



Daily News Bulletin

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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel marks Hussein's death

Israeli leaders joined the world community in mourning the death of Jordan's King Hussein and expressing support for his successor, King Abdullah.

President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are planning to attend Monday's funeral of Hussein, who died Sunday at 63.

Netanyahu is expected to be accompanied by several other Israeli figures, including Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, former Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, opposition leader Ehud Barak and former Prime Ministers Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir.

Meanwhile, North American Jewish leaders also expressed their sadness at Hussein's death.

In a statement, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said the monarch "will be missed by all those who came to appreciate his manifold contributions to his country and region."

Since the mid-1980s, Hussein met often with representatives of American Jewish organizations to promote Middle East peace and to bolster U.S. political and economic support for Jordan. [Page 1]

Palestinians plan 3-day mourning

The Palestinian Authority declared a three-day mourning period to mark King Hussein's death.

The self-rule government called Hussein a statesman who had served the just cause of his people and the cause of the Palestinians.

Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin also conveyed condolences to Jordan upon the monarch's death. [Page 4]

Arabs call for U.N. action

The U.N. General Assembly convened last Friday in an emergency special session devoted to "illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

The Arab Group at the U.N. has introduced a resolution calling on the 188 contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to convene to discuss violations of the convention in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It would be the first meeting of the parties since 1949, when they adopted the convention, which deals with the treatment of civilians and prisoners during wartime.

The session is expected to continue this week.

THE LEGACY OF KING HUSSEIN

Hussein, gentle champion of peace, succumbs to cancer

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — The most-fitting summation of King Hussein bin Talal's nearly five decades as Jordan's ruler may well come from the title of his own 1962 autobiography: "Uneasy Lies the Head."

His reign would certainly have been less uneasy had he possessed more cards to play in the region's shifting sands of expedient military alliances and often-deadly power politics.

But his was a desert kingdom with few natural resources and little real regional power. Jordan, created as a buffer state by England and France after World War II, was perpetually buffeted by its more powerful neighbors. Hussein repeatedly had to protect his nation's sovereignty from the onslaughts of Syria, Iraq and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The king was, moreover, something of an outsider in his own country: The royal Hashemite family from which he was descended had its roots in the far southern edge of the Arabian peninsula. On more than one occasion, his loyal Bedouin troops saved his throne.

Of necessity, Hussein walked a political tightrope throughout the more than 46 years he occupied the Hashemite throne. At his death at 63, he was the region's longest-serving ruler — eight U.S. presidents and 10 British prime ministers came and went from the time he ascended to power in 1952.

He was, in short, a political survivor. And he used his survival skills to become, as he will perhaps best be remembered, a champion of peace.

Educated at the Sandhurst military academy in Britain, he was more liberal than any other Arab ruler — particularly in his attitude toward Israel.

Hussein may well have made peace with the Jewish state a decade or two earlier than he actually did in October 1994 — had it not been for the staunch opposition to such a move from the rest of the Arab world and from the Palestinian population that made up the majority of Hussein's kingdom.

With an eye toward achieving a peace with Israel that would also serve Palestinian needs, he held a series of secret meetings with Israeli officials over the years, some of which have been made public only recently: with Defense Minister Moshe Dayan in 1972, with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in 1987 and with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that same year.

The meetings were of necessity held in secret. In 1951, when he was 15, Hussein witnessed the assassination of his grandfather, King Abdullah, by a Palestinian gunman angry at the king's perceived willingness to carve up Palestinian lands with Israel. Had his meetings with the Israelis become widely known, Hussein was certain he would suffer a similar fate.

Perhaps the most famous of the "secret" meetings was Hussein's encounter with Prime Minister Golda Meir on the eve of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Days before that meeting, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Syrian President Hafez Assad had tried to convince the Jordanian monarch that Israel was about to attack them. They asked him to allow Syrian troops to move through northern Jordan to head off the Israeli assault.

Six years earlier, in the 1967 Six-Day War, Hussein had learned the cost of allying himself with Egypt and Syria. As a result of that war, he lost eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank — "I had never received a more crushing blow than that," Hussein said in a recent interview. In 1973, he was not about to make the same mistake again. Far from

MIDEAST FOCUS

Knesset approves budget

Israel's Knesset approved the country's 1999 budget of approximately \$54 billion. The approval came after a month of heated debate and marathon discussions. The budget's passage was secured after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged \$135 million to projects supported by Orthodox legislators.

Arafat urges speeding of aid

Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat urged international donors to help the Middle East peace process by speeding up aid to the Palestinians. Arafat made his comments in Germany to 30 donor nations with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Israel attacks Lebanese positions

Israel attacked suspected Hezbollah positions in the southern Lebanon security zone over the weekend. The attack came in retaliation for a roadside bomb attack that killed one member of the Israel-allied South Lebanon Army and wounded another.

