

Reds Popular in Caribbean

EDITOR'S NOTE: Communists no longer are welcome in Guatemala, but they're still winning popularity contests in two areas at our doorstep. Here's the story of how Reds on French-owned Martinique and Guadeloupe have grabbed off top administrative jobs and what French and U. S. authorities say about it.

By SAM SUMMERLIN
Of The Associated Press

FORT DE FRANCE, Martinique (AP)—Communists have established beachheads on the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe at the gateway to the Caribbean.

But the Reds manning the ramparts here are in a no-man's land—neither Washington nor Moscow seems too much interested in them.

Locally, Communists appear to be the most popular men on the islands. Mayors of the capital cities on both islands are Communists and on Martinique the Reds have captured their biggest voting percentage in the Western hemisphere.

WHERE IS IT?

This situation—only five hours by air from the Panama Canal—has existed for several years. Yet if you asked the average U.S. newspaper reader about Martinique, his knowledge probably would be confined to a vague

recollection of a historic volcanic eruption. That would be Mt. Pelée, which in 1902 destroyed the city of St. Pierre and 30,000 of its inhabitants.

The unusually well-versed might remember that Napoleon's Empress Josephine was born on Martinique. But for most people, it would be a task to even locate the tiny island on a map.

Why the lack of alarm? One diplomat explains it this way:

Guatemala was master of its own destiny. But Martinique and Guadeloupe are departments (states) under the French flag. And France keeps a tight rein over both.

"The Communists," he adds, "are unarmed and without outside help, the worst they can do is create riots and labor agitation. But they could not take over by force."

Close observers think the prospects of outside help for local Communists is extremely remote.

STRAPPED FOR FUNDS

Though they occupy a strategic spot in relation to the United States, Central and South America, the islands nevertheless are isolated. Two commercial airfields, one on each island, service four-engineered Air France transports and Pan American planes passing through, but communication facilities are generally inadequate. The islands are easy prey to blockade. They must import everything except sugar, rum and bananas.

Most important, there is every indication the Russians do not give the islands high priority. The Communist Party here and its newspaper often are strapped for funds.

"The Soviets realize the islands are under French control," one

official points out. "They don't see any way they can take advantage of the situation at the moment."

While the United States regards Red penetration in any part of the world as serious business, the situation in Martinique and Guadeloupe does not seem to have stirred up anxiety in the states.

Pentagon officials recall that after France surrendered to Germany in World War II, the Navy clamped a highly effective blockade on the outside world. If things should ever get out of hand here, creating a threat to hemisphere security, the same methods could be used again.

WON SEATS

It's the Communists' personal popularity rather than their numbers which makes the situation on Martinique and Guadeloupe worthy of interest.

In the 1951 national elections, the Reds captured 60 to 65 per cent of the vote on Martinique; about 40 per cent on Guadeloupe.

Communists also won two of Martinique's three deputy seats in the French National Assembly. They got only one deputy in the Guadeloupe elections.

French possessions since early in the 17th century, both Martinique and Guadeloupe are under control of Paris-appointed prefects, or governors. The prefect controls police and, in emergencies, the armed forces stationed on his island.

Martinique's handsome governor, Christian Laigret, thinks Communist election gains mean little.

Emphasizing the population of both islands is almost 95 per cent Negro, with most of the land controlled by a handful of white families, Laigret says:

"The people vote black, not Communist. If war should start tomorrow, we would put 12 Martinique Communists in jail. There would be no others of importance at large."

The governor says eight live in this capital city; the other four at the northern end of the island.

FEELS CONFIDENT

He points out he has about 300 police and 2,000 troops at his command. Despite rumors of small arms smuggling, he feels confident the Reds pose no serious military threat.

Communist strength on both islands is concentrated in the larger cities. An estimated 70 per cent of the Red vote on Martinique is found in Fort de France and neighboring Lamentin, which together have about 85,000 of the island's 265,000 population.

Another official agrees with Laigret in evaluating Communist gains.

"Communism," he says, "developed great strength because the Red leaders were people very popular with the blacks as individuals before they took up the Communist line."

Aime Cesaire, mayor of Fort de France and often called the top Communist on Martinique is a

case in point. He polled 14,000 of the 18,000 votes cast in the capital's last election—far above the straight Red vote percentage.

Cesaire, says Gov. Laigret, is so popular that if he proclaimed himself a socialist tomorrow he could be re-elected mayor the next day with equal success.

PATTERN BORNE OUT

On Guadeloupe, Gov. Jean Ravail ranks Rosan Girard, the island's lone Communist deputy to the French Parliament, as top Red.

The pattern of personal popularity, gained before seeking public office, is again borne out in the case of Girard. He was a doctor who gained much admiration for ministering to the poor.

"When Girard decided to get into politics," says Gov. Ravail, "the people didn't vote for Communism. They voted for the man. If he died tomorrow, there would no longer be a major Communist on Guadeloupe."

Divided opposition has helped the Communists of Martinique, as it has Reds the world over. But Gov. Laigret points out the Socialists, DeGaullists and other anti-Communist parties are working for an organized front. He predicts a drop in the Red vote in next spring's senatorial and provincial elections.

Do island Communists want independence from France?

