

Gaspar Jimenez and sister, Clara Jimenez, leave Miami International Airport.

The Miami Herald
5-11-83-2B

Freed exile vows to 'continue fight'

By HELGA SILVA
Herald Staff Writer

Gaspar Jimenez returned to Miami on Tuesday after he was deported from Mexico, where he spent 27 months in jail for the attempted kidnaping of a Cuban diplomat.

Family members, a few friends and supporters greeted Jimenez when he arrived at Miami International Airport shortly after 3 p.m.

"I feel wonderful to be home with my family. I am grateful for everything that people have done for me," he told reporters as he embraced his two daughters, mother and sister.

Jimenez, accompanied by his wife, Carmen, was put on a Mexicana jetliner by Mexican authorities early Tuesday.

"I am against communism," he said. "I will continue to fight because although they have tried to discredit me, they have not been able to do that."

The former Florida East Coast Railway day laborer, who came to Miami in 1961, has been in and out of jail since July 1976, when he was arrested in Mexico with Orestes Ruiz. They were charged with the attempted kidnaping of Daniel Ferrer, the Cuban consul in Merida, Mexico, and the slaying of Artagnan Diaz, the diplomat's

bodyguard.

A third man jailed for the attempted kidnaping, Gustavo Castillo, was released from Mexico five months ago. He was among the well-wishers who greeted Jimenez on Tuesday.

"This is not the end of the odyssey," Castillo told reporters. "It is part of the odyssey. We still have one left behind bars [in Mexico] and Cuba still has to be freed."

Jimenez thanked his supporters in Miami's exile community who had raised money and demonstrated to protest his extradition to Mexico and hired lawyers to speed his release from jail.

When Jimenez was arrested in 1976, Mexican police said that they had seized three bags from him containing explosive devices. The materials consisted of five blasting caps packed in a plastic bottle of baby powder, three coffee cans with plastic explosives weighing about 2.2 pounds each, a fuse, five batteries and two lengths of electric wire.

According to statements from Jimenez filed by the Mexican government in court here, the plan was to kidnap the Cuban consul, take him to the mountains, kill him and then demand that the Mexican government pressure Cuba to re-

lease political prisoners in Cuba by pretending the Cuban consul was still alive.

Later in a Mexican court, Jimenez repudiated those statements, saying he was forced to sign after he was beaten and tortured.

Eight months after his arrest on March 21, 1977, Jimenez escaped from the Mexican penitentiary where he was held pending trial.

Two months after his escape he was sought in Miami for questioning by local police and the FBI about Miami-based terrorist activities, including a April 1976 bombing in which WQBA radio news director Emilio Milian lost his legs.

Federal authorities and a grand jury were investigating evidence that Miami-based Cuban exiles planned, financed and carried out a number of terrorist attacks against Cuban government officials or institutions abroad.

Jimenez and Castillo were arrested in January 1978 in Miami on an extradition request filed by the Mexican government.

Cuban exiles mounted a series of demonstrations followed by a fund-raising campaign to finance the legal battle to fight off the extradition. Jimenez was finally extradited to Mexico in February 1981 and Castillo followed in April.



TIM CHAPMAN / Miami Herald Staff