

Communists in France Losing Popularity But Party Still Has Large Vote Following

(Editor's Note: Premier Pierre Mendes-France recently returned from the United States where he assured Americans that France is a staunch ally. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic bishop of Liverpool has charged that France is so full of Communists that she never will fight. A Communist spy scandal has been top news for several months in French newspapers. This is a report on Communism in France.)

By EDWARD SHIELDS
United Press Correspondent
Paris — (U.P.) — There isn't much pie in the sky for free Europe's second largest Communist Party these days.

Fewer people read its newspapers. Fewer Frenchmen belong to it. Members of the National Society of Mayors has refused to have anything to do with their Red colleagues. Workers and youth are looking more hopefully to Premier Mendes-France for leadership.

However, the Communists still have the largest voting following in the nation, the second largest number of deputies in the French National Assembly and remain a power among the people.

Parisians Losing Interest
Parisians have been losing interest in the party; most of the farmers lost interest long ago. In the middle-size towns in industrial areas, the Communists still have lots of punches to toss, but they haven't been able to land any on the jutting jaw of Mendes-France. Moreover, he has some punches of his own.

When he took over the premiership, he told the Assembly he did not want the Red votes. He told his western allies, in

his United Nations speech, that he would never swallow the Communist bait of bi-lateral talks between France and the Kremlin, without Britain or the United States.

He has pushed ahead with his anti-alcoholism decrees although the Communists have tried to grab political kudos by linking up with the farmers who saw their traditional right to make their own beverages threatened.

Realistic View
Observers here say that Mendes-France's willingness to trade punches with an admittedly tough adversary is a more realistic view of France today than the widely-quoted words of Britain's Roman Catholic Bishop Heenan of Liverpool.

The bishop said France never would fight for western Europe's freedom because the nation was riddled with Reds.

Mendes-France stated recently, and convinced a lot of western observers, that Frenchmen who vote to the far left are "discouraged people" voicing a "protest" rather than down-the-line followers of the Kremlin creed.

The answer, the dynamic premier explained, is to cut the ground from under the Communists, to remove the things Frenchmen are protesting against.

"If such reforms and such policy are not carried out, and if these people remain despairing and discouraged, then the Communist danger will increase," he warned.

The Communists, with their 99 votes in the Assembly, are still playing it from strength. They polled 4,500,000 votes in the last general election in 1951.

One out of every four Frenchmen marked his ballot for the Communist candidate or one of the Progressives, who won four seats and consistently vote with the Reds.

Votes Help Collapse
This block of 100 votes in the 627-seat Chamber — later reduced to 99 by death—frightened more than one of the fast-revolving French premiers in the past three years and helped collapse several governments.

Mendes-France looked coldly to the far left when he came up for investiture and told the Assembly he wanted a majority without the Communist members.

He got it. One hundred fifty-four deputies opposed him, 47 abstained and 320 voted for him plus the 99 Reds.

The Communists also voted for his Indo-China settlement, and for his Tunisian policy of more self-government. They turned against him on the budget, and on the western European Union agreements.

Mendes-France made no effort to win them over; predicted, in fact, that their vote might fall if a general election were held now. Even the Communists figured his forecast probably was right.

Inflation Levels Off
The 10 years since the liberation have seen a deterioration of the comradeship of the resist-

ance forces, which was a main-spring of Red strength. The years also have brought a leveling-off in the wildly zooming post-war inflation, an increase in home-building, a gradual revival of liking for Americans, and the end of the running sore of the Indo-China war.

Communist Party membership dropped from its 800,000 peak of 1946 to 400,000 in 1951, and is estimated at 250,000 today. The party dropped 1,000,000 votes between the 1946 and 1951 general elections.

Even the Communist newspaper, "L'Humanite," let down its hair for a public shampoo recently. Once 500,000 copies of it were sold daily. Now, the paper admitted, it is distributing only 121,000 copies. In the past year, there were 10,000 fewer copies sold daily in Paris than the year before.

And Mendes-France isn't giving the paper any of the sort of material that might help its circulation rise.

Babson's Forecast To Appear on Friday

Roger W. Babson's business and financial forecast for 1955 will appear on page one of The Mail Tribune's Friday issue. Babson, whose weekly column in The Mail Tribune and some 300 other newspapers across the nation, has an average of 86 per cent accuracy in his forecasts for the past 16 years.

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Comic Czar Says Most Objectionable Material Removed

New York — Comic book "czar" Charles F. Murphy reported today that his office has removed at least 70 per cent of objectionable material from the 60,000,000 comic books distributed monthly.

Reporting on the first two months of his work since the Comic Magazine Association of America adopted a code to tone down sex, crime and horror in its products, Murphy said he is hopeful of cleaning up the remaining 30 per cent soon.

Murphy, code administrator for the association and a former New York City magistrate, said he and his staff have blue-penciled 5656 proposed drawings for comic books and rejected 126 proposed stories.

More than one-fourth of the art changes involved putting more clothes on feminine figures and flattening their curves.

The association code, adopted Oct. 27, outlaws horror, terror, violence and crime instruction books.

It also is designed to bar objectionable advertising, and Murphy reported he had halted the publication of at least five advertisements, including some offering whips and switch-blade knives.

Salem — (U.P.) — Gov. Paul L. Patterson has reappointed Dr. E. W. Carter of Roseburg and Dr. E. P. Delaney of Salem as members of the state chiropractors' examining board.

Descents Hailed as Year's Outstanding Exploration Feats

Washington — (U.P.) — The National Geographic Society today hailed as two outstanding exploration feats of 1954 record descents into the ocean and into the bowels of the earth by four Frenchmen.

The society praised the achievements of two French naval officers who descended 13,287 feet into the sea off the coast of Dakar and two French cave explorers who dived to 2485 feet in the Berger Cave near Grenoble.

The society's year-end survey also noted that mountain climbers were busy in the opposite direction, spurred by the conquest of Mr. Everest. It cited the ascent of 28,250-foot K-2 July 31 by a group of Italian mountaineers.

Other outstanding exploration achievements included: The discovery that the planet Mars has simple vegetation by an astronomical expedition which went to South Africa and returned with 20,000 photographs of the planet.

The historic August journey of two U.S. icebreakers in the Arctic which pierced for the first time the formidable McClure Strait connecting the Arctic Ocean and Viscount Melville Sound.

The discovery by a young Egyptologist of what apparently is the funerary solar ship of Pharaoh Khufu in an underground chamber near the Great Pyramid at El Giza.

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