

Schiller Institute rallies defense of Lebanon at Paris meeting

by Christine Schier

“Stopping Genocide in Lebanon—A Strategy to Fight the American-Soviet Condominium” was the theme of a conference held by *Executive Intelligence Review* and the Schiller Institute in Paris, France on Sept. 21. More than 150 people gathered at the Centre Chaillot to hear Lebanese, French, and American speakers denounce American appeasement of the Syrian occupier, and defend the cause of a free Lebanon, enjoying freedom of conscience and cooperation among all its different communities.

The conference filled a vacuum left by other French political forces who, although defending the sovereignty of Lebanon, have not attempted to transform their protests into a mass mobilization or direct popular support.

Among the attendees were many religious and political leaders, including Monsignor Harfouche, vicar of the Maronite Patriarchate in France, and Father Riquet, an eminent defender of human rights, as well as representatives from the Lebanese Sunnite and Shi'ite Muslim communities. Speeches ranged from the international setting behind the occupation of Lebanon, to an analysis of the internal Lebanese situation and the contribution of France toward ensuring peace.

‘Kissinger doctrine’ is to blame

Jacques Cheminade, president of the French Schiller Institute, showed how the disaster had been brought to a head by a combination of Syrian ambitions, fanatic Islamic fundamentalism, and Israeli fears. But over and above these more visible elements, the ultimate blame is to be laid on the Soviet-American condominium and the “Kissinger doctrine” with its Metternichean concept of balance of forces. On the regional level, Hafez al Assad, that “small-time Metternich” whom Kissinger so admires, is called upon to enforce the condominium. “As an independent nation-state based on freedom of conscience and of speech, Lebanon is therefore naturally hostile to a regional and worldwide New Yalta, which explains why it is being attacked.” Cheminade called upon all Frenchmen to defend Lebanon with the same tenacity as does the Lebanese peasant in refusing to give up his fields.

The theme of Soviet-American deals over the Middle East was further elaborated by Philip Golub, director of the *Middle East Insider* newsletter. “As ironic as it may be, American and Soviet priorities are identical, notwithstanding problems of competition, because both superpowers want to avoid reaching a nuclear level of escalation, while giving diplomatic priority to Teheran and Damascus, at the expense of other Middle Eastern nations and peoples.”

The American government approved of Hafez al Assad’s coup d’état in November 1970 and its policy has not really changed since, Golub explained. The expected worsening of Soviet-American relations over the next few years will probably lead to a major war in the Middle East. In that light, the resistance of the Lebanese people today is all the more justified.

What does Assad really hope to accomplish in Lebanon? Bassam al Hachem, professor at the Social Sciences Institute of the University of Lebanon, answered this question. “He did not come in order to fight Israel—he could have gone to the Golan for that. He did not come to defend the Palestinian revolution—he was one of their hangmen. And he certainly did not come to preserve the freedom of Lebanon. No, he occupied the country to ‘divide and reign.’” First, he attacked the Sunnites who opposed his regime, then he divided the Christians—the carrot for those in the North and the stick to those in the Shouf region south of Beirut. He is the one who has fomented the inter-Muslim conflicts, supporting Shi’ites and Druzes against Sunnites, then supporting the Shi’ite Amal movement against the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt.

Professor al Hachem explained that Hafez al Assad is obsessed by the smallness of his community in Syria—the Alawites account for only 12.5% of the Syrian population. Assad seeks in a Greater Syria the means to break the internal isolation of his community. At the same time, he tries to attack the different Sunnite communities by mounting an “axis of minorities” all along the crescent from Pakistan to the Mediterranean. That is why he supported Iran against Sunnite Iraq.

During the discussion period, a participant pointed to the parallel of Henry Kissinger's policy toward the world's largest heroin producer, Communist China, and the way in which Assad transformed Lebanon's Bekaa Valley into marijuana and poppy fields.

Create a Second Lebanese Republic

Antoine Sfeir, editor-in-chief of *Cahiers de l'Orient*, stressed in his speech that Lebanon has always been a "troublemaker" in the region, in that it is the only state which honors democracy and freedom of religion and of speech. Prime Minister Michel Aoun himself, a man of the people and the armed forces, is also a "troublemaker." His message is simple: All foreign troops must get out of Lebanon. And yet, this "simplistic" message creates trouble for the Lebanese oligarchy, the political caste, and even the hierarchy of the Maronite Church.

