approval by the Executive Committee of The White Rose.

The motion received unanimous support from my colleagues and was sent immediately to Miró Cardona, President of the Revolutionary Council, with the following letter:

New York, March 28, 1961

Mr. José Miró Cardona

President of the Revolutionary Council

Compatriot:

I fulfill my duty of forwarding the document that, on this date, has been approved during an extraordinary session of The White Rose.

I hope that the passions from the heat of the Cuban tragedy, which have on occasions hindered necessary objective reasoning for the benefit of our homeland, will not represent an obstacle for a serene consideration to the pronouncements stated in this document addressed to you.

Awaiting your response, I send you kind regards,

Domingo Gómez Gimeránez

President of The White Rose

The fundamental part of our motion read as follows:

“Today, before the reality of a Revolutionary Council that claims to be the nucleus of a government of an Armed Republic, with the appropriate resources and recognitions for a war of liberation, The White Rose has the duty to declare that it condemns the unilateral and exclusionary procedures used to create such an organization, as well as many of the principles and ideas it supports, and which are against the 1940 Constitution and the dreams of equality and fraternity of the Cuban nation. However, The White Rose declares that in these painful moments, there is no higher duty or more urgent and sacred responsibility for all Cubans than fighting for the liberation of our enslaved country and that until we expel the forces of brutality, we must put aside ambitions, passions, struggles and any other considerations that hinder our process of liberation.

The White Rose is willing to offer various squads of Cubans, currently in exile, who are physically apt and ready, including Pedro Peña Góngora, José Hipsan Lara, Rafael Díaz-Balart, and George Fernández, to enter, without delay, the training camps, all of us as simple soldiers, in a disciplined manner. This offer also includes the contribution of our best clandestine cadres inside Cuba.

The objective of The White Rose in adopting this attitude is to contribute to a greater coordination, effectiveness and urgency of the national liberation, since we have affirmed that to fight and die for our homeland, there is no need to ask for anyone’s permission, and we will act in consequence at all times.”

Days passed without an answer from the Revolutionary Council, which did not even have the courtesy to inform us of the receipt of our motion, so the executive cell agreed, for the historical record, to publish the motion in the press. Extra-officially, I also learned that the offer of The White Rose was vetoed.

Our motion was published in “El Diario de Nueva York,” on April 2, 1961, as well as in Miami’s “Diario Las Américas.”

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MY MOVE TO EUROPE

In Fort Lauderdale I had the pleasure of renewing a close friendship with Manuel García Ruiz, an old Cuban friend, and through him I got to know former Cuban Senator Jorge Barroso. Barroso was an important landowner in Cuba before Castro took power and was an expert in commodity futures, specifically related to sugar. It was a somewhat technical business, but Barroso, as well as García Ruiz, knew a great deal about it. They invited me to join them in the sugar futures market.

I invested a small amount of money and we worked for over a year in that market expecting that sugar prices would rise, while most experts had concluded the contrary would occur. This business with Barroso and García Ruiz allowed me to earn enough money to move to Spain with my family in 1963, where I registered at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (the Central University of Madrid), and obtained a doctorate in law. My dissertation, “Agrarian Law and Agrarian Politics; the fear of reform in Iberoamerica” was published and prized by the Institute of Hispanic Culture in Spain. I later registered in a special course in Comparative law that included studies in three universities: Liège in Belgium, Strasbourg in France and Coimbra in Portugal. In Coimbra, one of my professors was Marcelo Caetano, who years later would be the successor to Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal. I obtained degrees in comparative law from those three universities.

I moved to Europe largely because, after the October 1962 missile crisis and the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union which committed the United States to protect Fidel Castro’s regime in exchange for the Soviet promise

to not introduce nuclear weapons into Cuba, it seemed logical to me to prepare myself for what would obviously be a very long exile. I was always encouraged by the idea of being ready, as much as possible, to eventually be useful in the process of the democratic reconstruction of my country, from which I have been forced to be separated, although it has always remained deeply in my heart.

With a doctorate in law, I opened an office in Madrid, and my professional activities included travels throughout a large part of the world.

In Spain, I divorced Hilda Caballero Brunét, who was my wife for over 25 years and the mother of my children. She was an exceptional woman, who, due to her devotion to Cuba, was always very important in the education of our four children and to the attachment they all feel for Cuba. I eventually married Mercedes Romay Becarría, Chelas, with whom I have had a happy marriage for more than 25 years. Chelas is part of a wonderful family that is one of the most important families in Galicia. At the time of our marriage, she was a widow with five children, three girls and two boys; to this day I consider them all like my own children.

After obtaining my doctorate in law, my professional activities led me to travel a large part of the world.



TWO GREAT CUBANS AND DEAR FRIENDS,  
JOAQUÍN MARTÍNEZ SÁENZ, FORMER  
PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF CUBA,  
AND GASTÓN BAQUERO, ONE OF THE  
GREATEST WRITERS IN CUBAN HISTORY,  
DURING THE IN SPAIN, THINKING OF CUBA  
EVENT, MADRID, 1965.



DURING AN INTERVIEW IN MY HOUSE IN MADRID, 1965. YOU CAN JUST BARELY MAKE OUT MY SON MARIO TO THE LEFT. JOSÉ IS TO THE RIGHT.



AFTER OBTAINING MY DOCTORATE IN LAW, MY PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES LED ME TO TRAVEL A LARGE PART OF THE WORLD. THIS PICTURE IS OF MY VISIT WITH PRESIDENT FERNANDO BELAÚNDE TERRY (TO THE RIGHT) IN LIMA, PERU, 1967.



