

Dear Editor, of, if Oped, Orwell's Prize Student

Having until now blamed almost all the ills of the ever-sick Muslim world on Israel and Jews, in his "New Lebanese Threats" column Roy Meachum for the first time, also blames Christians. In doing this he gives us a brilliant display of ^{his} the scholarship of which he so often reminds us: He sure learned his Orwell well.

George Orwell, who said you control the future by controlling the past and whose "Big Brother" was forever rewriting history for that purpose.

That France sent a naval force to the eastern part of the Mediterranean to be able to protect its 7000 citizens living in Lebanon can't be true because France is ~~an~~ ^{imperial} ~~power~~ ^{power}. Castigating Christian France for "the latest imperialistic gesture" he misuses this to justify still more of the Muslim terrorism he has so long defended. It is, he says, a new "excuse for terror." It has plunged his "despair and disgust" to "new depths."

So his trusting readers can "understand what is going on" in Lebanon he gives them "a brief review" of history - his rewriting of history a la Orwell to make only Christians entirely responsible for this incredible, bestial Arab slaughter of Arabs. True to Orwell he has major omissions. He makes no mention of the Eisenhower administration's dispatch of our military when ^{without} that intervention the warring ^{factions} might have worked out their disagreements and ^{the} ~~perhaps modified the de facto~~ ^{new Rafiq al} agreement which divided power between Christians and Arabs.

True also to both Orwell and the PLO that he loves and defends against anything and ~~and~~ everything, no matter how horrible, he also fails to inform his readers that the current Lebanese tragedy was set off with the PLO's move to Lebanon from Jordan. That, as he also hasn't troubled his readers to know, was not ^{caused} by Jews or Christians but by ^{Arafat and his PLO} ~~the Arafats themselves~~. They were trying to overthrow King Hussein and take Jordan over when ^{Hussein's} ~~he and his~~ army drove them out. And here, together with what he also doesn't mention, the Syrian ^{occupation} ~~invasion~~, is the immediate cause of the wreckage and ^{the} ~~indiscribable~~ slaughter of Arab by Arab in Lebanon. Both PLO and Syria tried to take Lebanon over.

MEACHUM

Because ~~he~~ defends everything muslim until he has no alternative he never told his readers the claim the PLO can make for controlling Jordan. Britain, whose imperialism in it he also does not mention, when it took over the Ottoman Empire after World War I, which he does go into, created the Palestinian state of Trans-Jordan from 70 percent of the Palestine territory. Naturally, that Winston Churchill intended and much of the world expected the smaller remaining fraction would be for a Jewish state, now Israel, he can't say after all he has written critical of Israel and in defense of Muslims in general and the PLO in particular. ^Nor, in his consummate scholarship, has he mentioned ^{the} that a majority of Jordan's population is of ^{the} ^{that} ~~Palestinian~~ origin ^{which is only natural because Jordan is the larger part of Palestine.}

Meachum is as predictable as the day-night cycle. ~~xxxxxxx~~ An article ~~in~~ the Washington Post, which he reads and sometimes quotes, published two weeks before his newest practise of Orwell, ~~It is by an authentic scholar, a fellow at the Washington~~
~~Institute for Near Eastern Studies, and it is one of the current devastations of and wholesale~~
~~slaughters in Lebanon.~~

quotes the college professor son of ^a the great Lebanese diplomat and UN official, Charles Malik, on the present troubles in Lebanon. Professor Malik states that just about all Lebanese factions, those that are killing each other in particular, agree that the immediate problem is the Syrian occupation and that the Syrians must leave if there is to be any possibility of any kind of ^{of} ~~peace~~, any saving of what remains of Lebanon and its people.

although he castigates Lebanon's president as "only another Lebanese warlord," the fact is that it is his Christian army that is fighting to drive Syria out of Lebanon. As, I would like to believe, Meachum would approve ^{of} in Americans who would fight to drive ^{into} ~~let us say~~ Mexican or Canadian armies were they to ~~invade~~ invade the United States.

