

Cuba

Response to Information Request Number:	CUB00003.REF
Date:	30 May 2000
Subject:	Cuba: <i>Movimiento por la Democracia en Cuba</i> (MDC)
From:	INS Resource Information Center (RIC)
Keywords:	Cuba, Dissidents, Organizations

Query:

Is there a dissident organization called the *Movimiento por la Democracia en Cuba* in eastern Cuba and, if so, does it receive monetary assistance from other dissident groups or allied Cuban exile organizations?

Response:

According to the Florida-based *Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia* (GAD), Support Group to the Dissidence, and to prominent Cuban dissident Mirna Riverón Guerrero, the *Movimiento por la Democracia en Cuba* (MDC) does exist and, as of spring 1999, was operating from the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. (Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia, April 1999)

The GAD, legally constituted in early 1995 and with its office in Coral Gables, maintains relations and provides concrete support, including monetary assistance, to a number of dissident groups in Cuba, as well as donated books and periodicals for independent libraries on the island. (Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia, April 1999)

An official of the GAD confirmed to the INS Resource Information Center the existence of the MDC. According to the official, the MDC in spring 1999 had participated in a "democracy-training session" with the *Movimiento Democracia y Paz* (MDP), Peace and Democracy Movement, a Santiago de Cuba-based group, headed by Jorge León Rodríguez González and formed in the mid-1990s, which has close relations with and receives assistance, including monetary support, from the GAD. The GAD official said that the MDP was one of its principal conduits for aid distribution and that given the cooperation between the two groups in Cuba, he believed it was "more than possible" that the MDP was passing along to the MDC some of the assistance it was receiving from the GAD. (Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia, April 1999)

The GAD official also contacted Mirna Riverón Guerrero in Santiago de Cuba who was able to confirm that the president of the MDC as of spring 1999 was Rafael Gutiérrez Acuña, a person whom she had met on several occasions. Riverón Guerrero related that Gutiérrez Acuña also was a representative in Santiago de Cuba of the *Concilio Cubano*, the now greatly diminished dissident umbrella organization which was repressed by the Cuban government in 1996. (Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia, April 1999)

Riverón Guerrero, a well known peaceful opponent of the Cuban government and an occasional contributor to the independent *Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental* (APLO), Eastern Free Press Agency, founded the *Biblioteca Independiente "René Eduardo Chibás,"* Independent Library "René Eduardo Chibás" in Santiago de Cuba in 1998, which became an informal nexus for dissident activities in the Santiago de Cuba area. (Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental, 19 April 1998; Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental, 24 January

1999; Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental, 15 February 1999). Riverón Guerrero reportedly went into exile in early 2000. (Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental, 2 February 2000)

References:

Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental. Rodríguez, Emily. "Inaugurada la Casa Chibás y biblioteca independiente en Santiago de Cuba" (Santiago de Cuba: 19 April 1998), published 20 April 1998 by *CubaNet*: www.cubanet.org/CNews/y98/apr98/20a6.htm.

Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental. Santana, Santiago. "Acogen jóvenes de Palmarito de Cauto biblioteca independiente" (Santiago de Cuba: 24 January 1999), published 26 January 1999 by *CubaNet*: www.cubanet.org/CNews/y99/jan99/26a2.htm.

Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental. Santana, Santiago. "Arrestos y amenazas en Santiago de Cuba" (Santiago de Cuba: 15 February 1999), published 16 February 1999 by *CubaNet*: www.cubanet.org/CNews/y99/feb99/16a3.htm.

Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental. Santana, Santiago. "Traslada su sede biblioteca independiente René E. Chibás" (Santiago de Cuba: 2 February 2000), published 3 February 2000 by *CubaNet*: www.cubanet.org/CNews/y00/feb00/03a6.htm.

Grupo de Apoyo a la Disidencia (GAD). Two interviews with GAD official Frank Hernández-Trujillo, on 1 April 1999 and on 10 April 1999.

Last Modified 06/14/2002