Now, thanks to General Aoun, there is again the possibility of building a true Lebanese nation. We are going to create a Second Lebanese Republic, Sfeir declared. It will be built by all those "children of the war" who identify themselves first and foremost as "Lebanese." The fight will be tough, warned Sfeir. For a long time, the Christians neglected the Muslims and gave up trying to "Lebanize" them. "The time has come to build one single indivisible nation. . . . We have taken too much advantage of cheap Palestinian manpower, we have let the only democracy in the Arab-Muslim world sink into anarchy."

A lively debate broke out between Professor al Hachem and Mr. Sfeir. Hachem maintained that it was now up to the Lebanese Islamic community to recognize the separation between civil and religious society, while Sfeir argued that the Lebanese Christians had not "organized," or "Lebanized," the Muslims over the years, and that the Christian community first had to wake up. These differences dissolved in the room and at the podium when homage was paid to those Shi'ites and Sunnis who, like Nazem el Kaderi, have defended the constitutional state at their own risk and peril.

Samir Daher, president of the International Peace and Human Rights Union, defined the conditions for peace in the Middle East. The Lebanese Army, in his words, is the last legitimate resort for resisting the Syrian occupying force, and is therefore a rallying point. From the U.S.S.R., Lebanon expects a minimum of sincerity when it speaks of "popular liberation"; and from the U.S., it expects that it act as the "leader of the free world." Kissinger's policy has spelled nothing but disaster; he "carried over into the Lebanon the Israeli-Egyptian conflict," and as Cardinal de Retz stated, "For great issues, there can be no small steps." Daher expressed confidence that the Lebanese can work things out among themselves: In war, he said, there are never two winners but, without this consensus, there may well be two losers.

Gen. Georges Lavernhe, former technical adviser to the Lebanese government, described the role of France in the

Middle East. Although France still has a special responsibility toward Lebanon, she at least partially reneged in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Parisian intelligentsia totally misunderstood the nature of the conflict: pro-Palestinian and pro-Muslim, they thought they were witnessing a "class struggle" and a "liberation of the Palestinian people." This misconception paralyzed the necessary initiatives, even more so since French intellectuals were still suffering from the trauma and the guilt of the Algerian war. On top of that, when the oil crisis broke out, a premium was placed on relations with oil-producing countries, often to the detriment of Lebanon.

Since then, in the recent period, French policy has somewhat shifted, even though the means employed, such as the sending of the fleet to the Mediterranean, are not really equal to the tasks. However, France has found herself relatively isolated on the Lebanese issue. When the government asked for emergency action by the United Nations Security Council, when French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas denounced the Kissinger doctrine, neither the American administration nor the European Community (EC) supported them. The truth is that all other European countries followed the United States, playing the Syrian card.

In this way, France has had to retreat from her former position and toe the line. Under American pressure, the search for a solution was again entrusted to the Group of Three (Marocco, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia) from the Arab League. Although the Group of Three had originally imposed the withdrawal of all Syrian troops as a precondition to any agreement or cease-fire, they have now withdrawn this precondition, under pressure from Washington.

The participants supported sending a harshly worded message to President George Bush, asking him to change policy, and another to French President François Mitterrand, thanking him for his help and asking him to intervene in order to have the EC countries withdraw their ambassadors from Damascus and to put an end to economic aid for Syria.

Mrs. Marianna Wertz, the wife of William Wertz, one of Lyndon LaRouche's imprisoned collaborators, testified on the battle led by her American friends on behalf of Lebanon and human rights. She described the physical and spiritual torture Mr. LaRouche is subjected to, but also asked the public not to judge the American people on the basis of its government. "America will wake up before long. The American people, committed to just causes, will not tolerate a bad government forever. In America, the fight is on to obtain freedom for Mr. LaRouche. We firmly intend to win it and at the same time to help you to win the battle for the freedom of Lebanon."

Toward the end of the conference, a film made by Lebanese students on the Syrians' atrocities in Beirut was shown. Finally, homage was paid to all the victims of the Lebanese war, and the memory of Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, great World War II French Resistance leader who had so passionately supported Lebanon, was invoked.

