

Mr. Mike Powell, managing editor
News-Post
Frederick, Md. 21701

4/23/89

Dear Mike,

If you presume that this is related to my recent submission addressing Roy Meachum's recent column about Israel and Lebanon, you misread my intentions. However, I do intend this to relate to that and other of his columns. If I'd thought about it I'd also have saved what you may not have seen, a recent full-page ad in the Washington Post by Lebanese-Americans (some of whom, by the way, are among my closest and dearest friends.)

The Meachum column to which I refer I did keep, along with a copy of what I wrote, but at the moment I cannot locate them. In it, among other things, he sought to blame the awful suffering in Lebanon on Israel. Certainly ~~he~~ attributed none of it to anything else.

From the time you surrendered responsibility for the oped page and letters not one of my oped page submissions has appeared and few of the letters. As I now recall one of the oped page submissions was poorly edited and appeared as a gutted letter. All sense and purpose were removed. This was before I knew you no longer edited those things, far back.

My recollection is not certain but I believe that what was edited out had to do with Arab arming, including nuclear and chemical/biological, and addressed one of Meachum's tirades about alleged Israeli nuclear arms.

What I am really addressing is the institutional and personal honesty in what local readers get from papers with a de facto monopoly. While anyone has an absolute right to say or think anything, responsible and honest journalism requires at least an effort at some balance and, at least in theory, honesty and truthfulness. Meachum's columns do not meet traditional standards and the papers' policies certainly do not in recent months.

I have no interest in personal attention, no ego involvement in being published locally or elsewhere and what I've sent is only response. I've not introduced the subject, I've taken no initiatives, I don't get paid for what you print and when I'm 76 and can't do all the things I'd still like to I'd prefer not to take this time to make the papers and its editors appear to be honest when on this subject they have not been.

I have no unusual sources but I submit quite often, including in what I refer to above, I was ahead of the U.S. news. In part this comes from previous experience, when I was an intelligence analyst for the government, and in part from my reading. The latter, from time to time, includes English Israeli papers, mostly the Israeli Jerusalem Post. A dear friend goes there on work from time to time and brings these papers back for me. Last time it included a new (to me at least) paper and it was that paper that carried elaborate details on Muslim combined efforts to develop a nuclear bomb. You may have seen an excited story on this in the Washington Post a few weeks ago. Your papers rejected it when I submitted it months ago. Before Xmas, as I now recall, because my friend returned before then. I may have the Israeli story, what I sent in or both, but for some years I've had problems with filing and, if you are interested, it may take some effort to locate either or both. However, in this regard, I do call to your attention that although I have, with no real choice, written in haste, not once has any single factual error been alleged by any reader or by Meachum. He has had a couple of long-delayed puerile efforts but never once on the basis of fact. (He can now accept this as a challenge and for your convenience in conveying this to him I include a copy.)

During the period in question you have published an awful lot of just plain junk on your oped page and some letters I do not have to characterize to you. Nonsense and drivel.

In what I just sent in I attributed most of Lebanon's current anguish to Syria. I don't now recall whether I included that the great impetus of recent years was caused by the PLO when Hussein kicked it out of Jordan when they were trying to take it over, but that is the fact and that one business caused immeasurably more casualties than what

Israel has done in what is clearly intended to control attacks on it from Lebanon.

Right after I sent this in there was that full-page ad in the Washington Post, by American-Lebanese blaming it all on Syria and just yesterday that paper carried a report on the demonstration by these people in Lafayette Square after their leaders met with the President and asked him to "intervene with Syria to stop its bombing of Beirut and withdraw (its) troops from Lebanon."

In short, I was again ahead of the news and was correct.

These appear to be the opposite of the credentials your papers now require.

Whether or not you appreciate it, your papers are now racist and incite race hatred. I do not question that you have this right. I would like to believe that you do not intend this but the record for months has been the exact opposite. I would like to believe that you also want factual accuracy and truth in your own expressions of opinion, and when you employ Meacham as your columnist these become your own views, more when you censor and refuse to publish submissions of other views on those matters.

If what I submitted that was either censored or rejected was kept, I'd like you to find the time to read them and decide for yourself whether or not I was truthful and accurate and to compare it with what in that time you did publish that I've described as junk, nonsense and drivvel.

I am aware that you may not have the freedom you might prefer but I do believe that as managing editor you also have responsibilities that in the matters I address you have not met.

Whatever accounts for it, in recent years your papers have preached race hatred and intolerance and have been inflammatory in those matters I have addressed. All I have tried to do is give you an opposing view so that you would have at least a figleaf to cover this ugliness and your readers a necessarily more limited view from the other side.

This requires no answer. I'll drive to a mailbox and mail this soon so that, although our weekend mail goes to Baltimore, it may reach you before you have discarded today's Washington Post. If it does not and more than the first page of its article from its long-time and apparently Muslim Beirut correspondent interests you, I'm keeping the whole story. The jump is a full page and not easy to copy on our ~~mess~~ primitive copies. You can have it if you want it.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg