

Letters

Daoud: 'An Erroneous Picture'

To the Editor:

Your editorial of Jan. 12 and the Week in Review article Jan. 16, as well as letters from some of your readers, paint such a blatantly erroneous picture of the Abu Daoud affair and France's policy in the Middle East that I feel obliged to point out some of the elementary facts.

(1) I am astonished that — even in a matter of extradition—it can be written that "government policy often can and should affect judicial views." In a democratic country, this is a rather surprising assertion.

(2) Abu Daoud could not have been detained for several weeks. In France, judges are required to determine the legality of keeping a suspect under arrest. The 20-day time limit applies only to the transmission of the dossier supporting a request for provisional arrest, provided the request has been confirmed through diplomatic channels. This not being the case four days after the arrest, the French court had no choice.

(3) It is most regrettable that moral principles at times conflict with observance of the law and that legislation passed to protect individual liberties may benefit suspects who might not be worthy of it. No genuine democracy is immune from such a dilemma. Need I recall that over a hundred Nazi war criminals are at present living in complete freedom in the United States?

(4) Abu Daoud's "first-class seat" was provided by Air Algérie after he was expelled, in conformity with immigration procedures, for having en-

tered France under a false identity.

(5) I find it most distressing that someone of the reputation of the writer Elie Wiesel would assert that France abstained in the U.N. on the Nov. 10, 1975, vote on the resolution equating Zionism with racism. This is completely untrue: France voted *against* this resolution.

(6) Your allegation that the French Government yielded to external pressure is most shocking. In France, as in the U.S., the judiciary is independent from the executive, and the guidelines of our Middle East policy were set ten years ago. You cannot possibly intimate that General de Gaulle was ready to submit to any "blackmail by terror." Since 1967, our policy has not changed: We have constantly supported Israel's right to existence, but we also believe that the Palestinian problem must be solved.

(7) We are no less determined than you to fight international terrorism. At least your editorial admits that France "has advocated severe anti-terror measures." However, the real problem is treating the causes. This means seeking a just peace for all. This implies the mutual recognition of the Israelis by the Palestinians and of the Palestinians by the Israelis.

We were the first to state this. We will continue to say it. Doesn't real courage mean, after all, transcending passion and prejudice to seek the difficult path of peace?

JACQUES KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET
Ambassador of France
Washington, Jan. 28, 1977

On American Artists' 'Expression of Outrage'

To the Editor:

On Jan. 27, Hilton Kramer reported from Paris on the "vexed" French reaction to the artists' boycott of the opening of the Centre Pompidou. Organized as an expression of outrage against the French Government's release of Abu Daoud, the protest appeared in The Times and is scheduled to appear this week in Le Monde and The International Herald Tribune.

One dealer, in a counter-boycott gesture, asserted that art was above "transitory political events." Hilton Kramer reported that the politically ideological French artists have long complained about their American counterparts' indifference to such questions but regard this boycott as a misplaced reaction. Mr. Kramer found it ironic that it was not "French policy toward Israel and the Arabs that has suddenly changed, but the American art world's perception of that policy."

Goya's outrage against the French invasion of Spain produced his "Disasters of War." The bombing of a small town was the catalyst for Picasso's "Guernica." It was the rise of Hitler, a "transitory political event," that repressed free expression throughout Europe, and ultimately caused the art center to shift from Paris to New York. Artists have always been the conscience of the world. American artists spoke out against Vietnam and for amnesty. Mark di Suvero would not exhibit in America during our involvement in Vietnam. By the sale of art, political campaigns have been subsidized and the art world has been directly involved in "transitory" political events. American artists have not been indifferent.

The issue is not a boycott based upon the sudden perception of the policy of France toward Israel; that policy was known. It is, rather, a protest of terrorism as a viable political tool, a tool which has gained the status of acceptability in the United Nations.

Finally, Mr. Kramer points out that at the Centre Pompidou postwar American art is accorded its first major place in an official French museum. Just as it is a fact that Paris is the cradle of modern art, it is also a fact that the major postwar contributions to the ongoing history of art were made in New York, and the French museums' denial of this fact has been at the expense of France.

Art is the tool by which society extends its perception, and as such it is fitting to employ so indispensable an aid to bring to the attention of the community of nations that terrorism is not acceptable and accession to terrorism will not be tolerated.

ARNOLD GLIMCHER
President, Pace Gallery
New York, Jan. 28, 1977