AS A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA, I PRESIDED THE COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC THAT WAS PART OF THE CUBAN UNIVERSITY FEDERATION, TO FIGHT AGAINST TRUJILLO'S TYRANNY. ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS WAS (AND STILL IS) ÁNGEL MIOLÁN, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE DOMINICAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE FORTIES DURING HIS EXILE IN CUBA. THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN IN 1968 DURING ONE OF HIS VISITS TO SPAIN WHILE HE WAS SECRETARY OF TOURISM OF HIS COUNTRY.



WORKING IN MY OFFICE IN MADRID, 1974.

## COSTA RICAN DIPLOMAT

When Joaquín Trejos was elected president of Costa Rica in 1966, his friend, former President Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia, who was also a good friend of mine, managed to have me appointed agricultural attaché of the Costa Rican embassy in Spain. For the first time in exile, I had passports for my family and myself, as a diplomat for the small yet great Central American nation.

Through the years I held various diplomatic positions for Costa Rica, including Consul General in Sao Paulo, Brazil; attaché in the embassy in Venezuela; and Minister-Counselor and Chargé D'Affaires in Paraguay, where I had the opportunity to improve relations between Costa Rica and Paraguay.

When José "Pepe" Figueres was elected president of Costa Rica in 1970, I contacted him when he made a visit to Madrid in order to present to him my resignation from the diplomatic position I held. "Don Pepe" was the opposition leader to Calderón Guardia, my great friend, and he was also an enemy of former President Batista. But one of Figueres's greatest friends was Alberto Inocente Álvarez, one of the most brilliant Cubans of the "Generation of 1930," former Foreign Affairs Minister and former Ambassador to the United Nations, as well as one of the founders of the Auténtico Party, so we had always been active members of opposing political parties. Inocente Álvarez was large hearted enough to recommend me to President-elect Figueres, who told me: "I ask you to please continue being a diplomat for Costa Rica." I replied that it would be an honor for me, and that I would

always be very grateful, although he had to know that I would always maintain my friendships with former Presidents Calderón Guardia and Batista. Figueres replied that loyalty to friends was one of the characteristics he admired most in a person. That was the beginning of a very respectful friendship with Pepe Figueres, one of the greatest statesmen in Latin American history.

When Figueres completed his term, Daniel Odubér was elected president of the exemplary Central American nation in 1974 and he also retained me in my diplomatic position. The same thing occurred during the next term with President Rodrigo Carazo and years later with President Rafael Ángel Calderón Fournier, son of Calderón Guardia, who also appointed me as one of his presidential advisors. During the governments of Figueres and Odubér, who was one of the most brilliant jurists in Latin America, Gonzalo Facio was Minister of Foreign Affairs. I had the honor of cultivating a true friendship with him, and it was he who asked me, on behalf of Figueres, to accept the position of Minister-Counselor and Chargé D'Affaires of Costa Rica in Paraguay, where I was able to significantly alleviate the diplomatic tension that had existed between the two countries. When Calderón Fournier ended his presidency in 1994, he became the head of the opposition to the newly elected government of José Figueres Jr. I then resigned my diplomatic position in Costa Rica, where I had received so many demonstrations of solidarity and kindness from different parties and political leaders. From my Costa Rican friends I learned a great deal about tolerance and prudence: two essential elements of democracy.



MIAMI, 2003.



DURING A VISIT BY COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT PEPE FIGUERES (THIRD FROM THE LEFT) TO MADRID IN 1972. I WAS AT THE TIME AN ATTACHÉ IN THE EMBASSY OF COSTA RICA IN SPAIN.



WITH LINCOLN, JOSÉ, RAFAEL  
AND MARIO, MIAMI, 2003

# THE IDEAS OF THE WHITE ROSE

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE  
RECONSTRUCTION OF CUBA

# IDEAS FOR THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF THE WHITE ROSE

## INTRODUCTION

A political program is always an expression of an understanding of man and society, the understanding of a specific man within a society in a specific period of history. It is an ideological comprehension expressed in a political will to carry out certain principles.

It ought to be the general outline of what needs to be done for the further development of society, starting from what that society actually is and what has to be done to achieve sought for progress. In societies that have attained stability, specifications for short-term goals are added to a general strategic outline. In our case, many of these precisions will have to wait until the future is clearer.

A political program is not, as Castroists believe, an arbitrary social engineering project, but rather the basic instructions for the path that should be taken by a society, with all its complexity and contradictions, all its different and opposing interests, taking into account men the way they are. The White Rose is founded on the pillars of Jose Martí's precious conception: "with all and for the good of all."

## OUR IDEAS

### A PROJECT OF LOVE WITHIN THE RULE OF LAW

**U**nder the current conditions of Cuban society and those that we will probably face in the near future, the tasks to be accomplished in the inevitable moment of change during the transition from totalitarianism to democracy, from a centralized to a market economy, from Castroist slavery to freedom and the Rule of Law, will not only be extraordinary but extremely difficult.

The Castroist demolition of the country, of its cultural and moral fiber, has been enormous. Economic, sociological, and spiritual damage has been immense. This is why the parallel work of reconstruction and transition to a new society has to be carried out tactfully and wisely, but most importantly with deep love for Cuba and its people. The reconstruction of our country will be a labor of love, or it will not be. It must be accomplished within the strict framework of the Rule of Law, with the clear goal of permanently eradicating hatred among Cubans. The objective cannot be anything other than the happiness of our people, and our support structure for this sacred task will be the remaining cultural and moral reserves that have not succumbed to the national disaster. And we cannot fail. We must mobilize those reserves and make faith and optimism reappear in our people, who are, today, deeply hurt and skeptical.

