

Mr. George Delaplaine
News-Post
Frederick, Md. 21701

12/18/85

Dear George,

Believe you You have every right to employ a Jules Streicher and to publish him but because I do not intend to be the Goebbels he is making of you, I write you. And to warn you, from the reactions I am getting, that you are going to wind up hated by many people, including a not inconsiderable number who are important to you.

As I said in one of my letters to the editor, if you read them, ordinarily I do not reach Meachum's crap. Apparently he has convinced you that he is the Leonardo of journalism, the one who knows all there is to know about everything in the world and you, personally, are too busy to keep up with details, events and some history. In fact he is superficial and not infrequently wrong. I'm convinced that some of what may appear to be error is actually deliberate, racist malice.

Yesterday I saw the treacle at the beginning of his column. When I got to where he describes Nancy Reagan's visit to Fort Campbell as "bravery" and "above a first lady's duty," my stomach turned and I turned the pages. Doesn't this kind of utter nonsense, this (I now see) purposeful excess bother you at all? Do you have this low regard for your readers and their intelligence?

Today, however, I heard about that column, so I retrieved it and read it. It is as vile and deliberate a piece of anti-semitic propaganda as I've seen in many, many years, contrived as experienced writers can and do contrive to make it appear to be both factually correct and reasonable and ~~it~~ in fact is neither.

Has he ever written such a piece on the innumerable occasions when American soldiers lost their lives as the result of similar duties? For example, in Germany, which has the manpower not to need any U.S. troops? Really, throughout the world. (He even suggests that the men we lost through negligence in Lebanon represent lives cost by Jews and he is entirely silent about his Arab friends being their murderers.)

Of all that is very wrong with this truly evil stuff I address but a few of these rotten misrepresentations. After the excessive silliness about the greatest manifestation of Reagan's humanity, which is hardly factual or even justified, and the insult to intelligence about ~~ancient~~ "bravery" he says we ought not believe the actual fact, that these men are "simply victims of a faulty airplane." Would you have published this if the accident had been to a plane returning from a businessmen's convention in which lives were lost? Did he write such a column when our soldiers were murdered in Germany and Italy and elsewhere - in countries of large populations and armies rather than in the barren Sinai?

After referring to what is propaganda, not fact, our country's alleged "non-policy in the Middle East," which is his distorted way of avoiding saying that his Arab bedmates don't like it and thus of hiding his virulent prejudices, he concludes that graf, "Instead of revenge (and who has suggested this, and revenge against whom?) Washington should have fought for a comprehensive peace." The thrust of this Hitlerism is that the only reason there is no peace in the Middle East is, going back to his earlier and knowing lie about it, Jews don't want peace there. But what is the truth? That he does know and you should. It is that the Arab countries from the first have refused any kind of peace with Israel. And when Sadat did agree to a peace, those for whom Meachum is a propagandist and apologist, as you are through publishing him, assassinated him. The other Arab rulers all fear this, and it happened before, as they know. This is why Hussein is king of Jordan - Abdullah was assassinated when he was talking peace.

He is deliberately inciting anti-semitism in a community in which I had no earlier experience with that evil and you are responsible for it. There is more than enough in my earlier letters - that he has not in any way disputed because he cannot - to have put you and your editors to thinking and to have been sensitive to this really terrible thing you are doing.

If I hadn't written some letters you'd not even have a figleaf of pretense of even-handedness. The policy of your papers thus is to print only anti-semitism until you are criticized for it, when you've done no more than print the criticism.

Meachum's distortions and misrepresentations are monstrous and, unlike his assault on the FBI, cannot be attributed to his ignorance, carelessness and enormous ego, which is unhidden in his writings.

Most of your readers lack knowledge of significant national and international events and their beliefs are formed by what you give them to read. In Meachum you are ~~going~~^{giving} them, in more moderate and careful form, what they'd get from the publications of the Klan, what they'd have gotten years ago from the Bund and its inspiration and fuhrer, what the hatemongers churn out.

Take a look at this column now and ask yourself if the excesses with which he begins are not intended to magnify the readers' reactions to what follows, the careful distortions and misrepresentations that are and are intended to be anti-semitism. Why else would he so magnify what, no matter how much they may have mourned, no matter how genuinely (and he has no way of knowing in any event) is a minimal political necessity for any American president?

