opinion about Lebanon. They suggest that Israel, by invading Lebanon, is also acting as a saviour of the Lebanese, and in particular the "Christians", from implied depredations of the PLO. All articles which discuss the Phalangist Party, a paramilitary political organization which is supported by *some* of the Maronites, who are *one* of Lebanon's several Christian sects, receive a headline with "Christian" as part of its title. For example, stories about Phalangist-Israeli cooperation have been headlined:
"Christians Join Lebanese War, Shell Guerrillas" (Baltimore Sun, June 17, 1982)
"Israel and Christians Surround PLO" (Washington Post)
Such headlines evoke a very different reader response than would a more honest description.

b) Editorials. In general the major daily papers have been consistently supportive of Israel's invasion, although there has been varying degrees of criticism for what has been termed "over-reaction". The editorials of one paper are a notable exception to this general pattern: The *Christian Science Monitor* from the beginning of the war has refused to condone Israel's actions. On June 8, the *Christian Science Monitor* observed:
"The Israeli invasion of Lebanon should prompt nations to earnest self-examination. Are they working as hard for peace as they seem to be for war? Peace demands not only moral and spiritual vigilance but conscious, unrelenting effort. If Britain and Argentina had stuck to resolving their dispute by peaceful means, they would not now be mired in armed conflict. If the Arab-Israeli dispute had been given the diplomatic attention it demands, we might not be witnessing a devastating Israeli attack on Lebanon. Letting political problems simmer until they explode betrays a lack of intelligence and vision."
Other press editorials, in contrast, have virtually defended Israel's "right" to intervene in Lebanon. For example, the *Chicago Tribune*, also on June 8, criticized "The pious outrage about Israel" and asserted that it is necessary to recognize Israeli measures "meant purely to gain a measure of security."

The Washington Post and *New York Times* editorials have tended to take a more skeptical view of what the final outcome of the invasion will be. As early as June 7, the *New York Times* acknowledged that Israel had used the attack upon its ambassador as "only a pretext for a long-planned strike into Lebanon." However, the paper also advised its readers that "it was never reasonable to expect Israel to leave the Galilee hostage to an unfettered PLO army within rocket range." On June 8, the *Washington Post* expressed concern about the future in Lebanon and the eastern Mediterrean region as a consequence of Israel's invasion, but it also insisted that "Israel's determination to police its northern border cannot be faulted." This balancing of criticism of Israel with an "understanding" for why it must do what it does is a persistent theme in not just the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* editorials, but also in those of other papers. Only at the end of July when Israel began its merciless bombing and shelling of West Beirut did editorials in papers like the *Post* adopt a stance of unambiguous condemnation of this particular Israeli policy.
While it is fair to credit editors for refusing to accept the Israeli rationale for its massive bombardment of West Beirut, it is also accurate to say that criticisms of this tactic were limited to questioning the senseless killing inflicted upon the civilians in the city. There has been no serious examination of the moral and legal bases of Israel's occupation. On the contrary, there seems to be a passive acceptance of the "fact" that Israel's presence in Lebanon may be long-term. The basic reason editors fail to consider the consequences for Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinians is that they have become inured to accepting the Israeli definition of what constitutes "facts" in the Middle East. This characteristic leads us to the next type of pro-Israeli bias in the press.

2. ACCEPTING THE ISRAELI LINE

In the simplest terms the Israeli invasion and continuing occupation of Lebanon is an act of military aggression. However, Israel has a more unique view of the "facts". The official Israeli position is that its campaign in Lebanon is "Operation Peace for Galilee", meaning Israel has sent its army into Lebanon to destroy bases from which Palestinian "terrorists" have been launching rocket attacks upon Israeli towns in the northern part of the country. Initially, Israel's stated objective was to clear southern Lebanon up to the Zahrani River (about 25 miles north of the Israeli border) of all PLO "strongholds". Later, as Israeli forces began their siege of Beirut, the goal broadened to include the expulsion of all Palestinian "terrorists" from Lebanon. For Israel, then, the war in Lebanon is not an act of aggression at all, but a form of legitimate self-defense.

