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SFCHRONICLE

A Cuban 'Tiger' Vanishes

Miami

The one-time dreaded "Tiger" of pre-Castro Cuba, Rolando Masferrer, disappeared here as he was to start a four-year prison term for revolutionary activity. Federal agents are looking for him.

The 52-year-old Cuban exile was sentenced in 1968 in connection with a plot to invade Haiti and overthrow President Francois Duvalier. He had been free on \$6000 appeal bond. "He appears to have skipped the country," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Lloyd Bates.

"When a U.S. marshal went to get him he wasn't there. Then he saw his farewell address in his newspaper."

PAPER

Libertad, a Spanish language weekly published here by Masferrer, appeared with this notice late in April.

"When this edition of Libertad is on the newsstand, I will be, along with several hundred men, armed, trained, ready for duty and death, in the mountains or jungles that lead to Cuba.

"I leave pending the bureaucratic and judicial knots of the Immigration Service which have kept me prisoner for ten years. Under bond. Obliging me to report every week to look into the face of some idiot who would ask about my health."

Masferrer was to have begun his prison term about six weeks ago after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected his appeal. His disappearance, however, only just came to light publicly.

ARMY

Masferrer commanded a ragtag army of 75 Cuban and Haitian exiles and American adventurers that planned to invade Haiti. Duvalier's overthrow was to have been a stepping-stone to proceed against Fidel Castro.

U.S. agents arrested the men at their hideout in the Florida Keys in January, 1967.

Masferrer was sentenced to three years on a conviction of conspiracy to invade Haiti and one year on a court of conspiring to export arms.

In Cuba, Masferrer had commanded a private army, the Tigers, which moved against enemies of President Fulgencio Batista. He is often called Tiger.

MOBS

When Batista fell to Castro in 1959, pro-Castro mobs destroyed Masferrer's daily newspaper, Tiempo, in Havana.

Masferrer fled into exile, only to be ruled an inadmissible alien by immigration authorities in Miami. They said he had served in the leftist International Brigade in the 1936 Spanish civil war, and later allegedly engaged in terrorist activities in Cuba.

There was no place to deport Masferrer to, so he was permitted to remain in the United States, with his movements restricted. He still is under deportation order.