

Beirut Fears U.S. Will Recall Troops, Leaving Country At Red Mercy

By TOM A. CULLEN
NEA Staff Correspondent
BEIRUT (NEA) — The over-riding fear of many Lebanese to whom I have talked is that a premature withdrawal of American military forces would leave their nation at the mercy of the Communists.

Parents Free On Probation

MONTEREY, Calif. (AP) — A mother and elderly stepfather who padlocked a 24-pound ball and chain around the neck of her 12-year-old son were freed on probation after testifying the boy was uncontrollable.

NO, NOT AGAIN!

MOBILE, Ala. (UPI)—Perry Denson, 27, on parole for robbing a service station, was arrested Tuesday for robbing the same service station again.

power if the Americans pull out and leave only an inadequate U.N. political force to back up the constitutional government.

But that would be only the first step in the Communist subversion. There is a strange conspiracy of silence concerning the Lebanese Communist Party which, although illegal, is the best organized in the Middle East.

The world is so intent upon the conflicting claims of rival politicians and the presence of U.S. forces that the Communists are all but ignored — which suits them perfectly.

Outlawing the party actually has favored it, making its members and activities difficult to pinpoint. Yet, the Reds are found at all levels of the rebel ranks, working quietly so as not to embarrass the rebel chiefs.

The Lebanese Communists are the strongest and best trained in the Middle East, according to Hassan Tweini, editor of a leading Arab newspaper and former deputy speaker of parliament. Here are the facts about the party that Tweini gave me during an interview:

Lebanese and Syrian Communists are combined under one leadership commanding 20,000 militants and many more sympathizers.

The leader is a Moscow-trained Syrian, Kalid Bakdash, the wildest Communist politician in the Arab world.

The Lebanese-Syrian party is the brains behind weaker Red parties in Egypt and Iraq, and provides liaison with Moscow for all party activity in the Middle East.

Both Gamal Abdel Nasser and Saudi Arabia's King Saud unwittingly finance the Communists by pouring money into Red newspapers whose front pages hymn Nasser's hate campaigns, while inside are Soviet propaganda handouts extolling Russian-style atomic energy.

Bakdash, a lawyer from a wealthy family, became the first Communist elected to an Arab parliament when he polled 17,000 votes in the 1954 Syrian elections. Bakdash makes frequent trips to Moscow for instructions. He is the No. 1 man — and the most feared by non-Communists.

Another able leader is Antoine Tabet, lawyer and architect, but best known for his editorship of a Beirut Communist Magazine which once won for him a Stalin Peace Prize.

Rebel chief Raschid Karamé, who controls the northern port city of Tripoli, has a Communist brother. Raschid complains privately that his brother, Maan Karamé, is trying to run the show.

The Communist leaders in Lebanon and Syria are mostly lawyers, doctors, teachers and engineers. The party membership of 20,000 — divided roughly half-and-half between the two nations — may not seem large, but no other political party has as many militant adherents.

And it is well to remember that Russia's Bolsheviks numbered only 23,000 on the eve of the 1917 revolution.

In the present Lebanese crisis, the Communists are equally at home on the barricades or in the salons of such millionaire politicians as former premier Hussein Oueini.

In Oueini's miniature Versailles Palace overlooking the Mediterranean, the Reds quote the Koran to allay the fears of the middle class politicians.

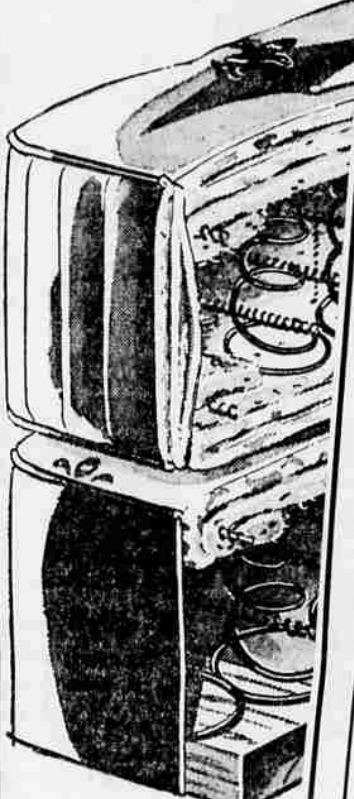
But to the masses, they preach hatred of the West and friendship for the Soviet Union and Nasser.

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