

ADDENDUM: JUNTA DEL GOBIERNO DE CUBA
EN EL EXILIO

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CARLOS RODRIGUEZ QUESADA

Carlos Rodriguez Quesada was general coordinator of the Cuban underground movement known as the 30th of November,¹ named for an anti-Batista uprising on November 30, 1956 led by Frank Pais who was killed in the assault.² The organization was made up mainly of labor union members.³

Quesada was also a leader of the labor movement among sugar and agricultural workers in the Province of Las Villas and rose to national prominence in the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).⁴ Although Quesada had fought Batista with Castro and was elected to Secretary General of the CTC after Castro took power, he⁵ grew disgruntled with Castro's Communist leanings.

Likewise, the 30th of November which philosophically leaned toward socialism and nationalization of industry,⁶ was totally opposed to Castro and Communism. The group began across-the-board anti-Castro activities including guerilla actions, sabotage, propaganda and exfiltrations of members from Cuba.⁷ The 30th of November was considered to be one of the most effective organizations in the Cuban underground until infiltration by Castro agents and Cuban government repression following the Bay of Pigs invasion severely crippled its activities.⁸

Quesada and other 30th of November members were forced to seek asylum.⁹ Quesada escaped to the United States in March 1961 aboard a fishing boat.¹⁰

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During his last days in the Cuban underground,¹¹
Quesada had been in contact with U.S. agents in Havana.
However, after he took asylum, he began to disagree with
them about how to utilize the underground members within¹²
labor and peasant organizations. Nevertheless the 30th
of November did join the CIA-sponsored Cuban Revolutionary¹³
Council, and received \$6000 per month from it.

But Quesada had his troubles with the Council as
well. One incident occurred when Quesada went to Puerto¹⁴
Rico on a special operation for the Council. It was learned
that Quesada had been independently courting sympathetic
military leaders and senators who disagreed with what¹⁵
was then State Department policy toward Cuba. At the same
time, Quesada was involved in discussions among the
leaders of the DRE, MRP and the 30th of November about
forming a new unity group outside the Council organizational^{15a}
umbrella.

These activities put Quesada at odds with the Council
leadership and in March 1962 he was expelled by Antonio
Varona, the Council's general coordinator, for "lack of¹⁶
discipline." The actual reason given for Quesada's expulsion
was his involvement in organizing a hunger strike in Bayfront¹⁷
Park in Miami at which 152 people were arrested. The
strike had been planned as a peaceful demonstration during¹⁸
President Kennedy's March 10th visit to Miami. The strikers
called for aid for the liberation of Cuba and the
resignation of Jose Miro Cardona as head of the Council.¹⁹

Other well-known Cuban exile leaders such as Laureano Batista Falla of the MDC had joined Quesada in the protest.²⁰ The so-called peaceful demonstration, however, deteriorated into a wild melee and the arrests ensued.

A few weeks later, Quesada held a press conference²¹ criticizing the Council. These actions caused a division²² among the members of the 30th of November. Part of the group elected to remain with the Council while Quesada set up a rival faction named the Movimiento Revolucionario de Frank Pais.²³ Because the 30th of November had been so closely identified with Quesada and his followers, Quesada's group continued to be referred to as the 30th²⁴ of November. Having lost the healthy Council subsidy, however, Quesada spent the next few months trying to gain²⁵ recognition for his group and find ways to fund it.

The group soon became known as one of the more outspoken of the anti-Castro organizations. In April of 1962 an FBI report noted that the group's leaders²⁶ no longer trusted the CIA. Quesada revealed that in a February 1962 operation planned with the CIA, the 30th of November group had given names of the participants in Cuba to the CIA but those individuals had been²⁷ subsequently arrested.

By 1963, Quesada's attitude toward the U.S. government showed no signs of softening. In March, he wrote a letter to Presidnet Kennedy requesting immediate armed intervention²⁸ in Cuba to fight Communism. "You are either with or

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against America," Quesada claimed.

