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TEXT
TAGS: SCUL, PREL, FR, AG
SUBJECT: ROUND TWO IN ALGERIAN PRESS CAMPAIGN
- OVER BARBIE

TRIAL

REF: ALGIERS 3341

1. (LOU) SUMMARY. ALGERIAN PRESS HAS FOCUSED ON THE BARBIE TRIAL IN ANOTHER SERIES OF ARTICLES-- THIS TIME IN RESPONSE TO CHARGES OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE FRENCH PRESS FOLLOWING THE FIRST SERIES IN MAY (REFTEL). THE ALGERIANS WERE PARTICULARLY STUNG BY AN EDITORIAL IN THE FRENCH NEWSWEEKLY "LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR" WRITTEN BY JEAN DANIEL. "ALGERIE ACTUALITE" TOOK THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF PUBLISHING THE DANIEL EDITORIAL IN FULL IN ITS JUNE 4 EDITION, AND RESPONDED TO DANIEL'S CHARGES IN ACCOMPANYING ARTICLES. ON THE WHOLE, THESE ARTICLES CONFIRMED, RATHER THAN DISPELLED, THE IMPRESSION OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND REPORTEDLY CAUSED

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FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOA. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THROUGH DANIEL, "ACTUALITE" READERS LEARNED THAT THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS TELEPHONED HIM TO DISASSOCIATE THE GOA FROM THE ORIGINAL ARTICLES IN "ACTUALITE" ON THE BARBIE TRIAL. DANIEL WROTE THAT HE WAS NOT APPEASED AND WONDERED WHY ALGERIANS WOULD ATTACK THEIR BEST ALLIES IN FRANCE--I.E., JEWS WHO SUPPORTED ALGERIAN INDEPENDENCE, WHO STRUGGLE AGAINST ANTI-ARAB RACISM IN FRANCE, AND WHO EMBRACE THE CAUSE OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE ALMOST HYSTERICALLY ANTI-ISRAELI ATTITUDES EXPRESSED IN "ACTUALITE" WERE WHOLLY OUT OF LINE WITH RECENT PROGRESS TOWARDS A MEETING OF MINDS BETWEEN THE ISRAELI LEFT AND "PROGRESSIVE" ARABS ON THE NEED FOR A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT: "THE PALESTINIANS ARE AWARE OF THIS PROGRESS, AND BECAUSE THEY ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED, THEY ARE A LITTLE MORE SERIOUS."

3. (U) RESPONSES IN THE ALGERIAN PRESS TO DANIEL'S CHARGE OF ANTI-SEMITISM VARIED. THERE WAS, TO BEGIN WITH, A REPETITION OF THE THEME THAT JEWS ARROGANTLY CLAIM A "MONOPOLY" ON THE HOLOCAUST AND EXPLOIT THEIR PAST PERSECUTION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES: NEITHER THE FRENCH NOR THE JEWS HAVE THE RIGHT TO JUDGE BARBIE IN LIGHT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE UNPUNISHED CRIMES AGAINST ALGERIANS AND PALESTINIANS (REFTEL). ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE WRITER IN "ACTUALITE" ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BOTH ARABS AND JEWS HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF WESTERN ANTI-SEMITISM, WITH THE DIFFERENCE THAT THE JEWS, UNLIKE THE ARABS, DID NOT ENJOY THE PROTECTION OF STATEHOOD AFTER 70 A.D. ANOTHER CONTRIBUTOR SURPRISINGLY AGREED WITH DANIEL THAT SOME ISRAELIS NOW FAVORED COMPROMISE--"SOMETHING UNTHINKABLE ONLY SEVERAL YEARS AGO"--WHILE THE PLO HAS ABANDONED INTRANSIGENCE AND IS "READY TO STUDY ANY HONORABLE SOLUTION."

4. (LOU) GENERALLY, HOWEVER, THE RESPONSES TO DANIEL, PARTICULARLY IN "REVOLUTION AFRICAINE," THE FLN PARTY WEEKLY, WERE AS UGLY IN TONE AS THE FIRST SERIES OF ARTICLES IN MAY. BOTH PAPERS, IN FACT, ARGUED THAT THE BARBIE TRIAL--ALONG WITH THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST KURT WALDHEIM, THE DEJAMJUK TRIAL, AND THE STRUGGLE ON BEHALF OF SOVIET REFUSENIKS-- IS PART OF A SCENARIO ORCHESTRATED BY WORLD ZIONISM TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM AND RETARD PROGRESS TOWARDS THE HOLDING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST. THE TWO PAPERS HEAPED SCORN ON DANIEL'S CLAIM TO BE A FRIEND OF THE ARABS AND ON THE VERY NOTION OF A COMPROMISE PEACE. AS "ACTUALITE" STARKLY PUT IT, "IS OR IS NOT THE 'NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR' A SUPPORTER OF THE ZIONIST DESIGN?"

5. (C) COMMENT. ALTHOUGH "ACTUALITE"
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BURNISHED ITS REPUTATION FOR OPENNESS BY PUBLISHING THE DANIEL EDITORIAL, IT DID NOT SUCCEED IN REPAIRING THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE ANTI-SEMITIC AND ANTI-WESTERN TONE OF ITS FIRST SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE BARBIE TRIAL. REPORTEDLY GOA OFFICIALS WERE PRIVATELY EMBARRASSED BY THE CONTINUING TRANS-MEDITERRANEAN POLEMIC AND HAVE BLAMED "ACTUALITE'S" EDITOR IN CHIEF, ABDELKRIM DJAAD, WHOM FOREIGN JOURNALISTS HERE REGARD AS ECCENTRIC. NEVERTHELESS, "ACTUALITE" IS A SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS ORGAN, AND ITS HARDLINE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT WHICH APPEARED IN RECENT ISSUES HAVE CURRENCY HERE. IN THIS INSTANCE, HOWEVER, THE PRESS HAS SUCCEEDED ONLY IN DAMAGING ALGERIA'S REPUTATION ABROAD AND IN ALIENATING FRIENDS SUCH AS JEAN DANIEL--A JEWISH PIED NOIR FROM BLIDA WHO REPORTEDLY REMAINS ON CLOSE TERMS WITH THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENCY. END COMMENT.
JOHNSTONE

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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