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CITE TDCS-314/92100-11

DIST 14 FEBRUAR

COUNTRY: BELGIUM/UNITED STATES/France

DOI: 12 FEBRUARY 1969

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S VISIT: ANTI-AMERICAN LECTURE AND  
FILM CONCERNING ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

ACQ: BELGIUM, BRUSSELS (12 FEBRUARY 1969) FIELD NO. 100-762

SOURCE: A COMPETENT AMERICAN OBSERVER

1. ON THE EVENING OF 12 FEBRUARY 1969 THE "FREE TRIBUNE" OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRUSSELS (ULB) SPONSORED IN A LARGE AUDITORIUM OF THE UNIVERSITY A FILM AND A LECTURE BY THE WELL KNOWN FRENCH LEFTIST EMANUEL D'ASTIER DE LA VIGIERE. ACCOMPANIED BY HERVE LAMARRE, A FRENCH CITIZEN, ON THE SUBJECT "L'AMERIQUE BRULE" (AMERICA IS BURNING). A DISCUSSION PERIOD FOLLOWED. (FIELD COMMENT: THE TITLE OF THE LECTURE AND FILM WAS THE SAME AS THAT OF A PSEUDONYMOUS BOOK PUBLISHED IN 1968 BY AN UNKNOWN AND APPARENTLY UNSUBSTANTIAL COMPANY NEWLY ESTABLISHED IN LIECHTENSTEIN. THE BOOK WAS PRINTED IN BELGIUM IN BOTH THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES. THE ENGLISH TITLE OF THE BOOK AND MOVIE IS "FAREWELL AMERICA".

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THE BOOK WAS SO VIOLENTLY HOSTILE TO THE UNITED STATES THAT THERE HAD BEEN CONCERN THAT THIS LECTURE AND MOVIE MIGHT EXACERBATE ANTI-AMERICANISM JUST BEFORE PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT. ABOUT 1300 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE PERFORMANCE, FILLING ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE LARGE AUDITORIUM. SLIGHTLY MORE THAN HALF OF THOSE PRESENT WERE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THE REST A WELL DRESSED, WELL BEHAVED MIDDLE CLASS AUDIENCE.

THE 34 MINUTE FILM, NARRATED IN ENGLISH, CONCERNED THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. LIKE THE BOOK, IT ASSERTED THAT THE ASSASSINATION WAS THE WORK OF A GROUP OF POWERFUL AMERICAN INTERESTS, INCLUDING THE OIL INDUSTRY, THE MILITARY AND THE FBI AND CIA. IT INCLUDED THE ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER FILM OF THE ASSASSINATION WHICH IT SHOWED SEVERAL TIMES, ADDING STILL PHOTOS, SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THREE GUNMEN WERE INVOLVED AND 6 SHOTS FIRED. BY COMPARING A PHOTOGRAPH OF A SUSPECT TAKEN NEAR THE SCENE OF THE ASSASSINATION WITH A DRAWING MADE OF A SUSPECT IN THE KILLING OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, AND BY SHOWING PICTURES OF THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT KENNEDY, THE FILM LINKED THESE THREE KILLINGS TOGETHER AS PART OF ONE PLOT. THE GUILTY PARTY WHICH

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IT ATTRIBUTED TO THE "CORRUPTION OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION."  
(FIELD COMMENT: THE FILM WAS SO OBVIOUS IN ITS EFFORT  
TO EVOKE EMOTION, AND IT PROVIDED SO LITTLE SUPPORT FOR  
ITS ALLEGATIONS, THAT IT RECEIVED LITTLE APPLAUSE FROM  
THIS AUDIENCE. EVEN D'ASTIER REMARKED TWICE THAT HE COULD  
NOT AGREE WITH CERTAIN, UNSPECIFIED, ASPECTS OF THE FILM.)

3. D'ASTIER'S LECTURE TOUCHED ONLY INCIDENTALLY ON  
THE UNITED STATES; HE CHATTED AMIABLY ABOUT HIS OWN BACK-  
GROUND AND VIEWPOINTS AND CERTAIN ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY  
FRENCH CIVILIZATION AND POLITICS. WHEN ASKED BY A MEMBER  
OF THE AUDIENCE WHETHER HIS REMARKS DID NOT IMPLY THAT  
FRANCE, RATHER THAN AMERICA, WAS BURNING, D'ASTIER AD-  
MITTED THAT THIS WAS SO AND THEREUPON UNDERMINED THE FILM'S  
THESIS BY ADDING THAT THE PROBLEM OF AMERICA WAS REALLY  
THE FORERUNNER OF A "UNIVERSAL" PROBLEM. D'ASTIER'S  
FAMBLING TALK WAS DISTURBED BY WHISTLING, LAUGHTER AND  
GENERAL DISINTEREST; NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE AUDIENCE LEFT  
THE HALL DURING HIS LECTURE. LAMARRE, WHO WAS INTRODUCED  
BY A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE, SAID THAT THE FILM WAS

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BEING SHOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN EUROPE, BUT HAD BEEN SHOWN TO STUDENTS AT BERKELEY AND STANFORD. LAMARRE ADMITTED THAT IT HAD BEEN LITTLE APPRECIATED IN THE UNITED STATES. HE STATED THAT HE HAD HAD CONTACT WITH DISTRICT ATTORNEY GARRISON IN LOUISIANA IN 1968 BUT THAT GARRISON HAD SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN THE PROJECT EXCEPT TO ASK FOR A COPY OF THE ZAPRUDER FILM. LAMARRE'S REMARKS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION WERE, LIKE D'ASTIER'S TALK, GREETED BY MANIFESTATIONS OF BOREDOM AND DERISION.

5. (FIELD COMMENT: THE EVENING WAS A FARCE, AND SEEMS UNLIKELY TO HAVE INCREASED ANY ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS WHICH THE AUDIENCE MAY HAVE HAD. IT DOES NOT, THEREFORE, APPEAR TO HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE SECURITY SITUATION OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S TRIP TO BRUSSELS.)

6. FIELD DISSEM: STATE, SECRET SERVICE.

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