

SEP 24 1971

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FI

Pompidou Questions Jail Reform

By JOHN L. HESS

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Sept. 23 — President Pompidou, responding to a wave of revulsion at the slaying of two hostages by convicts yesterday, took issue today with proposals for penal reform and the abolition of the guillotine.

In reply to a question at his news conference about the tragedy at Clairvaux Prison, where two convicts killed a nurse and a guard before being overcome by the police, the President said that he expected that the Government would be blamed.

"It's already being said," he continued, "that one should have psychiatrists, sociologists, etc., around these hardened criminals, to give them some other prospect than life imprisonment."

"I don't believe much in psychiatrists in this field," he said. "Even when one kills in a moment of wild rage, one is not permanently mad, and what doctor will keep someone who is evidently not mad in a psychiatric asylum?"

Difficult Task Noted

The President went on to recount the story of a man who killed his wife, served his time as a model prisoner, married the prison social worker after his release, and killed her two years later.

He told the assembled journalists, "Happy are those who solve the problem in 50 lines."

The President's comment was foreshadowed in the newspaper *Combat*, which observed this morning, "Mr. Pompidou will not have an easy task if he must decide, in the face of public opinion, whether or not to grant grace to these two mutineers."

Nobody has gone to the guillotine since Mr. Pompidou came to office in early 1969. A poll at that time showed a substantial majority of the public in favor of abolition, and advocates had some hopes for passage of such a measure at the forthcoming session of Parliament. But the press today, although divided on the merits of the issue, agreed that the Clairvaux tragedy had dimmed prospects for reform.

A Parisian Deputy of the majority party, Claude Krieg, asked in a public statement whether withholding the death penalty in this case "would not be considered a sign of weakness?"

Guards Mob Ambulance

Mr. Krieg and many others also asked, however, whether the authorities had done everything possible to avoid the tragedy. A lawyer for one of the convict killers said he had volunteered to serve as an intermediary but his offer had been ignored.

Unions representing the judiciary and prison staffs declared in a joint statement that a "climate of insecurity" reigned because of a shortage of personnel and other means to carry out reforms already decreed.

Outside a hospital in Troyes, near Clairvaux, guards from the prison mobbed and tried to overturn the ambulance in which the two convicts were being taken to Paris after treatment for head injuries.

Two young guards resigned on the ground that they "didn't want to die for 1,100 francs [\$200] a month." They complained among other things that recent reforms, permitting the prisoners to receive newspapers and to listen to the radio, had spread the news of the Attica, N. Y., mutiny among them.

'Movement of Revolt'

On the other hand, Prof. Michel Foucault of the College de France, a leading advocate of penal reform, said tonight that tension had been running high at Clairvaux since an escape attempt early this year. He asserted that six men implicated in the break had been "badly beaten in the court before the eyes of the other prisoners."

See also 23, 29 Sep 71