Lebanon does indeed face many threats, although the only one is this column is both imaginary and Christian. But virtually 100 percent of Lebanon's actual problems

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caused ~~in~~ and perpetrated by Arabs.
are Arabs.

~~But there is not only no mention of this in~~

Neucham says exactly the opposite.

This qualifies him as a prize Orwell student and practitioner.

8/23/88
Roy Meachum



New Lebanese threats

Paris dispatched the carrier Foch to Lebanon last weekend. Immediately, the self-proclaimed Revolutionary Justice Organization promised to kill two American hostages if the carrier launched strikes against Syria and its Muslim allies.

In reply, French President Francois Mitterrand said his forces had no intention of attacking anyone. He assured the world the increased naval presence was meant to "safeguard" the lives of his country's 7,000 nationals still residing in the battered country.

Mr. Mitterrand made clear the Foch and its attendant ships were on station in the eastern Mediterranean simply to increase "diplomatic pressure." His obvious objective is to prop up the self-proclaimed Maronite Catholic president, who is actually only another Lebanese warlord. One among many.

The French president made no mention of the Americans, Britons and others held prisoner. Their number includes no French citizens and that fact certainly bolstered his bravado.

Once again, Paris has acted in its self-proclaimed role as the protector of Lebanon's sovereignty, a role it has intermittently pretended to sustain since America's anti-colonial policy forced the French to pull out of Beirut at the end of World War II.

To understand what is going on now, a brief review of the sinking nation's troubled past seems in order.

The first attempt to throw the Tricolor over Lebanon came in the middle of the last century. Emperor Louis Napoleon sent in his fleet, he said, to save his fellow Catholics from massacre at the hands of Lebanese Druze. His justification is not upheld by history.

In the area north of Beirut, as the Ottoman Empire rattled toward its demise, domineering Christian feudal lords provoked a revolt among their Muslim neighbors. Without outside help, thousands died on both sides.

At any rate, the emperor made no contribution to the slaughter. His sailors barely landed before taking off again. But for the next hundred years, France feasted off what the ancients called "the Levant" and its problems.

As for the British, they eventually aped Louis Napoleon in the region they had initially bypassed for India's riches. For years, including the emperor's first Lebanon landing, the English fleet supported French

ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean. The era's great powers conspired to prop up "the sick man of Europe," as the declining Ottoman crown was described.

But then London bankers and politicians "stole" the Suez Canal that had been built with the emperor's enthusiastic encouragement and support and in spite of Britain's determination to prevent its completion. The English occupation of Egypt in 1882 came to protect its investors from Cairo's first attempt to nationalize the Suez.

Similarly, Britain grabbed Palestine following World War I to guard the canal's Asian flank. The grab came in a deal cut with Paris that made good on Louis Napoleon's

Middle East dream which lingered along the Seine, long after his fall.

In the 1920s the French bombed and machine-gunned Syria into bloody submission. Because their control of Damascus was always touchy at best, they lopped off the sub-districts of Beirut and Lebanon, tossing in other slices of Syria to create an "independent" jurisdiction, more pliable to Paris.

For the next 25 years Lebanon was operated virtually as a department (state) of France. There ensued an incredible slew of violations against human rights and dignities, particularly among the people from the tossed-in slices and in Beirut.

Under the Tricolor, Lebanon's best governmental posts and the most favorable commercial concessions went to Maronite Catholics and their companies. Other Christians and Muslims (Sunni, Shiite and Druze) took what was left over.

There was widespread discrimination in the Arab country against anyone who spoke only Arabic. To this day, French remains the predominant language among what is left of better class Lebanese, wherever they live.

Beirut escaped for nearly three decades from the regional turmoil prompted by the colonial powers' withdrawal. The city and its countryside seemed to enjoy an anointed blessing that permitted harmony among all its diverse factions. Until recently, there was a large Jewish community which had its roots in the Biblical past, and earlier when modern Lebanon was known as Phoenicia.