Basically, the American press has accepted the Israeli position without any serious questioning. What Israel has done has been in the interests of peace! Aggression, invasion of a sovereign country, the violation of international law, these are not considered to be relevant concerns with respect to the situation in Lebanon. In fact, Lebanon need not even be considered a country with legal rights, according to the *New York Times*, which is probably the single most influential and authoritative newspaper in the United States:
"Peace is the issue, not Lebanon. There is no Lebanon or plausible plan to revive it. A world that tolerated its disintegration, occupation by Syria and collapse into quasi-feudal baronies, speaks nonsense when it pleads for Lebanese 'sovereignty' or territorial integrity'.
(— NYT, June 7, 1982, p. A-18)

Thus, the issue becomes in the American press the same issue as stated by the Israeli government: the right to self-defense, that is peace and security for Israel. Indeed, newspaper editors have been quite blunt on this point since the inception of the invasion on June 6. For example, the *Washington Post*, one of the country's most prestigious papers, said on June 7:
"Unquestionably, the Israelis have a right to protect their people. The British have just gone 8,000 miles to assert the same principle. Many observers, including the Reagan administration, had understood that Israel could not be expected to let its border towns be indiscriminately shelled ..."
(— Washington Post, June 7, 1982, p. A-14)
Other mass-circulation dailies have been even more ardent in their defense of Israel's invasion. According to the *Chicago Tribune*:
"... (I)t is important to keep the thing (invasion) in perspective, to understand the situation before coming to a quick and too-easy judgment about Israel's latest behavior.
Imagine if Cuba periodically were to hurl a few bombs onto southern Florida and send out hit squads to shoot American diplomats. Imagine of Austria occasionally took it into mind to harass its neighbors in Germany with few random rocket attacks. Britain has gone to war, after all, because Argentina moved into a barren, insignificant island thousands of miles from the British homeland.
... Israel has been under attack. Its foe is intransigent and unrelenting...Israel's justifiable desire to guarantee its citizens a simple measure of security and to send its diplomats in peace to foreign capitals has been repeatedly flouted."
(—Chicago Tribune, June 8, 1981, p. A 10)
What is so disturbing about the press acceptance of the Israeli position is the deliberate ignoring of facts. The Israeli premises are simply untrue. There was no provocation of Israel as far as shelling of its towns in the Galilee are concerned. Since July 1981, when a cease-fire, negotiated through the mediation of Philip Habib acting as President Reagan's special envoy, went into effect, the PLO had strictly observed the terms. It has been Israel which has repeatedly violated the terms of the U.S. sponsored cease-fire agreement. This was recognized by Anthony Lewis, the *New York Times* columnist whose regular "Abroad At Home" editorial is syndicated in many newspapers:
"In terms of keeping northern Israel free of artillery attacks, that arrangement (cease-fire) has been astonishingly successful.
For nine months not a single rocket or shell was fired by PLO gunners into Israel. When Israeli planes bombed Lebanon on April 21 for the first time since the truce started, the PLO did not respond. When there was another bombing on May 9, there was a limited response: about 100 rockets that Israel said caused no damage or casualties. Then, after the massive Israeli bombing last week, the PLO responded with full-scale barrages.
In short, the cease-fire kept the Galilee safe until Israel bombed Lebanon."
(—New York Times, June 7, 1982, P. A-19)
Anthony Lewis is not exceptional in his presentation of the facts, but writers like him are rare and their ability to impart accurate knowledge of the facts to editors would appear to be virtually non-existent. There is a blind acceptance of the Israeli line which filters out any information which may be contradictory. This can be seen in the general press treatment of the set of events which led to the invasion, the attempted assassination of an Israeli diplomat in London, up to all the incidents which have marked the Israeli besieging and blocade of Beirut since mid-June. For example, when Israel accused the PLO of being responsible for the assassination attempt and initiated massive bombing raids in Lebanon as a retaliation, no newspaper headlined — or even discussed — the PLO denial and denunciation of this action. In contrast there were banner headlines about Israel's accusations, accusations which were presented as if they were factual statements. Similarly, throughout the prolonged siege of Beirut there have been periods during which Israel has cut off all food, water and electricity, presumedly to induce the residents of the western and southern sectors of the city to flee, but these essentially inhumane moves which are in violation of the Geneva Accords are only referred to with the briefest of sentences within the text of an article dealing with other matters.

The overall impact of accepting Israeli statements as the "correct" interpretation of developments in Lebanon since the beginning of June is significant. The press is an influential source from which public attitudes are formed. By presenting what is essentially Israeli propaganda as truth, the public's views are shaped to be pro-Israeli. In view of the fact that the U.S. is not at war with the Lebanese, or the Palestinians, or any other Arabs, it is tragic that its citizens should be manipulated to have hostile feelings toward them.

3. DEHUMANIZING THE PALESTINIANS

Perhaps even more insidious than accepting the Israeli rationale for truth is the tendency to accept Israeli attitudes toward Palestinians. There is a racist character to the manner in which the Israeli government refers to Palestinians. Most of the stock Israeli phrases for describing the Palestinians and their primary political organization, the PLO, have been adopted by American newspapers. Some examples are presented below.