

The invasion of Lebanon and the nuclear freeze movement

written by Stephen Millies
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Israeli troops and tanks in Beirut, 1982.

Lebanon was invaded 40 years ago by the Zionist regime that occupies Palestine. At

least 48,000 Arab people were killed or injured in the attack that started June 6, 1982.

Apartment buildings in Beirut were seen on TV being bombed by Israeli war planes while Lebanese villages were shelled by Israeli tanks. The world was horrified by Lebanese and Palestinian children being killed.

The Israeli planes, cluster bombs, tanks and shells were made in the USA. Behind Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Israeli General Ariel Sharon was U.S. President Ronald Reagan in the White House.

Reagan's first Secretary of State, [Alexander Haig](#), called Israel "America's largest aircraft carrier which never could be sunk."

While Lebanon was being devastated, the U.S. was installing 108 Pershing 2 nuclear missiles in West Germany. Each of these deadly weapons could carry a nuclear payload three times greater than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Hiroshima's [bomb](#) killed 100,000 people, including 30,000 Korean slave laborers. With a range of over 1,000 miles, the [Pershing 2 missiles](#) could strike the Soviet Union in just [six minutes](#).

Millions of people demonstrated in Western Europe against this dangerous escalation in the arms race. At the same time a "nuclear freeze" movement arose in the United States that demanded a stop to any more nuclear weapons.

Reagan's supporters denounced the nuclear freeze movement. This writer saw preacher Ernest Angley claim on TV that Jesus Christ would return to earth via a worldwide nuclear war.

Six days after Israel invaded Lebanon, a million people came to New York City's Central Park on June 12, 1982. They demanded a nuclear freeze and peace.

But none of the speakers mentioned the slaughter in Lebanon. The rally organizers thought it was more important to get the endorsement of racist New York City Mayor Ed Koch, a big supporter of Israel.

Koch was hated by the Black and Latinx communities. The year before Koch had closed Harlem's Sydenham Hospital.

A sit-in there was viciously attacked by police on Sept. 19, 1980, injuring 30 people. The [Rev. Wyatt T. Walker](#), who had been a co-worker of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., called the police brutality as bad as anything that occurred in Birmingham or Selma, Alabama.

From Lebanon to Ukraine

The refusal of the "official" U.S. peace movement's leadership to denounce Israel's invasion was repulsive. It broke down the anti-war movement.

Later, some of these leaders were apologetic, especially after the September 1981 massacres at the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Over 3,000 people died there. An official Israeli inquiry admitted that Ariel Sharon was to blame.

In contrast, 100,000 people marched on the Pentagon on May 3, 1981, to demand an end to Reagan's wars in Central America. For the first time, a Palestinian representative spoke to the crowd.

The march was called by the People's Anti-war Mobilization (PAM) and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). PAM activists later formed the ANSWER coalition.

PAM called demonstrations against the invasion of Lebanon. At the June 12 rally, PAM supporters distributed tens of thousands of leaflets condemning the U.S.-Israeli

invasion.

There were few altercations in Central Park with supporters of Israel. Did the June 12 organizers really believe that Jewish people coming to a peace rally were all supporters of war criminals like Begin and Sharon?

The refusal to mention Lebanon was a capitulation to the capitalist establishment.

In its first stages, the invasion of Lebanon was a U.S. proxy war against the Warsaw Pact. That was a defensive military alliance of the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries against NATO.

By directing the Israel air force to shoot down 88 Soviet-built, Syrian-owned MiG jets on June 9 over Lebanon, the Pentagon was telling the Soviet Union that it could do the same over East Germany.

The U.S.-approved invasion of Lebanon and the installation of the nuclear first strike Pershing 2 missiles were both examples of the Reagan regime's adventurism.

Israel's nuclear stockpile was also U.S approved. These nukes were not targeted at Rockefeller's oil wells in the Arab/Persian gulf. They were aimed at the Soviet Union then and Iran today.

The challenge today is NATO's war against the Donbass republics and the Russian Federation. The U.S. and NATO instigated this war and are giving orders to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Congress can't find any more money to fight COVID-19 but it's spending over \$50 billion to fund fascists in Ukraine, like the Azov battalion.

Hands off Russia and the Donbass republics!