I have heard friends and colleagues speak of yesterday's Beirut in tones that the deeply religious

reserve for describing paradise. Today Inferno rages in its streets. It has become a lawless terrain, the province of gangsters and petty warlords.

Somewhere in the city's chaotic rubble, but no outsiders know exactly where, 17 men spin out their remaining days in abysmal bondage. I include the Israeli airman believed still alive. It now appears his two comrades probably did not survive the wounds that led to their capture.

Under the circumstances, Francois Mitterrand's summoning up the spirit of Louis Napoleon strikes me as abomination wrapped in anachronism. At the very least, this latest imperialistic gesture should turn out to be only another tasteless joke, maybe worse than most.

In light of the countless bombings and explosions in recent months, what can anyone expect to gain from brandishing a few more jets and missiles? His empty threat makes Mr. Mitterrand the French version of Rodney Dangerfield, but less deserving of respect.

Furthermore, how dare Paris provide new excuse for terror to the gangsters holding the hostages?

The human condition suffers an excess of violence in the ancient Levant. The cure cannot come from gunboat diplomacy, in any form. That fact is plain to anyone willing to look beyond his prejudice and pride.

At this moment, my despair and disgust have reached new depths. I expected better from the French.

Roy Meachum

Most dangerous 8/12/88 game



Spread across Thursday's News-Post front page was the latest promise from Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir to smash Palestinian hopes for a national homeland with "an iron fist." It would be difficult to count how many times since last November, when the *intifadah* (uprising) began, that threat has been made, and how often occupation authorities have announced peace had been restored to the troubled Holy Land.

Americans are in no position to carp at the Israelis' tendency to practice self-delusion on the Palestinian problem. As a people, we persist in creating illusions about the entire Middle East. Most of all, millions in this country wake up each morning with the hope that the entire region would have vanished in the night. Unfortunately, the same approach appears to afflict the powers-that-be in Washington.

U.S. policy-makers were caught flat-footed when King Hussein dealt himself out as the representative of the Palestinian people in negotiations governing their future. He was never "king of the Palestinians," but no more than their custodian, a role assumed by his grandfather in the wake of the 1948 wars. Dumping the people of the West Bank into King Abdullah's willing hands was but another way the world, including the other Arab nations, consigned them to the status of non-human beings. For his gain, the old king paid with his life at the hands of a Palestinian opposed to his foreign rule.

At best, Hussein was never more than the lesser of two evils in West Bank eyes, a convenience to serve the purpose of positioning Palestinians so that they might regain control over their own destiny. This hope was strengthened by the 1978 Camp David Accords, when agreement was reached that they were to regain some form of autonomy over the next five years.

Maybe not by accident, the *intifadah* began within days of the 10th anniversary of the celebration of President Sadat's historic voyage to Jerusalem. On that occasion, the Egyptian leader repeatedly stressed there could be no peace in the region without full recognition of Palestinian rights, including their own homeland.

In any event, the uprising, now in its ninth month, signalled, once and for all, that the Palestinians had made themselves responsible for their own fate. By their continuing willingness to die, they have affirmed their demands for self-determination. It is difficult to explain

why Washington has paid no attention. But, until the king's announced withdrawal, Hussein was the prime support upon which U.S. plans for a "fair settlement" rested.

In truth, the United States finds itself in the quandry that the Jordanian king summed up as having "no policy" in the Middle East. There are those who have made that charge since the 1967 June War when America delegated intelligence and other functions of national

policy to the triumphant Israelis.

For most of that time, Washington was able to exercise control over "moderate" Arab states through its position as the sole supplier of their major weapons systems. However, increasingly in recent years, Britain and France have moved into a gap created by Congressional unwillingness to authorize White House arms shopping lists for Arab nations.

