

MM 105-8342

at a farm about 30 miles north of New Orleans. About 18 men were involved in the training, which consisted of guerrilla tactics, but the equipment was inadequate and it appeared to FERNANDEZ that the MDC was conducting a racket by exhibiting the "commandos" in training to wealthy Americans who were asked to contribute to the anti-CASTRO cause. He said that while at camp near New Orleans, he was given a letter by the MDC members which set forth a military plan entitled "CHARLIE CHAN Operation." He said this operation provided for a commando landing party to assault a hotel in Cuba, killing Russian diplomats at the hotel, and then returning to the United States through assistance of underwater demolition teams operating off the U.S. Submarine BARRACUDA.

FERNANDEZ said he realized the plan was absurd and that the MDC was totally unqualified to carry it out. FERNANDEZ said that while at the MDC camp he became increasingly aware of the inability of the MDC organization in the movement against CASTRO, and in general became despondent for the success of the anti-CASTRO cause. He said since he was already fearing arrest by INS, he decided to make other plans to return to Cuba and he therefore wrote a letter to CARLOS LECHUGA, Cuban Ambassador to Cuba, in which he told LECHUGA he was a member of an anti-CASTRO organization, and had information concerning an imminent attack on Cuba and would provide the information to the Cuban Government if he could himself return to Cuba. He said he reasoned that the "CHARLIE CHAN" plan would not materialize and therefore in divulging it to the Cuban Government, he would not betray the MDC.

- 17 -

Could exposure of the "racket" by which they got money from Americans be the real reason for the exiles' anger at the alleged "spy"? Are these plans less than "absurd", these people less than "totally unqualified"?

272

676

MM 105-8342

FERNANDEZ stated after he returned to Miami with the MDC, he began to make arrangements to return to Cuba. He said he decided to leave clandestinely by boat and spoke of his plan to other members of the MDC, many of whom expressed their own desire to return to Cuba because of relatives there and disillusionment about life in exile.

FERNANDEZ said he intended to depart from Miami for Cuba on August 31, 1963, but had insufficient funds to obtain supplies for the trip. He said that on the morning of September 1, 1963, several members of the MDC placed him under house arrest at the MDC headquarters in Miami, and he was told that the members, including MDC leader LAUREANO BATISTA, were then acting in the capacity of a tribunal which could impose the death sentence on FERNANDEZ. FERNANDEZ stated under duress and threats of murder by MDC members, he confessed to being a Cuban intelligence agent and was released by the MDC after they had him sign a document in which he stated no duress was used to secure the confession.

During interview by the FBI, FERNANDEZ maintained that his confessions to the MDC were false and that he made them in order to obtain his release. He denied he ever acted as a Cuban intelligence agent or that he was a Communist, and stated his purpose in desiring to return to Cuba was to reunite with his family in spite of the CASTRO regime to which he is ideologically opposed. He admitted having written to CARLOS LECHUGA as alleged by the MDC and said his purpose was to exchange information with the Cuban government for safe return to Cuba.

- 18 -

Is it possible that Fernandez did not tell the FBI that his life was threatened and that the "confession" was beaten out of him? This report pretends to report what he said but has no reference to the strong-arm stuff, reported to the FBI while being administered. Here we have another example of the fidelity and totality of FBI reporting, its dedication to nothing but the whole truth.

273 677

MM 105-8342

On October 4, 1963, FERNANDEZ advised a Special Agent of the FBI that subsequent to the considerable derogatory publicity disseminated by various news media concerning his purported confession as a Cuban agent, he has lived in fear of reprisals by Cubans in the Miami area who believe he attempted to betray their cause. He said because of this and his concern for his family in Cuba, he again decided to attempt to arrange his legal return to Cuba, and in furtherance thereof wrote to CARLOS LECHUGA of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York and also to the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

FERNANDEZ said he thought LECHUGA was the Cuban Ambassador to Mexico when he had written the letter regarding the plans of the MDC.