Prisoners' release sought

Hamas supporters demonstrated in the West Bank town of Nablus demanding the release of activists detained in Palestinian jails since a terrorist attack last November in Jerusalem. Palestinian sources were quoted as saying that security forces are braced for possible confrontations with Hamas activists.

2000 tourist campaign launched

Israel's Tourism Ministry launched its campaign to attract visitors to celebrate the millennium.

A glossy full-color brochure titled "Celebrating 2000 in the Place Where It All Began" touts such events as a motorcycle rally from Rome to Jerusalem, a New Year's Eve formation of a human ring around the Dead Sea, and a "Million Tourist March" to promote world peace.



Daily News Bulletin

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reaching any agreement with Sadat and Assad, Hussein flew off alone to meet Meir.

He warned the prime minister that Egypt and Syria were planning a surprise attack on Israel. But Meir, with no intelligence reports to back up Hussein's assessment, did not heed the warning.

The king's meeting with her was in no small part the repayment of a debt to the Jewish state dating back to September 1970, when he was attempting to remove the PLO from Jordanian soil.

In the wake of the 1967 war, the PLO had entrenched itself in Jordan, from where it launched repeated raids on Israel. By 1970, PLO leader Yasser Arafat and other factional heads were attempting to overthrow the king, who viewed their operations against Israel as a threat to Jordan.

After Hussein came under machine-gun fire on the streets of Amman — and after the PLO staged the destruction of several hijacked airplanes at the capital's airport — the king had enough and declared war on the PLO. Fighting erupted in and around Amman in what later became known as Black September.

The wider Arab world, which had long distrusted Hussein as a Western puppet, sided with the PLO. Syria sent tanks into Jordan — and the king was powerless to stop their steady advance. After seeking American intervention — he could not possibly have sought Israeli help directly — on Sept. 16, four Israeli Phantom jets flew low over the Syrian tanks. Without a shot being fired, the tanks got the message, turned north and headed back for Damascus.

For years on end, Hussein had to seek peace with Israel from the shadows. His pro-Western proclivities had made him suspect among pan-Arabists since the 1950s, when he was the target of a succession of assassination and coup attempts. He had to wait — until after Egypt, then the Palestinians, signed peace treaties with the Jewish state.

On Sept. 14, 1993, Hussein finally had his chance: Only one day after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat shared their historic handshake on the White House lawn, Israel and Jordan signed a "Common Agenda." That document served as a blueprint for the peace treaty the two nations signed a year later, on Oct. 26, 1994.

It was then, in a signing ceremony with Rabin and President Clinton on the Israeli-Jordanian border, that Hussein could state, for all the world to hear, what he had previously pursued behind the scenes.

"This great valley in which we stand will become the valley of peace," he said. "This is peace with dignity. This is peace with commitment. This is our gift to our peoples and the generations to come."

In the ensuing years before he succumbed to cancer, Hussein lived up to those words, infusing warmth and humanity into his country's peace with Israel.

When Rabin's funeral was held on Nov. 6, 1995, Hussein moved the audience with his eulogy for the man he described as a "brother, a colleague and a friend."

"We belong to the camp of peace," he said. "We believe that our one God wishes us to live in peace, and we wish his peace upon us. For these are his teachings to all the followers of the three great monotheistic religions, the children of Abraham."

His dedication to peace became evident to all Israelis in March 1997, when Hussein paid condolence calls to the families of Israeli schoolchildren who were killed by a deranged Jordanian soldier while they were making a field trip to a site on the Israeli-Jordanian border. And if Hussein won the hearts of Israelis at that time, he won over much of the rest of the world when, clearly showing the effects of chemotherapy, he attended the White House signing of the Wye agreement last October.

In what proved his last appearance at a diplomatic event, he spoke of putting aside "our petty differences" and working for a better future, "for all the children of Abraham."

Only days before, he had gotten up from his sick bed to help Israel and the Palestinian Authority reach the accord. For months, he had been undergoing treatment for lymphatic cancer. On Sunday, that illness succeeded in accomplishing what assassins' bullets and plotting military leaders had failed to do.

Several years ago, when Hussein had overcome prostate cancer, a television interviewer asked him whether he was afraid of death.

"Life is a journey," he replied with regal simplicity. "It has a beginning and an end. Why should I be afraid?" □

JEWISH WORLD

Swiss politician escapes trial

A Swiss governmental committee voted not to prosecute an extremist politician for calling in July for a Swiss boycott of Jewish and American products.

The country's Jewish leaders, saying that several Jewish businesses are already suffering from the boycott, criticized the decision not to prosecute Rudolf Keller.