The timing could not have been worse from a U.S. point of view. For the restrictions grew tighter during the period when the Gulf nations, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, were in great anxiety from a series of Iranian victories in the war with Iraq. Rebuffed by Congress, the Gulf rulers felt forced to fend for their own defenses. In the process, the Kuwaitis and Saudis set an example for Hussein. When Jordan's latest shopping list was tattered by U.S. politics, Britain returned to their former Amman stamping grounds.

However, his newly won freedom from dependency on America should not be overemphasized. In stepping out of the Palestinian muddle, King Hussein showed the talent for simply accepting a condition which could not be changed. A healthy dose of the same reality would do wonders for this country and Israel.

In the first place, the United States must learn that its closest ally in the Middle East is much further away these days, and growing more distant all the time. Prime Minister Shamir is guaranteed thunderous applause each speech he hauls out the line that this nation is "no banana republic," subservient to American wishes. The Israelis appear fiercely determined to push Washington into establishing its own independence, if only by default.

At the same time, Mr. Shamir and his associates should examine the record over the past eight-plus months. They will discover that every move they have attempted to repress the *intifadah* has

only resulted in a new round of protests. In addition, using the Israeli Defense Force to subdue youths and girls has resulted, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, in further erosion of the once-proud aura of invincibility enjoyed by their armed forces. The erosion which began with the 1982 invasion of Lebanon constitutes a greater threat to Israel's future than all the stones thrown by Palestinians, so far and into the future.

Above all else, and in spite of any confusion in Washington, Jerusalem must find a way to make peace. The alternative is simply not acceptable. There are too many missiles and other new weapons rattling around the Middle East for anyone to count on a return to the past.

The simple truth jumps out: No one is in control in the Middle East. Each day the *intifadah* staggers on, mankind grows closer to World War III. To think otherwise is to play the most dangerous game of self-delusion since history began.

The Real Conflict in Lebanon's War

It's Not Moslem Against Christian—It's Both Against Syrian Domination

By Habib C. Malik 8/20/84

THE IMAGES of the Lebanon war are by now so numbingly familiar to the West that people may be missing a fundamentally important change that has taken place in the war there. Since last March, this fragmented society has begun to unite in supporting the demand of Gen. Michel Aoun, the interim prime minister, for removal of the Syrian occupation army from Lebanon.

Yes, there's still factional fighting between Christians and Moslems. And yes, Lebanon's old Christian-dominated political

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system is outmoded and unfair. But for the first time in Lebanon's 15-year agony, the political situation has been simplified for anyone willing to see the obvious: It is no longer purely a civil war among rival Lebanese factions, much less a "religious war." It is a "war of national liberation" against Syria, which directly and through its proxies now controls 70 percent of Lebanese territory.

This characterization of the Lebanon war is so much at odds with the assumptions of most Americans—even high-ranking officials at the State Department—that I need to offer some evidence that Christians and Moslems are united in wanting the Syrians out. Consider that:

■ Thirty percent of the Lebanese army troops fighting the Syrians are Moslem. They are commanded by Gen. Aoun, a

Christian, but they share his determination to remove foreign forces from the country.

■ Syria has failed in its efforts to push predominantly Moslem Lebanese army brigades into the fray against Gen. Aoun's forces. These units, based in West Beirut and other areas under Syrian control, have generally stayed in their barracks.

■ Despite Syria's efforts to rouse Moslem protest against Gen. Aoun, there have not been mass street demonstrations in West Beirut denouncing the general or burning his effigy. Quite the contrary, there have been quiet expressions of support for Aoun. In late July, for example, residents of West Beirut awoke to find pictures of the general posted by his supporters around the Henri Chehab Barracks in the Moslem neighborhood of Mousaytbeh.

