

3 Exiles Get 30 Years in Jail

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Three young Cuban exiles from Miami, who were arrested in Cuba Aug. 3 on charges of "infiltration," have been sentenced to 30 years each in a Cuban jail, according to the mother of one of the prisoners.

Mrs. Aida Sales, mother of Feliciano Miguel Sales, 23, said her son and two other men, Rodolfo Camps Verdecia, 25, and Luis Manuel Zuniga, 23, were tried and sentenced last week at Cabana Prison in Havana.

Mrs. Sales said her son had gone to Cuba to rescue his wife and year-old daughter who were left behind when he fled. The three are believed to have sailed together in a small craft to Cuba.

In a taped telephone conversation with Sales' 21-year-old wife in Cuba, Marta Marchena Sales, the mother, was given details of the trial.

"At least they have been saved, but, my God, all three got 30 years," Mrs. Sales said. "It seems that when we make enough noise from this side, they treat them a little better," she said, referring to the fact that the men were not killed. She said some other prisoners in similar cases have been killed.

In the conversation, Mrs. Marchena Sales said the men were tried together.

"FOR THE first hour of the three-hour trial, I was very hopeful because the state security agent who investigated the case gave a very accurate description," said Mrs. Marchena Sales.

"But then the prosecutor accused them of trying to infiltrate the society and accused them of selling themselves to the Americans," she added.

The defense lawyer met the three prisoners for the first time only minutes before the trial, said Mrs. Marchena Sales.

During the prosecutor's statement, Zuniga was dragged off after yelling, "You've sold yourselves to the Russians, she said."

"They were not able to speak during the trial, even though they were promised," Mrs. Marchena Sales said. "When they were being taken out Miguel said, 'Remember that you didn't let me talk,'" she said.

THE MEN had a record of anti-Castro activities in Cuba, Sales' mother said. Zuniga and Camps had served time in prison for trying to flee Cuba. Both escaped from jail and piloted a stolen boat to Miami Jan. 28.

Sales swam to the U. S. Naval base in Guantanamo early in July after serving four years in jail for his anti-Castro activities. He lived at his parents' home in Hialeah during his stay in Miami.

Mrs. Marchena Sales, a music professor in Cuba, was fired from her job after her husband's arrest and later rehired as an assistant professor.

A few days after the arrests, many Miami Cuban exiles launched a campaign to save the lives of the three prisoners.

"I know the campaign had to make a big difference," Mrs. Sales said. "They try to tell prisoners in Cuba that no one cares about them," she said, "but this proved that there are many who do care."

She also had written Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, appealing for mercy, and believes that the letter helped save the men from death.