We must make the social division and hatred imbued by Castroism gradually disappear as we create a society where all Cubans can co-exist as members of a sole and vital nation, within the normal and desirable differences of pluralism. This is our goal for our entire people, those within the ruined and embittered island, and those in exile, many of them successful, but equally embittered. A single country.

Just as Cubans inside the island should not see those who return from exile as conquerors, those from abroad should not view those inside as collaborationists. We have all been victims and together we will rebuild our future. That is how we will succeed. The criminals, who are the exception confirming the rule, will be judged by history, as well as under a strict Rule of Law.

This political program does not pretend to foresee all the details of the needed change. As a blueprint for change, it will have to be enriched and modified along the way, following the light of our ideals in our eyes and with great political sensitivity in our ears. On the other hand, change and liberation seem imminent if we look at the subsoil wherein lie the roots of our nation. We work for liberation, along with many others inside and outside of the country, even if we cannot yet picture its exact scenario. But change is near, events may come abruptly, and we must not let them take us by surprise and overwhelm us.

In all these years that we have worked for freedom, we have prepared a program of ideas and suggestions for the new generations of Cubans. The Second Republic must be founded on institutions and not on individuals.

We have taken into account the positive as well as the negative aspects of experiences in Central and Eastern European countries. And most importantly, the ethical-political thought of José Martí, that has been perversely manipulated, throughout the history of the Republic, and especially affronted during Castro's tyranny. We believe that the universality as well as the lovingly Cuban nature of Martí's thought constitutes our nation's most valuable treasure. In line with his ideas, we believe that "the government should emerge from the nation; it should be nothing more than the balance (the equilibrium) among the natural elements of the country."

Finally, we would like to state that during our more than fifty years of existence, we have not received any kind of aid, from any government or foreign agency - although we do not express ourselves against anybody because of this matter. We would like to stress that we have commitments to no one, except the Cuban people.

## NEITHER PROTAGONISM NOR PROSELYTISM

The White Rose does not seek any kind of protagonism, nor do we proselytize from exile, since we believe that in exile our main functions are to maintain opposition to the tyranny, to promote the debate of ideas and to deepen studies to allow us a greater understanding of our nation, in order to benefit from the positive aspects of our history and avoid its mistakes in the future Second Republic.

## THE BALANCE OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

The White Rose vindicates the positive balance of the first Cuban Republic (1902-1958), despite its mistakes and flaws, and maintains the conviction that after the dark and anti-historic parenthesis of the past more than five decades, the resurrection and reconstruction of the nation, to which we will contribute with hope and perseverance, will be possible in the Second Republic.

The false Castroist version of the first Cuban Republic (1902-1958) - unfortunately accepted and promoted by many in the Western world and in many cases perversely influenced by economic interests - has repeatedly insisted on the idea that Cuba was a country haunted by misery, illiteracy, prostitution, social inequality and the imperialist dominance of the United States over its economy and politics. This is an enormous, Goebbelian-like lie, ceaselessly repeated, that has been accepted as truth in many political and intellectual circles. The reality of Cuba was very different, even while acknowledging its stains, especially in order to not repeat them in the future. As Martí, our apostle, taught us: "Everything, even the sun, has stains; the grateful see the light, the ungrateful only the stains."

In this sense, the great Jewish-Spanish philosopher Rabbi Moisés Ben Maimón, better known as "Maimónides" (1135-1204), who inspired many of the studies of Thomas Aquinas, a man inserted in the tradition of the Judeo-Christian culture, which is our culture, bequeathed us the following maxim, which should not be forgotten:

“In the world there are no perfect men or women, all humans are composed of merits and sins. Likewise, there can be no perfect or infallible states or governments. The means to identify perversity and justice is the same in the individual and in the community. He is called just who possesses more merits than sins, and in the perverse, the terms are inverted. The same occurs in the state and government. If in the conduct of its members merits exceed sins, justice reigns in that state or government, and if sins exceed merits, there reigns corruption.” (From Mishneh-Torah, Contrition Section)

Following this path and bearing in mind the historical context and the reality of the country, when we analyze the nation’s achievements in the 56 short years of independence before Castro took power, we find a vibrant and thriving society, more advanced than even many industrialized countries and clearly ahead of Latin America. This is especially true when we take into account the characteristics and circumstances of our starting point as an independent nation.

Contrasting the credible information of the United Nations and the World Bank would be sufficient to prove this. Why, then, have Castro and his scribes abroad insisted on demolishing the truth? Because they needed to slander the Cuban nation, the Republic, to make everyone believe that the Republic was so abominable that it needed to be destroyed, as it has effectively been destroyed.

To begin with, Castroism has violated the fundamental freedoms and basic rights of the Cuban people, with the false excuses of reaffirming the nation’s sovereignty, attaining higher levels of economic development, and implementing social justice. But what has truly been accomplished in more than fifty years of Castroism, is exactly the opposite. During decades, national sovereignty was pawned as never before, to the Soviet Union, now fortunately disintegrated. Castro’s Cuba was a spearhead of Soviet aggression, carrying out the dirtiest jobs in mercenary wars in Africa and Latin America, or endangering the very existence of the nation and humanity during the missile crisis of 1962.

With regard to social justice, the Constitution of 1940 was a model of social equity, and even if there were less favored sectors - especially in rural areas - there

was a growing middle class, and workers had powerful unions with advanced labor legislation that protected them. This middle class, that helped Castro take power, was literally swept away during the first years of the tyranny that called itself the “revolution,” by way of the absolute nationalization of the economy. The same thing happened with the unions that, after defending the interests of workers for decades before Castro, became mere “transmission belts” of the totalitarian party-state.

