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Cuban Prisoners in Angola Talk

Silva Porto, Angola

Three disillusioned Cuban prisoners of war captured by anti-Communist forces said yesterday they came to Angola out of duty but had no idea what its civil war was about.

They said they came to Angola by ship and airplane with nearly 500 other Cubans in their contingents to help this country's Marxist Popular Movement, for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Interviewed by foreign reporters outside their jail, the Cubans identified themselves as Private DuCentes Rodriguez Garcia, 18, of Matanzas, Cuba; Lieutenant Seso Caldes, 22, of La Sierrita, not far from the Bay of

Pigs, and Private Jose Duroda, 21, of Guantanamo, near the U.S. naval installation on the Caribbean island.

The Cubans said they had been treated harshly — beaten, clubbed and tied to trees — for a few days after their capture by troops of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), but now were being treated well.

Caldes still bears inside his right and left elbows the burn scars of the ropes with which he was tied when wounded and taken prisoner in Lobito port, shortly after his arrival last October on the Cuban ship Heroic Vietnam. He said 400 other Cubans had been on the ship with him.

Garcia was flown from Cuba to Angola last August with some 30 other Cubans. He was captured by UNITA soldiers near Lobito in September when he strayed from his vehicle while foraging for food.

Duroda, who came to Angola on a ship named Coral with 50 other Cubans last November, was captured shortly afterward in the port of Benguela while he was repairing a car. He had landed at Port Amboin, south of Luanda.

Caldes, a \$180-a-month infantry officer, said he volunteered to come to Angola when Communist Party officials asked him "to fight mercenaries."

"We Cubans always want to

help people who want our help," he said. But he said he saw no mercenaries or other whites in Angola.

"In this case we Cubans were wrong, and the Cuban people they were involved in a purely civil war between Angola's blacks, the Negro officer said. "We were definitely wrong to get involved, as far as I can see."

Garcia, a caucasian, was ordered to Angola. He said he was told he was coming here to "help the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola — we weren't told against whom." He said he did not know when leaving Cuba what the MPLA was, but on

arriving was told "it was a movement."

"I really don't know what the fighting here is about," Garcia said.

Duroda, a mulatto with an afro haircut and mustache, said he was ordered to this country "to help in the Liberation of Angola." A member of Cuba's Communist Youth Organization, he said he would like his wife and baby daughter and the Cuban public to know. "So far I am treated well and I don't know what's going on and my people should keep their hands out of Angola."

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