Shortly after, Quesada and his followers joined
Paulino Sierra's Junta del Gobierno de Cuba en el Exilio.
Quesada became the Junta's head of Internal Affairs.

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However, several agency reports reviewed by the
Committee raise questions about Quesada's motivation
in joining the Junta. A CIA report indicated Quesada
wanted respectability to cover illicit dealings. The
report also suggested Quesada was living suspiciously
high for someone receiving assistance from the
Cuban Refugee Center. Other reports were more critical.
One called Quesada unreliable and untrustworthy, describing
him as a man who surrounds himself with "thieves, homo-
sexuals and drug addicts."

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In early 1964, after the Junta had ceased activities,
Quesada was expelled from his own group, the MRFP. There
were reports that Quesada had been misappropriating
funds for his own use.

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In assessing Quesada's role in the Junta del Gobierno
de Cuba and the effectiveness of the Junta itself, Quesada's
personal relationship with the anti-Castro organizations may be
be significant. Several agency reports reviewed by the
Committee suggest that "opportunists" made up much of the
membership of the Junta and contributed to its final demise.

Quesada may well fit into that category of individuals who sought funds from the Junta but made no effort to recruit followers or help unify all the anti-Castro groups into the Junta. In fact, Quesada may have been less a true leader of a group than one who used his role in the organization for his own ends.

1. HSCA Staff Summary of the Cuban Revolutionary Handbook, Section, RE: MRTN, (Hereinafter Handbook Summary)
Also, see
Staff Summary of CIA file for Carlos Rodriguez Quesada, p. 1 (Ref. Confidential Memo, May 19, 1962) (Hereinafter CIA-Quesada)
2. Handbook Summary, Section RE: MRTN
3. CIA-Quesada, p. 1 (Ref. Confidential Memo, May 19, 1962)
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 3, (Ref. January 18, 1961, Memo to Turner from Murphy)
6. Handbook Summary, Section on MRTN
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
Also, see
HSCA Staff Summary of FBI file for Carlos Rodriguez Quesada, p. 5, (Ref. #105-107224-16, March 15, 1962, Miami) (Hereinafter FBI-Quesada)
9. CIA-Quesada, p. 3 (Ref. January 18, 1961, Memo to Turner from Murphy)
10. Ibid., p. 1 (Ref. Biographic Data, June 20, 1961)
11. Ibid., p. 1 (Ref. Confidential Memo, May 19, 1962)
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 1 (Ref. Information Report, #00 A 3,277,525, Mimi 10015)
14. FBI-Quesada, p. 7 (Ref. #105-107224-16, March 15, 1962, Miami)
15. Ibid.
- 15a. Ibid., p. 6 (Ref. #109-584-3414, February 14, 1963, and #97-4133-60, April 30, 1963)
16. Ibid., p. 7 (Ref. #105-107224-16, March 15, 1962, Miami)
Also, see
Handbook Summary, MRTN Section
17. Ibid., p. 4 (Ref. #105-107224-A. March 19, 1962) and p. 8 (Ref. #105-92196-24, March 15, 1962)

18. Ibid., p. 1 (Ref. #109-584-3102, Miami March 15, 1962)
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 4 (Ref. #109-584-3183, May 28, 1963, Miami)
22. Handbook Summary, MRTN Section
23. Ibid.
- ~~24.~~ VOID
25. Ibid.
26. FBI-Quesada, p. 8 (Ref. #105-92196-30, April 16, 1962)
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 7 (Ref. 105-92196-70, April 12, 1963)
29. Ibid.
30. Handbook Summary, MRTN Section
31. Ibid.
32. VOID
33. CIA-Quesada, p. 1 (Ref. #OO A 3,277,525, Mimi 10015)
34. Ibid.
35. Handbook Summary, MRTN Section
36. Ibid.
37. FBI-Quesada, p. 4 (Ref, #105-137256-4, April 21, 1964)
38. HSCA Staff Summary of FBI file for Paulino Sierra Martinez, p. 7, Memo, February 28, 1961, RE: JGCE)