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The Reder Affair

The timing could not have been more inappropriate: The World Jewish Congress' Governing Board is holding its annual meeting in Vienna, the first gathering of world Jewish leaders in Austria since the end of World War II. During the same weekend, Jews and non-Jews around the world are marking the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps.

Meanwhile, at an airport at Graz, Austrian Defense Minister Friedhelm Frischenschlager personally greets, in what is described as almost a hero's welcome, Austrian-born Nazi war criminal Walter Reder following his release from an Italian prison after nearly 40 years' incarceration for mass murder of civilians.

The action sets off the expected political storm that envelopes Vienna for several days and overshadows issue the WJCongress would normally have addressed. Chancellor Fred Sinowatz has the difficult task of apologizing for the incident on the opening night of the WJC meeting to a very angry group of delegates, many of whom call on the WJC leadership to pack its bags and depart Vienna immediately.

The incident is described by Sinowatz as a grave mistake, a miscalculation. Frischenschlager also issues an apology, although there was little warmth emanating from the statement. Edgar Bronfman describes the delegates from around the world as "devastated, shocked and furious" over the Defense Minister's action.

Reder's release, orchestrated on humanitarian grounds by Austria, was a mistake within itself. While he had just six months left on his prison term, there was little to demonstrate a need to let him be a free man. He was sentenced for a retaliatory massacre for partisan attacks on German troops of 1,830 men, women and children in the north Italian village of Marzabotto in 1944. He was sentenced to life imprisonment but that was reduced in 1980.

The entire Reder episode from the Austrian request to the return to his native homeland at the age of 69, reeks of an inept Austrian government, full of officials who have demonstrated contempt of human suffering during the Holocaust and contempt for Jews and other survivors of the Nazi horrors.

It raised serious questions about the competence of the Austrian government of Chancellor Sinowatz. Survivors and families of those killed in Marzabotto voted just a few months ago 235 to one against the release of Reder. They have not forgotten. Why then has the Austrian leadership?

JERUSALEM (WNS) — Premier Shimon Peres received an enthusiastic welcome in the Bedouin town of Rahat in the Negev, his first visit to an Arab community since he took office last year. Hundreds of flag-waving youngsters greeted him with songs and beating drums when he arrived at the local school. He was accompanied by Ezer Weizman.

Behind The Scenes

At The United Nations

By David Horowitz

A World-Union Press Feature

Naqura Talks Fail

Dissolution -- Lebanon's Price For Betraying Israel

UNITED NATIONS (WUP) — It should now be clear to Israel's critics both here and abroad that the apparent failure of the UN-initiated Naqura talks, a failure compelling Israel to put into operation its own unilateral three-stage withdrawal plan geared to assure the security of its northern border, must be attributed to Syria's dictatorial role in Lebanon which has all but made that sectarian-divided nation into a Satellite of Damascus.

Responsibility for this sad state of affairs rests with the weak and cowardly leadership of the Lebanese Gemayel regime whose Prime Minister Rashid Karami appears to have sold out to President Assad.

The Gemayel regime's first tragic mistake was to listen to Syria and its mentor, the Soviet Union, demanding that Beirut abrogate the 17 May 1983 treaty between Israel and Lebanon -- a U.S.-approved agreement binding both countries as loyal allies and thus assuring future stability to that war-torn nation.

Divisive Lebanon is today tasting the bitter fruits of this abrogation. There's been no end to bombings and fractional strife and only last week, following Israel's announcement, a bomb exploded in Sidon killing a number of Arabs and seriously wounding the south Lebanese Sunni militia leader Mustapha Saad, "heightening fears of renewed civil strife" between Sunnis and Shiites while the Druze and the Maronite Christians fortify themselves against one another.

The latest bombing in Sidon hurriedly brought the anti-Israeli Prime Minister Karami into the picture again. Sinister as ever, he had the hutzpah to accuse Israel of having planted the bomb, charging that it was part of an Israeli plot to stir up local unrest to coincide with its withdrawal. Only despair could have made him stoop so low.

