

# Original Toni Nissi Rebuttal to Mother Jones

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From: Toni Nissi

Beirut Lebanon

Dear Sirs / Madams

In a recent article on March 21, 2016 by Max Rosenthal entitled "Trump Foreign Policy Adviser has ties to Brutal Lebanese Militia", Mother Jones has once more degraded itself by desperately selecting out of context sentences and utilizing selective phrases out of a very long interview held in October 2011 with Adam Serwer (published Oct 27 2011) under false pretenses aiming only at twisting the Truth in an attempt to smear and slander Professor Walid Phares (the recently appointed foreign affairs advisor to Donald Trump)

Rosenthal states in his article "As Mother Jones reported in 2011, Phares was a major player in the Lebanese Forces, one of the Christian militias that fought in Lebanon's brutal 15-year civil war. According to Toni Nissi, a colleague of Phares' at the time, Phares helped the group's leader, Samir Geagea, steep its fighters in religious ideology" Nissi said. "Walid Phares was responsible for training the lead officers in the ideology of the Lebanese Forces."

Out of an act of sheer desperation, the magazine is quoting itself five years ago!

Back in 2011, I got a call from Adam Serwer requesting an interview which was supposed to be a part of a "documentary" to make the whole free world learn from our resisting experience in defending Lebanon sovereignty during the phases of the war on Lebanon. Regrettably Mother Jones selected three sentences from an almost four hours full conversation with Serwer about the Lebanese resistance against Syrian occupation. Serwer maliciously distorted the form and core of what was discussed in a cheap and repulsive attempt to attack Professor Walid Phares and create an absurd and ludicrous connection between Professor Phares academic, political and intellectual roles and contribution to educate the high cadres of the Lebanese Christian resistance with the deplorable and unacceptable Sabra and Shatila massacres that neither Professor Phares nor even Dr. Samir Geagea the commander of the LF as of 1986 were in any way or form implicated in their exactions and which occurred almost four years before Phares had any public role in the Lebanese Forces

Furthermore, it is important to clarify what I said for the benefit of the good intentioned reader of the Mother Jones article:

a) In the Interview of 2011, I stated that Dr. Samir Geagea, was transforming the militia to a "Christian Army," explaining that this was executed in the context of applying strict conduct and leadership criteria amongst the officers and reorganizing the defensive efforts of the community to help continue protecting the only remaining unoccupied territory in Lebanon by the Syrian Army. The rest of the quote is Serwer's own confabulations and allegations.

b) Upon being directly asked about "any role" of Professor Walid Phares in the Sabra and Shatila massacres in September 1982, I responded clearly and unequivocally that "Phares had absolutely nothing to do with any violence, military activities, or massacres. He never shot one bullet";

How can an author of many books on democracy and pluralism over two decades be accused without any justification, as a militia actor involved in violence?

c) During the conversation with Serwer I explained that the legal institutions of the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Army started to collapse in 1975 and that the civil communities were forced to create "the Lebanese Front" as a political council representing all political parties, to manage, organize and lead the only remaining unoccupied area of the country. The platform of this organization was based on cultural pluralism, democracy and independence from foreign occupation. Based on this background, I discussed with Mr. Serwer about the public role of Walid Phares who started in 1986 to represent the Social Democratic Party, as its secretary general, in the council of representatives alongside other political parties. I reiterated that Walid Phares was educating and lecturing to the Cadres about the ideology of Lebanese Christian resistance based on the project of a pluralist, sovereign and democratic Lebanon. As a lecturer, Phares was educating and encouraging openness, understanding and pluralism, concepts very clear in his books published since 1979 including in "Pluralism in Lebanon," and "Democratic Dialogue," books ignored by Serwer.

I am appalled and totally disgusted that Mother Jones's Adam Serwer twisted few words , out of an another subject unpublished long interview , in the purpose of attacking Professor Walid Phares , with the goal of tarnishing his image during a Presidential campaign in the US. I also denounce Mother Jones for continuing to fan and perpetuate these false accusations against Phares and referring them to me. I demand a full retraction and apology from Mrs. Rosenthal, Serwer and from Mother Jones as well as a full removal of my name and quotes from the above shady articles in the print and online editions. Furthermore I hereby ask Mother Jones to publish my letter fully, under US laws.

Toni Nissi

Beirut, Lebanon