With regard to social development, Castro presents himself as the embodiment of “achievements” regarding education and public health. But a quick comparative look at what Cuba was during the Republic and what it is today, proves this to be a lie. Castro brags about Cuba occupying the first place regarding infant mortality in Latin America, which is true. But it is also true that it held the same position in 1957, when it also occupied the 13th place in the entire world, above France, Belgium, West Germany, Israel, Japan, Italy, Spain and Portugal; today it occupies number 24. Furthermore, if we study the correct statistics, we see that today Cuba is among the countries with the highest rate of abortions in the world, which necessarily affects the infant mortality numbers. In 1957, Cuba had the third highest number of physicians and dentists per inhabitant (128/100,000) in Latin America, above the United Kingdom and Finland.

Before Castro, Cuba held the fourth place in literacy in Latin America, with 76%. Today this percentage has risen to 90%. However, there are seven countries in the region that exceed this number, with freedom, without having experienced the social trauma and the repression Cuba has gone through, which makes us certain that Cuba could have achieved progress with democracy.

With regard to other economic indicators, Cuba under Castro’s regime has descended from fourth to one of the last places in per capita calorie consumption. The same can be said regarding telephones, automobiles, refrigerators and televisions, in which Cuba was not only one of the first in the region but in the world. Likewise, the production of sugar, coffee, meat, rice, etc., is today at the level it was at the beginning of the twentieth century, due to the amazing inefficiency of communism and Castro. And all this happened even though Cuba received, until the

USSR fell, five times the resources Western Europe received from the Marshall Plan following the devastation of the Second World War.

It is true that Cuba did not have a perfect society before Castro. Aside from the fact that there is always room for improvement in human matters, what country has achieved perfection in only 56 years of independence? There were problems, varied and complex, and Cuba was facing them with growing success. Today it has become a hell, where ineptness and endless destruction reign. We vindicate the good that Cubans achieved during the Republic, but at the same time we reject and keep in mind the Republic's mistakes. We vindicate its positive balance (Maimonides). We have lost a great deal in the destruction carried out by Castroism; its balance is terribly negative (Maimonides). Putting an end to this destruction is a sacred duty that will lead to national reconstruction. Cuba will emerge, like the phoenix, from its own ashes.

## OUR PROPOSALS FOR A POLITICAL PROJECT

Immediately after the liberation, a time that is often referred to as the transition period, the provisional government that will be established will have to accomplish, without fail, the following conditions:

1. Amnesty for all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the legalization of all political parties, labor unions and the press, and freedom of travel and movement.
2. Dissolution of all the repressive and paramilitary organs of the dictatorship and the establishment of norms of conduct that will lead to and guarantee the professionalism, dignity and political neutrality of the armed forces.
3. The Calling of elections, within a reasonable period of time, for a Constituent Congress that will have, apart from the responsibility of writing a new constitution, the legislative power and the power of oversight over the executive

authority. Subsequently, it shall call for general elections, from Municipal to Presidential, including for a new Congress.

The electoral tribunal that is constituted must guarantee the fairness and transparency of electoral processes, including equal distribution of radio and television time slots, as well as press access for all participants in the electoral process. Likewise, the electoral tribunal should ensure public access to information regarding all contributions received by the political parties. All such contributions must, in any case, be of public knowledge.

Among the improvements that we propose for the Second Republic, we believe that the Constitution should establish a Presidential term of five years, as well as the constitutional prohibition of reelection for the President. We also believe that the President of the Republic should be not only *de jure*, but also *de facto*, the "moderating and national solidarity authority," and because of that, the Constitution should establish that he/she must resign as a member of any political party or political position after being elected and before taking office as President.

We also propose to strengthen the provincial and municipal governments, with the aim of a healthy decentralization of power in order to lead to a closer relationship with the citizens.

## PRIVATE PROPERTY. ECONOMIC POLICY. THE CENTRAL BANK

For The White Rose, private property is not only an important subject, but a matter of principle, since it lies at the very foundation required for the reconstruction and economic development of our homeland, and it must be addressed with the respect which should be accorded to democratic values and freedom itself in a new Cuban Republic. History has shown that without full respect for private property, there is no freedom, well-being or progress in any society. Taking this as an

undeniable principle -and that is how it should be taken in the Constitution- the new Republic must solve the multiple demands which will be made by physical and/or legal persons who were affected by the expropriations -thefts- of Castroism. Accordingly, we propose the creation of an office with limited duration, an ad hoc entity, that will be in charge of the study and processing, case by case, of these complaints. The fair reparation of damaged rights should be sought without neglecting the interest of the nation and its citizens, within existing possibilities and resources. This may be achieved through the issuing of public bonds or other means that the law will determine accordingly.

#### **A) The issue of residential housing.**

The White Rose is radically opposed to evictions. The legitimate owners that so demonstrate their ownership will be indemnified and the current residents will not be evicted. Their status will be respected, this is, their property title or leasehold. The tenants will continue to pay their rent until they reach an appraised amount to become legitimate owners. A plan of social housing should be implemented as a priority, aiming to provide every Cuban family with decent housing that they can own.

#### **B) Industrial properties.**

- Individuals and/or legal entities that prove ownership of any industry and its real estate will have their rights restored, with the responsibility of financing the start-up of industrial activity in the restored assets.
- Industries and other production assets or services created during Castro's tyranny that are not or cannot be subject to claims will be transparently and gradually privatized once the first elected, legitimate government is constituted. This will propel the government's administration by making it more efficient and competitive while providing financial resources that will help the state face the great expenses of national reconstruction during this first period.