This same Karami had the gall last November to demand that Israel -- who had liberated his country by eliminating the PLO terrorists -- pay damages amounting to eight to ten billion dollars in war reparations. Hutzpah!

This writer repeats: Lebanon today is tasting the bitter fruits of its Syrian directed abrogation of the 17 May 1983 treaty. Chaos and confusion have resulted. Citing a former Lebanese Cabinet

King of One Liners



HENNY YOUNGMAN
 ...Man of Many Talents.

She told a cop, "A man is following me. I think he must be crazy."
 The cop agreed.

Minister, a Times despatch from the region cabled: "West Beirut is in the grip of lawlessness. Everything is bad and getting worse. I am the most depressed and pessimistic I have been in the past 10 years. I think now we are going down, finally, yes, we are going down."

The despatch continues: "There appears to be little reason for optimism. The Lebanese Government appears hopelessly bogged down in tribal feuds. The once resilient economy is in ruins...And most of the country is the provenance of either Syrian or Israeli occupiers or local warlords."

As Israel is now preparing to withdraw from Lebanon, your correspondent wishes to reemphasize what he stated in this column last November, namely, that the "Peace for Galilee" 1982 operation proved a Big Plus for Israel. It had to take place. Israel had no alternative. The PLO infrastructure had to be destroyed once and for all, not partially but totally as it was. The PLO is a broken reed today, thanks to Arik Sharon and Menachem Begin.

Notwithstanding the vehement cries and sharp criticisms voiced by the malcontent 'peace-now' advocates in both Israel and abroad protesting the operation -- claiming it to have been a major mistake and harmful to the State's status in the world -- the historic fact remains that the operation did at last destroy Israel's most perilous enemy which had constantly threatened the security of the nation.

Former Brig. General Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, one of Israel's top experts on Lebanon, was recently interviewed by Newsweek Magazine and asked "Is Israel better or worse off now than it was before invading Lebanon?" His reply:

"It's too early to draw a final balance sheet. One thing the war in Lebanon did accomplish was the destruction of the infrastructure of the PLO in south Lebanon. That and the subsequent PLO withdrawal from Beirut contributed to the splitting of the organization which, in turn, had profound impact on the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza...There is a new generation in the occupied areas which realizes that the policies of the PLO have failed. We should start a dialogue with the Palestinians...We should revive the autonomy plan."

Once Israel's northern border has been made secure, it will be in wisdom for the Jerusalem Government to revive former Prime Minister Menachem Begin's 26-point autonomy plan for Samaria and Judea. Our Arab cousins will find Israel a benevolent friend and partner. A new, free and united Lebanon may still find this to be so.

WASHINGTON (WNS) — The White House has informed West Germany that President Reagan will not visit the Dachau concentration camp after he attends the economic summit in Bonn May 2-4. Administration officials have been quoted as saying that the President thinks that a visit to Dachau "wouldn't contribute to the theme of reconciliation and friendship" and that "the Germans of today are not a part of that and shouldn't be made to feel that they are." The West Germans reportedly proposed the Dachau visit if Reagan stays on beyond the summit as part of a series of commemoration ceremonies for the 40th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany May 8.

TORONTO (WNS) — Suspected arson has triggered a police investigation of a fire that severely damaged the ground floor of Temple Shalom, a Reform synagogue in Vancouver. Most of the prayer books and all but one of the Torahs were saved. Six months ago, a Molotov cocktail was tossed into the synagogue but failed to ignite.

PARIS (WNS) — Anti-Semitic slogans were daubed in the small Jewish cemetery of Antibes in the south of France and on the local synagogue's walls. The President of the local Jewish community, Leon Allouche, said "local vandals and anti-Semites probably wanted to celebrate in their own way Nazi war criminal Walter Reder's liberation and triumphant return to Austria."