See **LEBANON**, B4, Col. 1

Lebanon's Real Conflict

LEBANON, From B1

■ Prominent Sunni families who moved to East Beirut since last March have brought horror stories about the Syrian occupation—including tales of looting, drug-smuggling, political intimidation and wholesale confiscation of property. Suffice it to say that even among their political supporters in Lebanon, the Syrians are not well-liked. And there's a widespread suspicion in West Beirut that the Syrians were responsible for the death last spring of Sunni Mufti Sheik Hassan Khaled, who at the time of his death was resisting Syrian pressure to denounce Gen. Aoun.

Syria nevertheless continues to claim that the war is one of civil strife among Lebanese. Syria's mouthpieces are mainly factional leaders like Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblatt. But their arguments shouldn't be taken at face value, for Berri and Jumblatt are not free men. The Syrians helped engineer Berri's sudden rise to Shiite prominence in 1980, while the price for Jumblatt's Druze victory in the Chouf in 1983 was subservience to Syrian policy in Lebanon.

An example of the Syrian effort to maintain the civil-war subterfuge came last weekend when a few hundred Druze and Hezbollah fighters charged ahead of Syrian tanks and heavy artillery in attacking Gen. Aoun's forces on several fronts.

Lebanon's Moslems are not fooled. The recent gathering in Damascus of supposed Moslem and "nationalist" leaders was more like a gallery of rogues and misfits—with Ahmed Jibril, the alleged mastermind of the Pan Am flight 103 bombing, thrown in for good measure. Iran's foreign minister was there too. It is these people who know exactly where the western hostages are—and who could free them instantly, were they not too busy plotting to devour what is left of Lebanon.

The Syrians play by what Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* has called "Hama Rules." He's referring to the brutal campaign waged by Syrian President Hafez Assad to destroy Sunni Moslem resistance to his regime that led, in 1982, to the destruction of the Syrian city of Hama, where the resistance was based. Assad's message in Hama was that he was prepared to do anything necessary—no matter how brutal—to save his regime. And if Assad was willing to level a city in his own country, what would he do to Beirut?

Make no mistake about it: The bulk of Lebanon's Christians and Sunni Moslems, along with many Shiites and Druze, are today united in wanting the Syrians out of Lebanon. This is surely why Gen. Aoun remains popular throughout the country despite the awful destruction caused by his challenge to the Syrians. Damascus had apparently assumed that its continuous shelling and blockade would turn the population against Aoun. They miscalculated. They seem prepared to accept the terrible ruins of their beloved Beirut as a price for eventual liberation.

Aoun is attractive to Lebanese in part because his moral courage contrasts so sharply with the values of Lebanon's decrepit (and often corrupt) political establishment. He's honest, uninterested in personal gain and genuinely patriotic. It's understandable why the Lebanese political establishment wouldn't comprehend Aoun, but it's disheartening to see him dismissed as "suicidally stubborn" in a recent editorial in a leading American newspaper.

It's hard to describe what this war has been like for the Lebanese these last five months, but let me try. I was in East Beirut for most of this time, and like everyone else I had to endure the hardships of random daily shelling and a Syrian land and sea blockade. We spent hours each day in corridors or underground parking garages, listening to bombs crashing outside and radio bulletins a few moments later reporting where the shells had landed. Just going to the bathroom often required intricate planning and considerable nerve. We used brief lulls to go out in search of basic provisions, only to scurry back for cover when the shelling resumed.

Then came the gasoline crunch, which made everything more difficult. The Syrian blockade—meant to starve Aoun and the Christian areas into submission—cut fuel supplies to a trickle. The days and weeks wore on, and the medieval state of siege brought an eerie, creeping paralysis. Obtaining a few gallons of gas for the car or the electric generator—usually on the black market—became a major accomplishment. As electric-power outages became more frequent and prolonged, darkness and dejection began to set in.

What began to bother me most was the effect of the siege on my students at the American University of Beirut's off-campus program in East Beirut. Many of them were about to finish their studies; some had been accepted for graduate study at good univer-

sities in the United States and spent their last semester before hiding in bomb shelters.

