

From 1967, even before that time the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands was responsible for Guadeloupe of which Jean Desert was a member [2]. The first Bahá'í governing body, the Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles, with its seat in Pointe a Pitre in Guadeloupe was elected in April 1977 [3]. Its jurisdiction covered Guadeloupe and its dependencies, Iles des Saintes; Marie-Galante; St. Barthelemy; Desirade Island, St. Martin/St. Maarten (of which the entire island was relocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward Islands in 1981, with its seat in Antigua), St. Barthelemy and Martinique. Since 1977 the composition of the Spiritual Assembly was made up of five Antilleans and five pioneers (???). In 1977 the Continental Board of Counsellors of Central America appointed Aurelien Andre, born 1948 in Guadeloupe, to the Auxiliary Board. In 1984 the Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles was dissolved, giving way to the Spiritual Assembly of Martinique and to that of Guadeloupe. Today, 1986 Guadeloupe has 20 local Spiritual Assemblies.

Official recognition. The Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles was incorporated on 8 January 1979 and the local Spiritual Assembly of Pointe a Pitre was incorporated on 6 April 1979. The purchase of the Bahá'í Centre of Guadeloupe occurred in July 1975. Further recognition was granted in January 1985 by the smaller Jewish and Islamic communities of Guadeloupe through their participation in World Religion Day sponsored by the Bahá'í Community. This event was reinforced immensely the prestige of the Bahá'í Faith, with assistance from the media, including many newspaper interviews before and after the event. Since the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran very favourable articles have appeared in the press.

Distinctive contributions of the Guadeloupe Bahá'í Community. The short obligatory prayer was translated in both Guadeloupian and Martiniquais Creole and published in BW: vol 18:854.

Sources

[1] BW vol 13:152 for a photograph of Desert family.

[2] BW vol 14: 542 carries a photo of Jean Desert, 2nd from left.

[3] BW vol 17: 336, see photograph.

[4] The author, Caillaud also mentions the names of Cassubi, and Agapel, and Miss Marianne Lunion, nee Balegant, Bahá'í News, Wilmette, Illinois.

[5] Bahá'í International News Service, Bahá'í World Centre.

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