#### **C) The Second Republic's tax legislation will be gradual and progressive, and we propose the establishment of the following:**

A contribution to finance the voluntary participation of workers as shareholders in companies, in a percentage to be specified, a participation that workers will pay for with a portion of their wages. A contribution to finance the creation and maintenance of a Bank for the Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Companies, whose funds will make possible access by the Cuban people to financial resources to start small and medium-sized businesses. The White Rose proposes the creation of one million of these businesses, which will translate into capitalism for all and for the good of all; in other words, a society of proprietors instead of a society of proletarians. Likewise, we propose the creation of two other banks: the Bank for Agricultural and Industrial Promotion (BANFAIC for its Spanish acronym) and the Bank for Economic and Social Development (BANDES). Within the gradual and progressive tax system, incentives will be given to individuals and/or legal entities that contribute to the two above-mentioned income sources for the state in the new Republic.

A third contribution would be directed toward the creation of a Social Security Fund that would guarantee pensions and social benefits. This would not affect other initiatives that persons or private institutions may wish to undertake in this regard.

#### **D) Economic Policy. The Central Bank. Monetary Agreement. The Cuba-United States Special Relationship.**

The objectives of the economic and fiscal policy of The White Rose for the Second Republic of Cuba with the Rule of Law will be oriented toward achieving a macro-economic balance to maintain, simultaneously, price level stability, a high employment rate equivalent to full employment, continuous and satisfactory growth of the national economy and equilibrium in the balance of payments. This means the creation of a prosperous society with opportunities for all Cubans.

At the same time, The White Rose supports the strengthening and defense of our national currency through the Central Bank, which should be recreated in the new Constitution as an independent institution from the government, even though it should support the general economic policy of the executive; support that should be subordinated to the function of the Bank, which is none other than the defense of the currency, the incentive for economic growth and the maintenance of price level stability in order to fight any inflationary tendency.

At the beginning of the Second Republic, a Monetary Agreement should be created to support and consolidate the Cuban Peso, which currently has no value.

## THE SPECIAL CUBA-USA RELATIONSHIP

One of the most important objectives of the Second Republic should be the establishment of a “special relationship” with the United States, similar to the one existing between the United States and Israel, or between the United States and the United Kingdom. The experience with our history and geography has taught us that the United States Congress has been a great ally of the Cuban people, ever since it passed, in 1898, the Joint Resolution emphasizing that “Cuba is and of right ought to be free and independent.”

The U.S. Congress, which is the direct representation of the noble American people, in that moment, as in others, helped in the achievement of our independence even though powerful annexationist interests seeking to take over Cuba were in existence.

On the other hand, we should not forget, to avoid similar evils, that during all our Republican history (1902-1958) lobbyists and other interests of the American economic power were constantly interfering with internal affairs of our homeland, disrupting the performance of our governments whenever they affected the interests of their economic sectors. (See the work of Bolivian economist Julio Alvarado who collaborated with the Republic as well as with the communist dictatorship, *The Cuban Adventure*).

The White Rose proposes the establishment of a special relation between our nation and the United States that would be close and fluid, based on institutions, mainly the Congresses of each country and their Chiefs of State.

Likewise, once Cuba is free, we propose that the Guantanamo Naval Base should immediately be returned to Cuba.

## AGRICULTURAL POLICY

To express in a very succinct manner the main ideas of The White Rose regarding agricultural policy in free Cuba, we will rely on the proposals made by Rafael Diaz-Balart in his book “Agrarian Law and Agrarian Policy,” his award-winning doctoral thesis presented at the Complutense University of Madrid, and published by the Institute of Hispanic Culture (known today as the Institute of Iberoamerican Cooperation).

1. Presence and direct cultivation by the owner -as far as possible-, with emphasis on the social function of property.
2. Eradication of unnecessary and unproductive large land ownership, which in Cuba today belongs to the state, and the fusion of inefficient smallholdings or parcel concentration, as well as the stimulation of exemplary development.
3. Promotion of legally stable and economically robust medium-sized agricultural property. And, in general, enabling as many farmers as possible to become owners of economically viable units.
4. Facilitate group agriculture, especially cooperative systems without intermediaries, unnecessary and unfair burdens, etc.
5. Systems of agricultural credits in order to facilitate the strengthening and technological development of small and medium-sized properties to avoid indebtedness of farmers by channeling credits to service cooperatives.

6. Promotion of the highest and most stable employment levels, of the improvement of quality of life and an economic physiology of society within a system creating profits based on prices and markets, and of the permanence of every farmer who works the land without being its owner. In this sense, the wise antecedent of the Cuban Law of Sugar Coordination will be taken into account.
7. Improvement of the tributary system with the goal of promoting and invigorating the pluralist and institutional structure of rural property.
8. Appropriately channel and resolve the contradictions between agricultural and industrial development, seeking its harmonization.
9. Promote rural technical education, spiritual orientation and a holistic cultural formation. Take common urban services, and cultural and recreational activities, to the countryside in order to enrich rural life and avoid migration to cities.
10. Professional unionization of farmers and the promulgation of a Law for Cooperatives, a General Agricultural Law and an Agricultural Code, avoiding, in general terms, the depression of the rural sector in every aspect and seeking the most equitable distribution of wealth.

## THE DEFENSE OF SOVEREIGNTY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF DEFENSE

The White Rose understands that the new Cuba must ensure the defense of its sovereignty, while guaranteeing the sovereignty of its defense. For that reason, without falling into the military hypertrophy advocated by the Castroist tyranny in its insane policy of international aggression, free Cuba should possess professional and operative armed forces, technologically advanced, respectful of the democratic system, guarantors of our territory's integrity and specially prepared

to confront the dangers of international terrorism and drug trafficking. The basis of our armed forces should lay in their technological superiority, which in turn should be the basis for the cutting-edge technological industrialization that we advocate (we support tax incentives and multiple kinds of support for the establishment and development of these types of industries, as well as for the promotion and support of technological research and development.)