Holocaust claims to be discussed

A top German official and a German bank chairman flew to Washington to meet with U.S. and Jewish officials in an attempt to resolve Holocaust-era claims.

The trip by German Chancellor Minister Bodo Hombach and Deutsche Bank Chairman Rolf Breuer comes a week after a historian for Deutsche Bank said the bank had helped finance the construction of the Auschwitz death camp.

Russian lawmakers call for funds

Russian legislators supported a non-binding motion asking Germany to allocate more funds for non-Jewish Nazi victims in Russia.

The motion approved by the Duma, the lower house of Parliament, says Germany's decision to compensate only Jewish victims of Nazism is an "act of injustice toward Russian citizens of other nationalities who fought and suffered just as much" during World War II.

Dutch call for review of El Al

Dutch politicians called for a review of El Al's "special status" at an Amsterdam airport. The comment came as the Netherlands continues its ongoing investigation into a 1992 crash of an El Al cargo jet that killed 43 people.

Israel confirmed last year that the plane was carrying materials that could be used to make sarin nerve gas.

French collaborator sues

Maurice Papon sued a French historian who accused the convicted Nazi collaborator of being responsible for the deaths of dozens of Algerian demonstrators during an October 1961 street protest in Paris.

Papon, who was Paris police chief at the time, admitted in a French court last week that about 30 Algerians were fished from the Seine River in the weeks that followed the protest, but added that they were killed during factional fighting between Algerian nationalist groups.

Last April, Papon, 88, was found guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity for his involvement in the deportation of Jews from wartime France.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

New Jewish study center adds to Moscow's learning explosion

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A new center for Jewish studies — the first-ever cooperative project between Israeli and Russian universities — has been dedicated at Moscow State University.

The program is affiliated with the school's prestigious Institute for Asian and African Studies, which has trained many well-known politicians, diplomats and public figures.

Throughout most of its history, however, the institute was unofficially closed to Jewish students.

The joint project of this prestigious Russian university, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Moscow Jewish University marks a high point in the revival of Jewish studies that has taken place in Russia following the collapse of communism.

Last week's dedication coincided with an annual conference on Jewish studies that demonstrated the breadth of the subject now available in Russia.

Jewish studies are currently being taught in over 70 universities and other academic settings in the former Soviet Union to more than 2,500 students.

Thirty students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have enrolled in the 5-year program of the Center for Jewish Studies and Civilization. The program offers majors in Israeli politics and economics, Jewish history and Hebrew language. Classes will be taught by visiting Hebrew University faculty as well as by local scholars.

Speaking at the dedication ceremony, Yom-Tov Assis, head of the Hebrew University's Institute for Jewish Studies, said a "fresh spirit is now filling the old building" of Moscow State University.

Indeed, that fresh spirit can be seen in the Hebrew graffiti that has joined Hindi, Japanese and Arabic on the tables of the institute's central auditorium.

"We used to have scores of experts on anti-Zionism," Yevgeny Satanovsky, chairman of the board of the Russian Jewish Congress, said, referring to the Soviet era. "However, we have no experts on Israeli politics and economics. Fortunately, the old-time ideology became a thing of the past."

The center is being supported by the Russian Jewish Congress, the Israeli government and the Stanley Chase family of Los Angeles.

The center is not the first full-time academic program on Jewish studies to operate in the Russian capital.

In addition to the Moscow Jewish University, the city hosts a few other Jewish institutions, including Project Judaica, a joint program between a Moscow university and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Faculty and students from these and other schools gathered last week in Moscow for an annual conference on Jewish studies.

Dozens of participants from throughout the former Soviet Union gave presentations on the Bible, Jewish history and thought, sociology, psychology, literature, arts and education.

The conference was organized by Sefer: The Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization.

First held in 1994, this conference has become one of the highlights for those engaged in Jewish studies at the university level.

At the conference, local academics were joined by an international delegation of professors and guests from Israel, England, Canada, Germany and the United States.

One of them favorably compared the event to a similar annual conference on Jewish studies held in the United States.

"What takes place in America is a minor achievement compared with what I see here," said David Singer, director of research and publications for the American Jewish Committee.

"The rich and broad program of this conference is absolutely miraculous."

The conference was underwritten by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and private donors. □

THE LEGACY OF KING HUSSEIN**Israelis grieve for King Hussein as they recall his path of peace***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israelis around the country lit candles in their homes. Some even braved the bad weather to light candles outside the Jordanian Embassy near Tel Aviv.

