



CUBAN COURT JAILS DISSIDENT POET, THREE OTHERS TO JAIL TERMS

By Pascal Fletcher

HAVANA, Cuba, Nov. - A Cuban court has sentenced a dissident poet, Maria Elena Cruz Varela, and three other dissidents to prison terms of between one and two years on charges of holding illegal meetings, printing clandestine documents and defaming state institutions.

The four, leaders of a

strations against her by pro-government supporters, received a two-year jail sentence on charges of holding illegal meetings and defaming state institutions.

Several European Community Ambassadors in Cuba have approached the government about the case of the dissident poet, who human rights activists say was attacked and beaten by

jailed for two years on the same charges.

Gabriel Aguado Chavez and Pastor Herrera Macouran were sentenced to jail terms of one year and six months and one year and four months respectively after being convicted of printing illegal documents and holding illegal meetings.

Cruz Varela's *Criterio Alternativo* organisation belongs to a grouping of small dissident and human rights parties called the Cuban Democratic Convergence which opposes Cuba's one-party communist government and has called for free elections and multi-party politics.

The government does not recognise any of the dissident groups, which it says are artificially created and supported by the United States, a charge denied by Washington.

According to the prosecution, police had confiscated "counterrevolutionary propaganda" from the group, including documents insulting members of Cuba's National Assembly, Communist Party and government. *Reuter*



small dissident group called *Criterio Alternativo* (Alternative Criteria), were tried on Wednesday afternoon in the Havana East Municipal Court, the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina said on Thursday.

Foreign correspondents were not allowed to enter the small courtroom and were told to remain outside, where a crowd of about 100 people, mostly pro-government supporters, were gathered.

The state prosecutor, Edelvis Pedro Yumar, said the four were tried for their illegal activities and not for their political opinions. Cu-

pro-government militants last week.

Another defendant, Jorge Anacleto Pomar, was also

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AUTORÍA

Fletcher, Pascal

FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN

1991

FORMATO

Artículo

DATOS DE PUBLICACIÓN

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