We also oppose compulsory military service, since we believe that the education of our new generations should be a task of family and school, and not one for the barracks.

## CITIZENSHIP AND DISCRIMINATION

There can be very few greater dangers to social peace, to the Republic's stability and its progress, than any weakness, as small as it may seem, of the fraternal, solid and permanent integration of all elements that have historically formed our national identity. The White Rose believes that we should feel proud of our mestizo (mixed race) culture and nation.

"Say Cuban and you have said it all," we were taught by the Apostle of Dos Ríos (Martí). The prohibition against discrimination that the 1940 Constitution established should be complemented by a positive conception in the Second Republic. The new constitution, therefore, must prohibit any kind of discrimination, especially due to skin color or ethnic origin, as well as gender, political or religious conviction, or any other that could harm the innate dignity of humans. Any type of violation of this precept must be severely punished by law. Regarding this aspect and with special emphasis, we advocate that the Constitution and the laws favor and make effective the true and total equality of women within society. In practice and in law.

In addition, The White Rose believes that all those who were forced by oppression to leave the country will be recognized as Cuban citizens, including their descen-

dants of the first generation who express their will to be Cuban and to be integrated into the nation, following the constitutional tradition of democratic Cuba, ever since the pre-Republican Constitution of La Yaya.

## THE LAY STATE

The White Rose favors a lay state for the New Republic, not only because it has been the common practice within the Western world to which we belong, but because it is what our national history and our reality dictate. To this respect, we propose the independence and the most absolute respect for all religions and philosophical practices that exist in our country. The Catholic religion, the Afro-Cuban syncretic religions, as well as other Christian and non-Christian denominations, form the wide range of beliefs of our people and they must all enjoy the same respect and equality within the state.

In this respect we also refer to fraternal institutions, like the Masons, which have had a notable presence in our history and which have even managed to survive with a certain degree of independence within the totalitarian state.

## EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Education is the basis for the progress and strength of a healthy and prosperous modern society and should defend the values of democracy and freedom, of the nation and the family, the most important cell of society. The state must ensure free education including high school and must guarantee that no Cuban with ability will remain without university or superior education due to a lack of economic resources. The functioning of private education must also be guaranteed with the mentioned values and in keeping with our best patriotic, civic and ethical traditions. Research must be promoted at all levels.

Access to hospitals and health care services must be ensured by the state for all citizens, without excluding private participation in the delivery of healthcare. The Cuban experience of member clinics, that functioned optimally during the First Republic, should be rescued.

Social security must also be a sacred right for every Cuban, guaranteed by the state as complementary to the right to work within the philosophy of full employment and of all other productive activity.

The encouragement of sports, healthy entertainment, leisure and culture will be enhanced by the state, but in no case will they be tutored as during the Castroist tyranny. In all these spheres of social life the state will favor and contribute to the development and action of civil society.

The White Rose proposes the creation of state entities in charge of the recovery of the historical memory and truth, national patrimony protection on the one hand and environmental protection on the other, including flora and fauna, as well as the restoration from the great ecological damage that the totalitarian dictatorship has caused the country.

## THE ECONOMIC-SOCIAL COUNCIL

We propose the creation of an economic and social council, an autonomous entity advising the government that would include the participation of union and business organizations and other social actors. This council will be the supreme organism for achieving consensus for the nation's economic policies, as well as for policies related to the development of productive activities. The aim is to achieve the greatest harmony among social actors in the development and increase of small and medium enterprises, in which all Cubans will pursue, as a priority of the nation, their personal participation in national assets, whose ideal instrument should be the National Stock Market. By doing this, we would be not only promoting popular participation in company management, as opposed to the "gi-

gantization” which characterizes totalitarian states, but following the precept of Martí which states that a society of small proprietors will always be happy and free.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS. CUBANISM

The White Rose rejects the euro-centric labels of right and left. We wish to be judged by our ideas, our proposals and our behavior. We are not linked to any international organizations with foreign ideas, although that does not mean that we absolutely reject them as points of reference. Neither communism, nor fascism, nor socialism, nor liberalism; our philosophy has its roots in the very core of our people, our traditions, our circumstances, our history and the desires, needs, and hopes of our homeland, without falling into a senseless chauvinism. It is the philosophy of our national heroes like Félix Varela, José de la Luz y Caballero, Ignacio Agramonte, Céspedes, García, Aguilera, Moncada, Maceo, Martí and Masó. This philosophy has a name: CUBANISM.

## POLITICAL POWER AND ECONOMIC POWER

The First Cuban Republic (1902-1958) was born castrated ever since the 1898 Treaty of Paris between the United States and Spain, in which Cubans were prevented from participating, even as observers. The properties of the pro-independence Cuban patriots that were confiscated beginning in 1868 were never returned to them or their heirs. For that reason, economic power in the Republic remained in the hands of the Spaniards, to which American investors had equally privileged access, since the Cubans were de-capitalized with the exception of those who were autonomists and whose belongings were never confiscated. Patriot Mambises (freedom fighters), who gave their all during the wars of independence, were left penniless. For example, the great General Quintín Banderas, who received an offer of employment from the first government of the Republic: to be a sweeper of the streets of Havana; the offer was rejected.

Pro-colonial Spaniards who favored the annexation of Cuba by the United States, as well as other autonomist sectors, started a sordid campaign against politicians and politics, which was the sole means for those who had been pro-independence supporters to integrate into the nation for whose liberty they had so fiercely fought.

It is the desire of The White Rose that the economic power in the New Republic will never be able to control, directly or indirectly, the political power, the essential instrument of democracy. As is obvious, there cannot be democracy without politics, nor politics without politicians. Defamatory campaigns against politicians and politicians tend to have a totalitarian inspiration.