By government decree, the Israeli flag was flown at half-mast to symbolize the nation's grief over the death of Jordan's King Hussein. Indeed, Sunday's death of the 63-year-old king united Israelis in a way reminiscent of the mourning that engulfed the nation following the November 1995 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

As Kinneret Elhanani, a tour guide, said while lighting a candle for the king on Sunday: "For me, he was like a brother. We have always liked him, even when he was considered our enemy."

In the hours following the announcement that the king had succumbed to lymphatic cancer, Israeli media devoted special programming to his legacy and radio stations played somber music.

All of this outpouring of affection came for a man who, until 1994, led a state that was officially at war with Israel.

But with their grieving, Israelis demonstrated that Hussein wouldn't be remembered for the tensions that existed between the two nations for so many years, but for the efforts the king made to bring the two countries together.

Why do Israelis feel such warmth for their former enemy?

In part, because in the past few years, Hussein gave his country's 1994 peace treaty with Israel a touch of personal warmth that was lacking in the peace with Egypt.

Nowhere was this more evident than two years ago, when Hussein came to Israel to pay his condolences to the bereaved families of the Naharayim massacre, in which seven school girls were murdered by a Jordanian soldier close to the border.

In an act of contrition many Israelis will never forget, Hussein knelt before the parents of the girls and begged for forgiveness.

One of the bereaved parents came up to him and said: "You are our king, too."

Diplomats, politicians and army officials were also struck by Hussein's personal, human touch. Shimon Shamir, Israel's first ambassador to Jordan, recalled that during their first meeting, Hussein gave him his private telephone number and urged Shamir to call whenever he deemed it necessary.

They met together five or six times in informal meetings, with Hussein often coming dressed casually to exchange ideas with the ambassador. Only at times of disagreement with Israel did Hussein summon Shamir to his official office for a formal meeting.

"Above all, I was impressed by his sincerity and human charm," recalled Shamir, a noted Middle East historian.

Israelis also feel warmth for the king because even when he was at war with Israel, he shattered the stereotype of the Arab who hates Israel and wants its destruction.

Even as far back as Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which Jordan was aligned with Syria and Egypt against the Jewish state, Israelis had a soft spot for the king. This week, Israeli humorist Ephraim Kishon, who coined Hussein's affectionate nickname "Hussi" that year, explained that even then, "we did not really regard him as an enemy."

Indeed, in 1973, on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, Hussein even flew to Israel to warn its leaders that Arab armies were planning a surprise attack.

Reserve Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Shaked, who arranged secret meetings between Hussein and then-Prime Minister Golda Meir between the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, recalled their first meeting. Shaked was the first one to greet the king, who showed up with his speed boat at the agreed-upon spot. "As soon as I spotted him, I saw a small man, who looked me in the eye as if he was my height."

On another occasion, Shaked drove Hussein by jeep to meet with Meir. "He sat next to me as if I had been his driver for 200 years, never looking to the sides, but looking straight ahead with confidence," Shaked recalled.

The king was also remembered for his sense of humor. Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres recalled how during secret talks with Hussein in London in 1987, when Peres was foreign minister in a national unity government, the British notable who was hosting the two leaders sent home all the servants to preserve secrecy. After dinner, Peres recalled, Hussein turned to Peres and said, "And now, let's do the dishes."

The king also transcended some of the divisions in Israeli politics — even after his death.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invited his two chief rival candidates for prime minister in the May 17 elections — his former defense minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Labor Party leader Ehud Barak — as well as former prime ministers Peres and Yitzhak Shamir to join Netanyahu at Hussein's funeral Monday. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon was also scheduled to attend.

Netanyahu called a special Cabinet meeting to mark the king's death, and the ministers observed a moment of silence.

In a special news conference, Netanyahu said, "Every Israeli — right, center, left, up, down — cherishes this man, views him as a Jordanian patriot but also as a champion of peace, a genuine peace between Israel and Jordan."

The prime minister recalled Hussein's pivotal role at the Wye talks in October, when he helped Israel and the Palestinians overcome the obstacles that were preventing an agreement.

"The peace between our peoples will be a testament to your abiding belief in lasting peace among the sons of Abraham," Netanyahu said.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman called the king "one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century, a brave soldier who fought for peace, a clever man, warm-hearted and the symbol of good neighborly relations."

For their part, Palestinians did not share the same scope of grief as the Israelis.

The Palestinian Authority did declare a three-day mourning period to mark Hussein's death, and the self-rule government called Hussein a statesman who had served the just cause of his people and the cause of the Palestinians. Even the militant Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin conveyed condolences to Jordan on the king's death.

But many Palestinians cannot forget 1970, when Hussein threw the Palestine Liberation Organization out of Jordan in a series of bloody confrontations known as Black September.

Israelis felt much differently. Eitan Haber, adviser to the late Rabin, spoke for many when he said: "Shalom enemy, shalom lover, shalom your majesty the king." □