Documentation

The conference "Stopping Genocide in Lebanon—A Strategy to Fight the American-Soviet Condominium" held in Paris, France on Sept. 21, received the following message of greeting from General Aoun:

Lebanon is living through a martyrdom. In the free zones as in the occupied territories, the Lebanese people, equally but in different ways, suffer under the yoke of the Syrian occupation force. Whether it be in the name of an *Anschluss* or by trng pretext of its own security at the expense of neighbouring territory, this Nazi regime is perpetrating massacres in Lebanon. It unfortunately enjoys the support of more than one country that claims to defend human rights and human freedom.

Undoubtedly the liberated zone with its Christian majority has had to endure the most, but the totality of the Lebanese people are victims of this martyrdom.

As I address the message to you, a Muslim Lebanese parliamentarian has just been assassinated by bullets from the Assad regime. This regime is striving to eliminate all independent personalities, since in all Syrian-occupied regions, these independent voices are the only means by which the Lebanese can vote for a Lebanon of freedom, of unity and of the future.

We appreciate your efforts made in the service of that Lebanon which we all defend.

—Michel Aoun, Prime Minister of Lebanon

Participants in the conference unanimously adopted and sent the following messages:

To President George Bush:

We the undersigned, gathered in Paris this 21st of September at a Schiller Institute conference devoted to defending the sovereignty of the Lebanese people, are shocked by the systematic backing you give to Syrian policy in the region. How can a nation like the United States, born of a war for independence and liberation, support such a tyranny as Hafez al Assad's, well known for its barbarity? How can a nation like yours support a drug-trafficking country that is slowly killing your own youth? How can a nation like yours support a country that is complicit in hostage taking and in terrorist acts that destroy your own airplanes in the skies?

Is America, the beacon of liberty for all oppressed peoples, dead? In the name of the historical America, of the America founded upon its declaration of the inalienable rights of man, we call upon you, President Bush, to change policy. We call upon you to use all your power in order to free Lebanon from all foreign occupation forces, that this nation might restore its freedom and sovereignty.

To Lebanese Prime Minister Gen. Michel Aoun:

Gathered in Paris on September 21, at a Schiller Institute conference in support of a free and sovereign Lebanon, we wish to express, General Aoun, our full support for the war of liberation you are waging against all armies occupying your country. We salute your patriotism and your immense courage, that quality of military men which General de Gaulle called "character." Through your actions and your unselfish struggle, hope and the will to fight have been awakened in your people. You remind other nations of the world, especially France, of those great moments in the past when they were called upon to take up arms to defend national integrity. May your courage also inspire today's politicians, so often devoid of ideals and purpose!

To Selim Hoss, Muslim Prime Minister of Lebanon:

Gathered in Paris . . . we ask you to denounce the exactions of the Syrian occupation forces who are acting against all the communities in Lebanon.

We are aware of the courage such an attitude would demand of you. We hope you will demonstrate that courage.

To François Mitterrand, President of France and of the European Council:

Gathered in Paris on September 21 at a conference organized by the Schiller Institute in support of a free and sovereign Lebanon, we would first like to thank you personally for your efforts and those of your foreign minister.

However, deeply outraged by the attitude of the Syrian occupier in Lebanon, we feel that a greater firmness toward Mr. Hafez al Assad, on your part and on the part of the member countries of the EEC, is politically indispensable.

We would also ask you to intervene on behalf of an immediate suspension of economic aid to Syria from France and from the member countries of the EEC, and for the withdrawal of their ambassadors in Damascus, until such time as the Syrian troops have withdrawn from Lebanon, in parallel with the other occupants of this country.

To Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.:

Gathered together in Paris, this 21st of September, at a conference organized by the Schiller Institute in defense of a free and sovereign Lebanon, we wish to convey our testimony of friendship and our moral support to Lyndon LaRouche, held prisoner in Rochester, Minnesota.

We salute the terrible risks run by all those fighting for the liberation of oppressed peoples, for justice and against any violation of any nation's sovereignty. We are in a good position to understand the price exacted for challenging established powers, and especially that of the present Soviet-American condominium and its mastermind in the U.S., Henry Kissinger.

Standing firm in the fight we are waging in spite of the martyrdom of our nation, we share your suffering and know that you, also, remain steadfast in a combat that joins ours.