I'd intended to stop here but something in the column caught my eye: "Ordinarily, such a contingent falls under the auspices of the United Nations. In fact it replaced a U.N. Emergency Force assembled to keep the peace in the wake of the 1973 October War." He follows this by saying that the reason the UN troops were withdrawn was that neither superpower contributes contingents. What he fudges over in "the October War" of 1973 is the fact that his Egyptian friends attacked Israel when the Jews ~~were~~^{were} in the synagogues observing Yom Kippur, and it is generally referred to as the Yom Kippur War. Now I don't try to keep up with all details, but I do have a clear recollection that at least one UN force was withdrawn by Egyptian demand, and I think it was at the very time about which he writes. If my recollection is correct, what in the world else do you need to know about his intent and purposes and what he is making of you personally and of your papers and through you, in the plural, of our community and its people?

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

Television may know no more painful moments: Ronald and Nancy Reagan walking among the surviving families and friends of the 248 American soldiers. No one could have watched without tears, either in their own eyes or caught in their throats.

In nearly five years in office, the president has performed no greater act of humanity. His wife's bravery was above a first lady's duty. Nancy Reagan's hugs and kisses attempted to absorb the pain from women and children left bereft in Fort Campbell, Ky. There were some men not ashamed to place their heads on her shoulder.

In his speech, the president quoted the 101st Airborne Division's "rendezvous with destiny." The phrase dates from World War II. The division's "Screaming Eagles" jumped into occupied Europe; they fought heroically to purge humanity of the Nazi horror. Their casualties were heavy. But they did not suffer death and mutilating wounds in vain.

The danger now is that the 248 we mourn today may be written off as simply victims to a faulty airplane. We can forget how they came to be in Gander, Newfoundland.

The fact never registered in the minds of most Americans that a continuing U.S. presence in the Sinai desert was part of the price this country paid for the Camp David accords. Israel demanded a permanent force to police the Egyptian side of the border. This led to the establishment of a multi-national peacekeeping and observer force.

Ordinarily, such a contingent falls under the auspices of the United Nations. In fact, it replaced a U.N. Emergency Force assembled to keep the peace in the wake of the 1973 October War. The principal obstacle to leaving the U.N. troops in place was that neither superpower — Russia or the United States — contributes to such contingents. And Menachem Begin wanted American boys in the Sinai.

Another complicating factor was Israel's refusal to permit a single observer from the peacekeeping force on its soil; this condition was not acceptable to the U.N. Therefore, to assure the signing of the accords, President Carter agreed to station an American battalion on the newly-regained Egyptian territory.

It was a decision that bothered many Middle East observers at the time; their concern was only slightly lessened when 10 other nations agreed to furnish troops to show their own support for peace in that troubled part of the world. However, this still leaves the United States in a vulnerable position; it guarantees Americans will be the first to die if war breaks out again.

Of course, that was the idea. The American buffer in the Sinai also works to Egypt's advantage. The U.S. troops protect Cairo against another Israeli pre-emptive strike, as in 1967. For this reason, the Egyptians treat the Americans as honored guests.

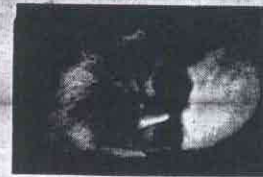
The current gain for the Israelis comes from the assuredness that they can dispose their manpower and weaponry as they deem fit, in other directions. It is doubtful there would have been an all-out invasion of Lebanon without those American forces guarding the Egyptian border.

To date, no U.S. soldier in the Sinai has been killed in the line of duty, except by accidents. For this reason, the force has never figured in most Americans' consideration of this nation's involvement in the Middle East. But given the volatility in that part of the world, how long can that situation last?

The lives of 248 young soldiers was a terrible price to pay; but if their deaths focus American public opinion on the folly of this country's non-policy in the Middle East, they will not have died in vain. In its anger, this nation ignored the earlier lesson of the murdered Marines. Instead of revenge, Washington should have fought for a comprehensive peace.

The time is long past to gamble with more young Americans' lives. First in Beirut and now in Gander, this nation has already paid enough. At the very least, Washington must demand, with new force, that Middle East peace talks begin immediately!

This "rendezvous with destiny" is the only memorial proper for the 101st Airborne's latest honored dead.



ROY MEACHUM

Viewpoint

'Rendezvous
with destiny'

Feb Post - 12/17/85