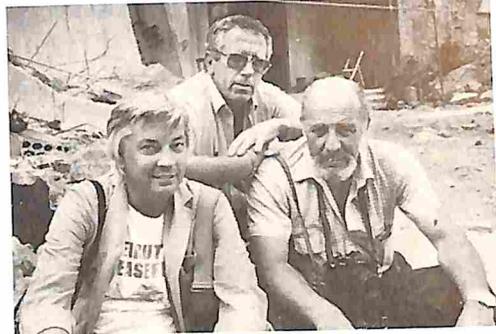


## Letter from the Publisher

The remarkable eyewitness account and exclusive photographs in this week's World story on the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel and the massacre that followed were the result of the almost routine serendipity that seems to be the hallmark of good journalists. As the bomb that was to kill Gemayel was being set off, TIME Correspondent David Halevy was at the reception desk of the Hotel Alexandre in East Beirut checking out. TIME Staff Photographer Rudi Frey was at the hotel bar having a beer. David Rubinger, another veteran TIME photographer, was upstairs packing. The three were in effect calling it a day, just like everybody else. "Trusting that a new and quieter era had begun in Lebanon," says Halevy, "we all believed that this would be our last trip to Beirut for some time." Then, he recalls, "the bomb exploded, and I was almost thrown to the lobby floor." Says Frey: "At first I thought: Cool it. It is just another car bomb around the block." But as their adrenaline began to rise, so did their suspicions, pointing all three of them toward Phalangist headquarters, only 150 yds. from their hotel.



Frey, Halevy and Rubinger after the bombing

only newsmen there. As the certainty grew that one of the bodies in the rubble was in fact that of the newly elected President, Halevy remembers thinking: "The dream of a strong Lebanese government is buried under those ruins."

After swiftly taking what street pictures he could before Gemayel's trigger-happy supporters arrived, Photographer Frey ducked into an adjacent building to get more pictures from a higher and safer vantage point. Suddenly shots were fired in his direction. Says he: "That was the signal to get my film to some safe place." Frey headed for the security of the Commodore Hotel in West Beirut, headquarters for much of the Western press in Lebanon, after leaving his film with Halevy and Rubinger. Concerned that Phalangist roadblocks would prevent them from getting to Israel to transmit their reporting and film back to New York City, they tossed their suitcases into a rented car and sped out of East Beirut. They were in Israel only long enough to get their first round of work safely en route to TIME in New York before they were back in Beirut to cover Gemayel's funeral in Bikfaya and rejoin Photographer Frey in covering Lebanon's new crisis.

*John A. Meyers*

Cover: Photograph by Bill Foley—AP

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TIME (ISSN 0040-781X) is published weekly at the subscription price of \$41 per year, by Time Inc., 3435 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90010. Principal office: Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020. J. Richard Munro, President; J. Winston Fowlkes, Treasurer; Charles B. Bear, Secretary. Second class postage paid at Los Angeles, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Vol. 120 No. 13 © 1982 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. TIME and the Red Border Design are protected through trademark registration in the United States and in the foreign countries where TIME magazine circulates. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TIME, Time & Life Building, 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611. □□□□

SEPTEMBER 27, 1982

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# TIME

# MASSACRE IN LEBANON



## Palestinian Civilians Are Slaughtered



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