## PLURALISM, ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

The experiences of the democratic transitions in Spain and in the European countries of the old Soviet Bloc have demonstrated that if even communist parties accept the Rule of Law and pluralism, they can be integrated into new situations of liberty in their nations.

The Cuban communist party has serious political responsibilities because of its support, throughout decades, of the hateful tyranny of Castro. Those responsibilities should be judged by the Cuban people at the ballot box. A different thing is the criminal responsibility derived from punishable actions committed by certain of its members against the dignity and human rights of citizens. That can and should be judged by Courts of Justice, but as we have repeatedly stated, it has to be done within a strict Rule of Law and with all procedural guarantees of a democracy.

The White Rose believes that legislators and, if applicable, members of the Constituent Assembly, should guide behavior but never the thought or affiliation of citizens. We desire a Cuba without persecutors or persecuted; without winners or losers; without vetoes or discrimination, without hatred or resentment.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE GENERATIONS

As we all know, the presentation of a program to the people, the presentation of ideas and projections -proposals, desires and hopes for the achievement of progress and stability of the nation- is a fundamental function of political parties in any democratic system. Aspiring to power through legitimate means, in order to implement those ideas to improve the life of the people, is not only a right but a duty. Likewise, the preparation and training of new leaders, to ensure a healthy, periodic replacement of leadership within the party, and consequently in the nation, is also an essential function of any political party in a democracy.

What we seek for our Second Republic is a Republic of institutions and not of personalities; that is why we have proposed in this program a Presidential term of five years and a definitive prohibition of reelection. The history of our nation and of Latin America is full of regrettable examples of personalisms with absurd pretensions of eternity. Cemeteries have plenty of “indispensable” people. This should not be mistaken with absurd attitudes of vetoes and discrimination due to age, sex, race, beliefs and ideas. The nation needs the effort of all its citizens and should take advantage of the contributions of all, which should be utilized and complemented in different activities and sectors of national life.

This proposal for a political program is, as is logical, subject to future enrichment and precisions, and is open to the observations and suggestions of our supporters and members. It will of course need the approval of the National Assembly of the party, once freedom reigns in Cuba.

The structure of the party will be defined in full detail as soon as possible, adapting itself to the laws regulating this field, with the participation of our members that are and will be in Cuba, and who will be in charge of ratifying their representatives and its structure.

## TOWARD FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, FRATERNITY AND PROGRESS OF THE CUBAN NATION

# EULOGIES TO RAFAEL DIAZ-BALART FROM HIS SONS

MAY 7, 2005

## RAFAEL DIAZ-BALART:

My father taught me the joy of life  
He taught me to learn how to learn  
That you only fear fear itself  
He taught me to have faith, like his, which was deep and abundant.

He and my mother created a very wide framework of limits for the growth and development of my siblings and me. That is how we know how to learn, how to enjoy and also how to deal with adversity. As I said, limits were wide, but they were also well defined and strict.

He demanded that we be obedient and respectful to my mother. He never allowed us to even raise our voice at her. She was always right.

He demanded that I never raise my hand against my young siblings, against anyone weaker than me, against anyone at all. But I must confess that poor Lincoln took many blows before I learned that lesson.

He demanded that we respect others as we wish to be respected. He simply instilled a concept in us, a word: conduct. And when we were children, my parents always talked to us with respect and treated us with the same consideration as adults.

I remember when I was 10 years old, in 1960, and we were living in Ft. Lauderdale -- when racial segregation still reined in the U.S. South -- and I had the idea of retelling my parents a joke I had heard from some friends at school. We were in the car, my parents in the front and Lincoln and I sitting in the back. The joke was a mockery of African Americans. My father stopped the car abruptly and turning toward me, said emphatically: "I want this to be the last time that I hear a racist word from you. I won't tolerate it!" I never forgot that lesson.

As Pope Benedict XVI has said: "Goodness that lets you get away with everything is no good for anyone. Real goodness sometimes implies saying NO."

I feel honored to be named Rafael after my father and my grandfather. But since a very young age, my father taught me that I was named Rafael to honor Rafael Balart, my father's great uncle, Mambí fighter who died as a captain when he was 17 years old in the manigua, fighting for Cuba's liberty.

My son Rafael, who is 24, is honored to be named after his grandfather, his great grandfather and Rafael Balart. And I know that he TOO is willing to fight for Cuba's freedom.

My father's love penetrated the hearts of those he touched.

There is a popular song that says:  
 Loving is heaven and light.  
 Loving is complete plenitude.  
 Loving is glory and peace  
 Loving doesn't know the end.

His best present to me was teaching me how to love. His legacy is: Deep love and respect for others, for family and for Cuba.

## JOSÉ DIAZ-BALART:

The Chinese philosopher Mencius said: "With justice at my side, I keep moving forward, even against thousands of people." Mencius didn't know my father, but he defined him with those words.

Martí said: "Complaining prostitutes character." My father never, never complained. Obviously, Martí never met my father, but with those words, he defined him.

How could I define my father? A man who, when saying farewell to his doctors, who had become his friends, his idols, he said to them: getting ill was worth it because it allowed me to meet you."

What can I say about my father, that when he received the visit, a few days ago from an angel – a lady from a Catholic Hospice who so dearly helped him, sat next to him in the corner of the bed, held his hands and tenderly asked him, "Rafael ... how do you feel?"

And my father looked at her with those sky blue eyes, and with that mischievous smile, and said ... "totally fucked".

She also laughed (a lot) and said to him:

In all these years, a patient has never answered that question with that sense of humor ... ..thank you Rafael, she said, for that smile.

Daddy: thank you for everything you taught me ... ..for so much love and tenderness ...but perhaps above all: thank you for that smile.

