

ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS
MOVIMENTO DEMOCRATICA CRISTIANO (MDC)
HSCA Vol. 10
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SUMMARY

As with many of the anti-Castro groups, the HSCA has provided only a brief history of the MDC. The HSCA does mention that both the FBI and Jim Garrison investigated an MDC training camp in Lacombe, La., and that the FBI raided and closed the camp in July of 1963. While several non-MDC anti-Castroites are mentioned in the story, none has any apparent connection or involvement with the Kennedy assassination. The report summarizes the MDC's attempts to gain support, some of its clandestine activity in Cuba, and concludes with the eventual disintegration of the organization.

BACKGROUND

The MDC was founded in March 1960 in Havana. The group espoused Christian doctrine as its guiding principle, and issued a manifesto strongly denouncing Communism and advocating a free enterprise system. As Castro tightened his grip on opposition, it became too dangerous for the leader of the MDC, Dr. Jose Ignacio Rasco, to remain in Cuba, and he exiled himself to Miami in April 1960. A clandestine branch of the MDC remained in Cuba.

After the Bay of Pigs, the MDC fragmented, resulting in several factions, each with its own leader, operating under the name MDC.

One such faction, called the "Lucas" faction after the war name of its leader (who had been in Cuba during the invasion and had been conducting guerilla war against Castro) replaced Rasco's faction within the CRC in October 1961.

Rasco's faction had a military arm, headed by a flamboyant, "independently wealthy" young Cuban named Laureano Batista Falla. He financed many of the infiltration activities of the MDC. The MDC and the DRE were extremely successful in 1962 and 1963 in conducting raids and sorties on Castro's assets.

In April 1963, however, an event occurred that seriously called into question the credibility of the MDC. In early April of that year, Frank Sturgis supplied information that Falla, Orlando Bosch, Manuel Artime, and Alexander Rorke were planning an air raid on a sugar refinery in Havana on April 25. Rorke announced publicly that the raid had taken place as planned and had been a success. Apparently, however, at the time of Rorke's announcement, the raid was still in the planning stages, and Rorke caught his cohorts off guard. The FBI conducted an intensive, hurried investigation of Rorke's claim, and concluded for various reasons that the incident was merely a publicity stunt.

The MDC continued to conduct raids on Cuba well into 1964. Falla also attempted to bring legitimacy to his group by meeting and associating with Christian Democratic leaders of other countries. Despite gaining some level of help and recognition from these leaders, the MDC, like the other anti-Castro groups based in the United States, faded away during the mid-sixties, as infiltration became progressively more difficult and as the U.S. government withdrew its support.

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