

"DENNIS THE MENACE"



Guatemalans Plan Camp To Handle Red Sympathizers

Editor's Note—This account of the political refugee situation in Guatemala comes from a former chief of the AP foreign service, now living in retirement in Guatemala. He currently is visiting the United States.

By CHARLES S. SMITH
Written for The AP

An isolated and deserted colony called Poptum, in the remote Peten district of Guatemala, is being turned into a concentration camp for Communist sympathizers. It will handle refugees now enjoying asylum in foreign embassies in Guatemala if they have no other place to go and if they face no serious charges.

Poptum is an area without highways, approachable only by trails and air. Former President Juan Jose Arevalo had grand plans for converting the section into a model agricultural colony. Millions of dollars were spent on buildings, machinery and livestock. But a projected highway was never completed. The socialist dream faded out and the administration of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman liquidated the assets and declared the experiment a failure. Exiles sent there find only houses in ruin and rusting farm machinery, desolation similar to a deserted mining town in the Rockies.

Arbenz and his government fled almost in entirety to foreign embassies, creating a stubborn problem for the Latin-American diplomats who gave them shelter and for Lt. Col. Carlos Castillo Armas, new chief of the Guatemalan government. It may be necessary to revise the definition of political asylum and alter agreements on this subject. Who is a legal political refugee? Can men charged with murder, torture and theft of government funds be classed as political refugees? Castillo refuses to grant safe conduct to about 40 or 50 of the fugitives charged with common crimes, including Arbenz and various members of his regime and of the regime of ex-President Arevalo.

Almost 800 persons took refuge in embassies when Arbenz fell, many of them foreign agitators. They took their families, and even their servants, with them. Castillo's aides charged that some of them carried government funds seized in the crisis. Gradually the less important refugees have been

granted safe conduct out of the country.

The persons sent to Poptum will be largely Guatemalans who have expressed a willingness to put themselves in the hands of local officials and have canceled their requests for safe conduct. Many are persons who fled to foreign flag protection unnecessarily as they had not been importantly engaged with politics of the Arbenz regime. However, the Castillo regime desires to keep them under supervision and promises them humane treatment in the concentration camp.

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TOKYO (AP) — Seven crewmen from a ship which surveyed radioactivity in the Bikini area for 51 days this summer have complained of liver trouble since their return. Kyodo news service said today.

The crewmen will be examined at the Tokyo University Hospital to determine whether their illnesses are the result of atomic contamination. Their condition is not considered serious.

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