

(c) The French have retained repression as a political weapon in Algeria, whereas native elements are allowed in Tunisia and Morocco to form political associations according to their lights and fancies. More about this later.

The third impression, confirming the above, came from no less a person than the Directeur de Cabinet of the Governor General, a young man highly thought of in administrative circles. In view of the degree of integration achieved in economic matters, he was asked whether this integration would ultimately be carried further, firstly by the suppression of custom barriers between the three areas, and secondly in the political field. Although the first question remained unanswered, the answer to the second was highly interesting: "It would be impossible for France to grant a higher degree of unification in the political field". Since prompting seemed necessary, I suggested that this might be because a unified North Africa would permit the whole Moslem population to unite in one large and uncontrollable Pan-Arab movement. He admitted that this was so, and admitted that economic differences had to be clearly defined in order that there should be no assimilation of interests between the various factions at present in the field.

We come now to the only Arab demonstration which has so far occurred West of Cairo (x). During the war, the Moslem population was afraid that any demonstrations on their part would be taken as an index of pro-Nazi activity, and they therefore refrained from any sort of anti-European movement. On the approach of VE Day, however, certain of the groups in the Department of Constantine, the most unruly element among the Arabs, petitioned the prefect to allow them to stage a parade and demonstration on the day following the end of hostilities, in Setif. This was agreed to, provided there was no evidence of political intent in such a demonstration. The terms having been agreed to, the parade took place, and it was immediately evident that this parade had a political motivation. Banners against France, and in favour of the liberation of a well-known Moslem political prisoner were prominent. The 50 French people in Setif were indignant, and someone started shooting. Later, a group of Arab hoodlums came back into town, and decimated the French population. The next day, the French Airforce came out and, in reprisal, bombed out a considerable number of Arab villages in the neighbourhood.

This reprisal is stated to be a point of rancour among all the Moslems in Algeria. Two qualified observers have stated that they believed this riot to have been incited by the French themselves, since it just happened that at that particular time a large number of French troops had returned

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(x) There has been one other demonstration, in November 1945, in Tripoli. It was stated that in this riot, some 600 Jews were casualties. This, however, was not strictly speaking an anti-European rising, since the North African Jew has long been assimilated to the native population, however much he may be disliked by some of the Moslem fanatics.