FERNANDEZ said he had not received a reply from his letter to CARLOS LECHUGA, but the Czechoslovakian Embassy, Washington, D.C., by letter dated September 30, 1963, acknowledged his communication and advised that no information relating to his status had been received from Cuba.

On October 16, 1963, FERNANDEZ advised he was attempting to be relocated in the United States through the assistance of the Catholic Relief Service at Miami.

On October 22, 1963, information was received from FERNANDEZ he was then residing at the YMCA at 826 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Need one wonder how much of a "spy" Fernandez was, how little pro-Castro if he didn't even know the assignments of major diplomatic personnel and didn't know how to address the men to whom he "reported"?

MM 105-8342

Record of the U.S. District Court, Chicago, Illinois, Docket #63CR664, reflects that on February 20, 1964, FERNANDEZ was sentenced in Federal District Court, Chicago, to serve five years on each of three counts of violation of Section 1324 (a) IV, Title 8, U. S. Code. At that time FERNANDEZ had entered a plea of guilty to the charge of encouraging and inducing the illegal entry of aliens into the United States. Execution of sentence was suspended and FERNANDEZ was placed on probation for three years. FERNANDEZ was restricted by the court to remain within the jurisdiction of the Northern District of Illinois, unless he obtained permission from the Probation Department.

With respect to the training camp of the MDC near New Orleans, Louisiana, where FERNANDEZ stated he had been in August, 1963, FERNANDEZ advised the camp was on a farm believed known as the Gus Labar Walhend, about 30 miles north of New Orleans.

It is also noted that following the interrogation of FERNANDEZ by the MDC on September 1, 1963, which interrogation was partially conducted by MANOLO DE CANAL, Spanish Radio Station Commentator in Miami, details of FERNANDEZ' confession were broadcast from Miami radio stations. This publicity included allegations that 8 individuals located in the United States; Nassau, Bahamas; Mexico and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, were known to FERNANDEZ as CASTRO agents. Six of the eight individuals who were alleged to be CASTRO agents, voluntarily presented themselves for interviews on September 3 and 4, 1963, to deny the allegations and clear their names. These individuals were DIEGO VALERO of Nassau, Bahamas;

JULIO POWER of Hialeah, Florida; CLAUDIO RODRIGUEZ and PEPE MENENDEZ of Miami, Florida, and HENRY BRUZUAL of Mexico City. BRUZUAL presented himself in the office of the American Embassy in Mexico City, for the purpose of clearing his name, as well as that of GUSTAVO OSMAYA, whose name had also been included as an alleged CASTRO agent. The only two individuals who did not present themselves to deny the allegations of FERNANDEZ were CARLOS LECHUGA of the Cuban Delegation to the United Nations and JOSE RODRIGUEZ MENENDEZ, described as a Cuban Embassy officer in Rio de Janeiro.

Also related to the confession given by FERNANDEZ to the MDC, is advice from the Office of the State Attorney, Miami, Florida, that on September 5, 1963, FERNANDEZ appeared at that office and furnished a sworn statement charging his civil rights were violated by a Cuban group that forced him by threats and violence to give a false statement implicating himself as a CASTRO spy.

- 21 -

It is noted that testimony by CARLOS BRINGUIER to Counsel for the Commission reflects on page 46 of his transcript that an article by Professor HERMINIO PORTELL-VILA, appearing in the February 2, 1964, issue of the magazine BOHEMIA INTERNACIONAL, contained a statement that FIDEL CASTRO was said to have made in a speech at the University of Havana on November 27, 1963. The statement was quoted as "The first time that OSWALD was in Cuba....."

BOHEMIA INTERNACIONAL, printed in Venezuela, is distributed at Miami, Florida, by Spanish Publications, 739 N.W. 29th Street.

- 22 -

That this is fiction, like so much of what originated with Bringuiet, did not keep it from being broadcast by the radical right, quoting the Commission's "evidence" as its "source", nor did it keep the Commission from printing it, knowing it to be wrong. This encouraged its further misuse by those irresponsibles whose major interest was propogande, not truth and who were not concerned with the consequences of spreading misinformation about the murder of an American President.

275

640