The Lebanese have been a drama of enormous proportion heroic deeds and tragic consequences the stuff of daily life—and the thing it, in part because reporting it, in part because reporting it. You might think, from a mood would be one of despair hasn't been the case. On the sensed that for the first time people were clear about who it and what the war was all about.

The overriding concern was sea blockade and bringing in fuel supplies. An equally important factor for Gen. Aoun was getting ammunition to fight the Syrians, for the most part, were coming from Iraq. Getting sophisticated Syrian maritime skill and daring. Freelance ships an exorbitant price, would coastal guns and steer their own my-controlled harbors. Even heard that another ship had survived the blockade, we had the feeling it had been scored.

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sities in the United States and Britain. They spent their last semester before graduation hiding in bomb shelters.

The Lebanese have been living amid a drama of enormous proportions—in which heroic deeds and tragic consequences are the stuff of daily life—and the world is missing it, in part because reporting is so difficult. You might think, from afar, that the mood would be one of despair, but that hasn't been the case. On the contrary, I sensed that for the first time in 15 years people were clear about who the enemy was and what the war was all about.

The overriding concern was breaking the sea blockade and bringing in vital food and fuel supplies. An equally important consideration for Gen. Aoun was getting arms and ammunition to fight the Syrians. These arms, for the most part, were said to be coming from Iraq. Getting them past sophisticated Syrian maritime radars required skill and daring. Freelance ship captains, for an exorbitant price, would dodge Syrian coastal guns and steer their vessels into army-controlled harbors. Every time we heard that another ship had successfully run the blockade, we had the feeling a great victory had been scored.

Since the beginning of this month a difficult situation has become appallingly worse with the shelling escalating to unprecedented levels of ferocity on all sides. Chances for any sort of political dialogue

seem so remote right now. And yet such a dialogue is the only eventual way out for all parties to this conflict.

Michel Aoun has made it clear on more than one occasion, particularly to the special Arab League committee that has been handling the Lebanon crisis, that he is ready for dialogue on all the issues once the Syrians agree to a lasting ceasefire and the lifting of their blockade. Aoun's point is simplicity itself: Negotiations and dialogue at the point of a foreign gun are ludicrous. Besides, it is somewhat ironic that a repressive regime with so much blood on its hands should be insisting on "political reforms" in a neighboring country as the precondition for a cessation of hostilities.

The Arab League committee worked tirelessly to explore ways of getting the Syrians to agree to a ceasefire and an end to the blockade. Their statement earlier this month announcing that they had reached a dead end didn't specifically blame Damascus, but it left little doubt that Syria had blocked the peace effort.

As a Lebanese Christian, I must admit that these issues are not black and white. The Lebanese themselves, and the Christians in particular, must share a sizable burden of responsibility for their present woes. All too often their leaders have been preoccupied with greed and self-promotion at the expense of the common good. The Lebanese Forces militia, the

Christians' self-proclaimed protectors, didn't do a good job of representing this last free Christian community in the Middle East. Their image in the West, as right-wing "Phalangists," was unattractive. And at home, Lebanese grew tired of the Christian militia's private ports and heavy taxes—not to mention its trafficking in contraband and prostitution. Aoun marked a refreshing change.

My late father, Charles Malik, was co-author (with Eleanor Roosevelt) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and later president of the United Nations General Assembly. He spent a great deal of his life pondering the question of moral responsibility in international affairs, and the obligation of nations large and small to reckon with the judgment of history. Towards the end of his life, what bothered him most was the inability of people in the comfortable capitals of the West to empathize with people elsewhere—and to understand that some problems in the world truly are a question of right and wrong, of good and evil.

What has been happening in Lebanon is such a moral issue. The Pope said it most clearly last week when he described Syrian aggression in Lebanon as "genocide." How the West should respond to this tragedy is a complicated question. What isn't complicated is the need for a bold and imaginative—and yes, a moral—response.