

Castro's daughter granted asylum in U.S.

Agence France Presse -- English

December 22, 1993 U.S.-Castro 3rdlead-2-last

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Section: International news

Length: 1360 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Dec 22 1833 18:33 Eastern Time 122293

Body

A daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro fled Cuba and has been granted asylum in the United States, a State Department official said Wednesday.

Alina Fernandez, 38, left Cuba on Monday for Madrid, Spain and flew to Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, the official said privately.

She left her teenaged daughter Alina behind in Cuba, where the standard of living has deteriorated steadily since the breakup of the Soviet Union cut off Cuba's cut-rate fuel supply.

One television network reported that Fernandez was in Washington. Jose Cardenas of the right-wing Cuban American National Foundation said she would wait several days before speaking publicly.

Representative Lincoln Diaz Balart, a Florida Republican, said Fernandez's decision was "very symbolic of the national consensus in Cuba."

In Havana a Foreign Ministry spokesman said there would be no official reaction or commentary on the departure of Fernandez.

Fernandez is the daughter of Fidel Castro and Natalia Revuelta Clews, a supporter of the Cuban revolution who at the time of Alina's birth in 1955 was married to Orlando Fernandez, a cardiologist who fled to the United States in 1961. Fidel Castro never has acknowledged Alina Fernandez as his daughter.

She is a longtime critic of the Cuban government and once described Castro as a tyrant to a reporter. She does not use Castro's surname and has said that she has not spoken with him in years.

A former model, Fernandez has said that her strongest memories of Castro are from her childhood when the Cuban leader visited the apartment she shared with her mother, still a staunch backer of the socialist revolution.

Until recently, Fernandez lived in a relatively wealthy section of Havana with her own daughter.

AFP

She was last allowed to leave the island in 1964, when at age eight she accompanied her mother to Paris, Fernandez told The Washington Post in April 1992.

"I dream of going back there, of going anywhere," she said. "But I'll never be able to leave, like a lot of other people here."

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In another interview in 1992 she said: "What do I think about Cuba's socialism? I used to believe in it when I was very little. But now, Cuban socialism is a dead-end street. In my mind, I associate it with economic collapse, with food shortages."

dkb/ak

AFP

The United States has granted political asylum to the daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, a State Department official said Wednesday.

The official said that Alina Fernandez Revuelta, aged about 40, left Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday. She left a teenaged daughter behind in Cuba.

ak/dkb

AFP

The United States has granted political asylum to the daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, a State Department official said Wednesday.

Alina Fernandez Revuelta, aged about 40, left Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, the official said privately.

She left a teenaged daughter behind in Cuba, where the standard of living has deteriorated steadily since the breakup of the Soviet Union cut off Cuba's fuel supply.

Representative Lincoln Diaz Balart, a Florida Republican, said Fernandez's decision was "very symbolic of the national consensus in Cuba."

Fernandez Revuelta has long been a critic of the Cuban government.

ak/dkb

AFP

The daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro has left Cuba and been granted asylum in the United States, a State Department official said Wednesday.

Alina Fernandez, in her late 30s, left Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, the official said privately.

She left a teenaged daughter behind in Cuba, where the standard of living has deteriorated steadily since the breakup of the Soviet Union cut off Cuba's fuel supply.

Cable News Network reported that Fernandez was in Washington. Jose Cardenas of the Cuban American National Foundation said she would wait several days before speaking publicly.

Representative Lincoln Diaz Balart, a Florida Republican, said Fernandez's decision was "very symbolic of the national consensus in Cuba."

Fernandez has long been a critic of the Cuban government and once described Castro as a "tyrant" to a reporter.

A former model, Fernandez has said that her main memories of Castro are from her childhood when the Cuban leader visited the apartment she shared with her mother, still a supporter of the revolution.

Until recently, she lived in a relatively wealthy section of Havana with her own daughter.

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Fernandez has refused to use Castros' surname and the Cuban leader has not acknowledged her as his daughter. She has said that she has not spoken with him in years.

Fernandez once married a Mexican, but Cuban authorities denied her permission to emigrate with him to Mexico. He eventually left Cuba without her.

AFP

She later wed a Mexican but Cuban authorities denied her permission to emigrate with him to Mexico. He eventually left Cuba without her.

It was not clear why Cuban authorities gave her permission to fly to Madrid.

But one unofficial source in Havana said the development likely was part of the government's new policy of allowing anyone who wants to leave to do so.

She was last allowed to leave the island in 1964, when at age eight she accompanied her mother to Paris.

"I dream of going back there, of going anywhere," she said in a 1992 interview. "But I'll never be able to leave, like a lot of other people here."

In another interview in 1992 she said: "What do I think about Cuba's socialism? I used to believe in it when I was very little. But now, Cuban socialism is a dead-end street. In my mind, I associate it with economic collapse, with food shortages."

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: POLITICAL ASYLUM (89%); TYPES OF GOVERNMENT (89%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (78%); INTERVIEWS (78%); STATE DEPARTMENTS & FOREIGN SERVICES (78%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (73%); LIVING STANDARDS (71%); ECONOMIC CRISIS (50%); FOOD CRISES & SHORTAGES (50%)

Company: WASHINGTON POST CO (53%); NASH HOLDINGS LLC (53%); GRAHAM HOLDINGS CO (53%); WASHINGTON POST CO (53%); NASH HOLDINGS LLC (53%); GRAHAM HOLDINGS CO (53%)

Ticker: WPO (NYSE) (53%); GHC (NYSE) (53%)

Industry: FOOD CRISES & SHORTAGES (50%)

Person: FIDEL CASTRO (89%)

Geographic: HAVANA, CUBA (92%); ATLANTA, GA, USA (90%); ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USA (79%); MADRID, SPAIN (73%); GEORGIA, USA (92%); FLORIDA, USA (79%); CUBA (98%); UNITED STATES (95%); SPAIN (93%)

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Load-Date: December 22, 1993

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