Editor Camille Sylvestre, who publishes the Communist journal "Justice" here and who is a member of the three-man secretariat of the Communist party on Martinique says no.

"Our fight is a fight of the Martinique people in liaison with the French. We want to give Martinique workers the same rights as workers in France."

Sylvestre claims the Communist Party on Martinique is an entirely local organization.

"We do not depend on Moscow," he says. "We receive some reports from the Communist Party in France, but no orders."

Following a world-wide pattern, Reds on Martinique press their campaign mostly among workers. They have seized control of the unions and recruit young leaders from the ranks of educated discontents.

Martinique and Guadeloupe still are strange shores for many Americans, but the State Department has a keen observer on the scene to keep Washington posted. He is Clinton Olson, U. S. consul for Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana, an affable career diplomat.

On the job here less than a year, Olson knows what to look for. He has had wide experience in dealing with Communists in Russia and other Iron Curtain countries.

If the Communists on Martinique and Guadeloupe ever turn their attention to something besides a Caribbean workers' paradise, they'll have trouble concealing their intentions from Olson's trained eye.



ANOTHER NEW LOOK—

Another version of the "new look" is this two piece dress by Dior of Paris in dark grey flannel. The full pleated skirt is topped by a simple buttoned top that de-emphasizes the bosom and barely outlines the torso.

Troops Stage Final Review

SEOUL (AP)—The U.S. 2nd Division, one of four being pulled out of Korea, staged a massive farewell parade near the west central front Saturday.

There has been no announcement as to when the division will leave, but presumably it will be soon.

The redeployment of the 2nd, was announced last week, along with that of the 25th division, which is going to Hawaii. Two other divisions leaving Korea have not been named.

Gen. Maxwell Taylor, 8th Army commander, told the massed troops:

"The 2nd division is not retiring but like a strong athlete it is pulling back to spring further."

Taylor reviewed 3,500 soldiers. The attached Dutch and Thai battalions joined in the parade.

A division spokesman said approximately 1,000 men who served more than 12 of the required 16 months of the Korean tour will form a brigade to escort the colors of the division to the United States. The others will be reassigned to other U. S. divisions in Korea to continue their Korean tour, he said.

Man Farming After Mishap Severed Feet

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—G. Errett Mills is one of the happiest men in Jefferson County. Why?

It's been nearly five years since his legs were severed just above the ankles—except for heel cords and main arteries—but he's still carrying on farm work on his natural feet.

The accident occurred while he was watching the demonstration of a portable circular saw. The machine bucked and the saw blade left his feet dangling.

FEET SAVED

At the hospital where he was taken, orthopedic surgeons were divided as to the best course of treatment. Some did not think his feet could be saved. Others were convinced the effort was worthwhile.

After repeated blood transfusions and more than four hours' work by two teams of surgeons—one team for each leg—the operation appeared successful. A close check showed that blood circulation has been re-established in the feet.

After the casts were removed, a series of skin grafts completed the job. Later, Mills' legs were encased in braces to support his weight of 165 pounds.

Two years ago the braces were discarded and Mills went back to work on his 10-acre farm.

He usually walks about two miles daily, care for three cows and cultivates his crops.

FARM FEVER

"I get farm fever," he said. "I believe I could handle a bigger farm, but my two sisters think this one is large enough. It is hard to get help I'd need on a larger farm."

His case was written up in medical journals. The half-bushel basket of letters the farmer has received came from many countries and all asked the same question:

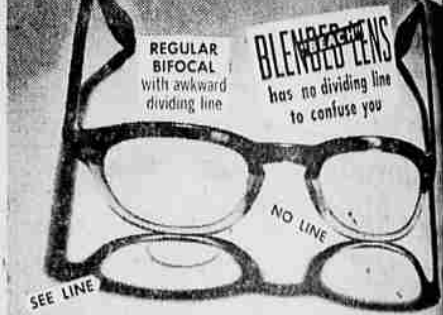
"How are you doing?" "You never know how many good people there are in the world, until you get in trouble," he says.

"I hope the press services will tell these people how well I'm getting along. I never get around to answering all those letters."

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NOTICE

Lane County hereby offers for sale the tract of land known as the Lane County Farm on the Coburg Road

The Farm will be sold by competitive bids, to be opened at 10:00 o'clock A.M., Wednesday, September 1, 1954, in the Commissioners' room, Courthouse, Eugene, Oregon. Bid prices are to be at a price per acre for the whole Farm, except Tract A, or for any combination or individual tracts as numbered on plat shown herewith. All tracts are exclusive of roads.

Tract A is not included in the sale. The entire Farm, except Tract B, is covered by a lease which expires October 25, 1954. Tract B is covered by a lease which expires October 25, 1958. Possession will be given the successful bidders on those dates. Tracts C and D will be divided at the request of two or more bidders.

Cash or alternate bid prices providing for 5 annual payments will be accepted. Title insurance will be furnished by Lane County. A bid bond or certified check equal to 10 percent of the bid must accompany each bid.

Right to reject any or all bids for any reason is reserved by Lane County.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR LANE COUNTY

Signed By

ROBERT D. MACLAY, County Commissioner
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RALPH PETERSEN, County Commissioner