MARIO DIAZ-BALART:

“Interesting, this is a very interesting process, I’m learning a great deal, it’s a blessing from God, to be able to keep on learning until the end.”

In the last moments of his life, my father spoke this way about the process of his own death.

He continued learning and he continued teaching me until the last moment.

My father did more, Much more than teach me how to live. With his example, With his love, With his determination, With his strength and his devotion to honor and his word, He taught me how to face life, with all its challenges and blessings.

He always used to say that politics was a lay priesthood. And he taught us that there is no greater satisfaction than being able to help others.

Maimónides, his favorite philosopher said:

“He who saves a soul in the world, is as if he were saving a whole world.” On the contrary, some think that the common good is more important than the good of every person.

But my father always told me that there is no common good if there’s no individual good to start with.

That’s why he always treated every person with so much respect and love.

What a friend . . .

...And what kinds of friends he has.

When General Douglas MacArthur said good-bye for the last time to his dear soldiers in West Point, he talked about the fundamental principles of life,

Which are the same principles of how to live and how to die . . . .that my father taught my siblings and me:

Duty.  
Honor.  
And country.

Those three sacred words, MacArthur said, will dictate what you want to be, what you can be. They are your rallying points: to build courage when courage seems to fail; To regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, To create hope when hope becomes forlorn. General MacArthur continues,

They teach you not to substitute words for actions. To have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high To learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep To reach into the future yet never neglect the past To be serious yet never to take yourself too seriously To be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

For my father,  
Duty  
Honor  
And country

Were not only the foundation of his being, But also Guided him every day of his life. Everything he taught me does not end today . . . he will continue to guide me for the rest of my life..

## LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART:

My father was my constant teacher and best friend.

He taught me how to live -and now he has taught me how to die.

He kept on teaching me until the last moment of his life -with so much strength, and with so much tenderness!

One of the first memories of my life (it's like a photographic image) is that of my parents (my mother and father) looking at me from above (maybe in my cradle) with the smiles of parents. I still remember the happiness and security they instilled in me in that moment.

During the last days of his life I wanted to convey to him that same feeling of happiness and security with my eyes and my words. What I do know is that during the difficult moments at the end of his life, he continued to look and talk to me and my brothers with the same tenderness and transmitting the same happiness and security he always did.

I'm going to miss his tenderness, wisdom and talent, his orientation and advice, his generosity of spirit (a practical, real and solid generosity, not a theoretical one).

How he enjoyed being able to help someone!

I'm going to deeply miss his devotion and supreme love for Cuba, because his wisdom for bringing together Cubans of different thoughts and origins will be greatly needed in the coming Republic.

He used his extraordinary communication gift to unify and build, both in personal relations or through mass media.

Mercedes Romay, his Chelas, his endless idyllic companion, found this letter a few days ago among my father's books. It is from a listener of his radio program "So-bremera" 10 years ago.

"Dear Sir:

Let me address you through this means, since it is impossible to reach you by telephone during your program. And that is logical. You have many thousands of listeners.

I'm not Cuban. I do appreciate and love Cubans, but of course, my passion for your homeland is not as great as yours.

The night you answered those people who were not fond of your taking Mr. Huber Matos to the station for an interview, Mr. Díaz-Balart, I was really moved while listening to you. You gave a lesson of law in all its facets, a real lesson in democracy, honorability, great generosity and a great vision for Cuba after Castro is physically destroyed, since he is already morally destroyed ... ..that night I closed my eyes and saw myself in the auditorium of a great university.

Your loyal listener, Mrs. Acuña."

Uniting and building!

And in the peak of his talent ... until his last days!

How I wish that he could return!

But, as Ortega y Gasset said, "Man is man plus his circumstances."

What are our circumstances now?

We have to make sure that his ideals of fraternal love and his devotion for Cubans return.

As my father wrote in his fraternal and inspired essay, an answer to "The Homeland belongs to everyone" of our brothers on the enslaved island, and which he entitled: "And We Belong to the Homeland:"

“A spiritual infrastructure of love is the greatest achievement we can aim for.

This implies the defense of our ethnic, cultural, philosophical and religious roots.

One sole race, the “Cuban race,” should reign with deserved respect ... Those of us who are believers can and should always put God above all in the free and lay Republic that will soon be a reality. And everyone: believers, agnostics and atheists, ought to keep in our hearts a supreme commandment, the new and triumphant formula of love:

You shall love Cuba above everything else, and other Cubans as you love yourself.”

Yes, Rafael Lincoln Díaz-Balart Gutiérrez, as you told us during the last hours of your life:

“It was worth it.”

“It begins now.”

All that struggle, all that studying, all that wisdom, all that perseverance, all that love ... was worth it.

And it will constitute a seed for the resuscitation and the reconstruction of what was the ideal of your life:

The New Republic, free and lay.



*These are the memoirs of Rafael Diaz-Balart (1926-2005), the Cuban politician, lawyer, orator and author who was the Majority Leader and Majority Caucus Chairman in the House of Representatives of Cuba from 1954 to 1958. His speech on the Floor of the House in 1955 in opposition to the amnesty for Fidel Castro predicted that totalitarianism would be installed in Cuba if Castro came to power, something that occurred four years later. In January 1959, in New York City, he founded the first organization to fight the Castro regime, "The White Rose". In 1965 he received his Doctorate of Law from the Central University of Madrid, Spain, and later obtained degrees in Comparative Law from the Universities of Liege, Belgium, Coimbra, Portugal, and Strasbourg, France. His professional activities as a legal and financial advisor led him to travel the world, and during several decades he served as a diplomat for the sister Republic of Costa Rica. But his love for Cuba and his dream of freedom for Cubans constituted the constant compass of his life.*