



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 77, No. 26

Tuesday, February 9, 1999

82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Accord reached on German fund

Jewish and German officials reached an agreement in principle on a process to compensate slave workers from the Nazi era and to provide restitution for Jewish property seized under the Nazi Aryanization program.

The settlement could top \$1 billion, according to some observers.

The agreement removes Jewish groups' opposition to Deutsche Bank's planned \$10.1 billion takeover of Bankers Trust.

### World leaders attend funeral

An estimated 800,000 Jordanians lined the streets of Amman as the coffin of King Hussein was taken from the royal palace for burial. Four American presidents were among the world leaders attending the king's funeral.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman led a delegation of more than 20 to Jordan.

At the funeral, Weizman was approached by and shook the hand of Nayef Hawatmeh.

Hawatmeh's group, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was responsible for a 1974 attack on a school in Ma'alot in which 24 Israelis were killed.

### Israel to give money to Diaspora

Israel's approximately \$54 billion 1999 budget includes \$4 million to fund Israel-Diaspora relations. "This decision is a symbolic step in the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora," said Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, who added that the move reflects Israel's "obligation" to be a "shining light in promoting Jewish education for future generations."

### War crimes trial opens in London

Britain's first Nazi war crimes trial opened in London. Anthony Sawoniuk, 77, was charged with the 1942 murders of four Jews in the German-occupied town of Domachevo in Belarus.

Before being sworn in, members of the jury were advised to remove themselves from the panel if they or their families "suffered as a result of the German actions against Jewish or other races or religions." In 1991, Britain enacted legislation permitting the prosecution of Nazi war crimes suspects who settled in Britain after World War II.

## THE LEGACY OF KING HUSSEIN

### Jordan's monarch forged special ties with U.S. Jews

By Julia Goldman

NEW YORK (JTA) — In 1964, Theodore Mann and other members of the American Jewish Congress were arrested for picketing the Jordanian pavilion at the World's Fair in New York.

Two decades later, Mann and a small group of AJCongress officers met with King Hussein in Amman for the first official visit by an American Jewish organization to Jordan.

"It was entirely friendly, social and friendly," Mann recalled of that meeting. "However, it was peace that we were talking about."

"It was clear to us that he desperately wanted it, and it was clear to him that so did we," said Mann, a Philadelphia attorney and veteran Jewish communal leader.

In the years since then — until Hussein's death Sunday at the age of 63 after a prolonged battle with cancer — the Hashemite ruler met with representatives of dozens of Jewish organizations to promote Middle East peace and to bolster U.S. political and economic support for Jordan. He received awards from numerous Jewish organizations such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Anti-Defamation League.

Today, Mann and other North American Jewish leaders remember Hussein with respect and true affection.

"One of the reasons I, and I think so many other people, have come to love the king," Mann said last week as the king lay close to death, "is because he's an illustration — just as Sadat was — that there are some people who are able to change deeply held views. It's only when one believes that that one can have any hope for the future."

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981, after signing the 1979 peace treaty with Israel. Hussein, who had ordered his troops to fight against Israeli forces in 1967, eventually forged a similar treaty with the Jewish state in 1994.

The king was "a great man with a great vision," said Steven Grossman of Boston, a former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"King Hussein will forever be known as one of the great heroes of the Jewish people," said Grossman.

In written statements and personal reminiscences, American Jewish leaders noted Hussein's friendship with former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, his partner in peace, whom he had eulogized as "brother."

Some cited his arrival from treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland in October as an example of Hussein's humanity and courage. Many observers view his participation in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as having contributed significantly to their resolution.

The king's secret meetings with Israeli leaders have become increasingly well known. Less well known is that in his campaign for regional peace, Hussein also reached out to the North American Jewish community.

"He had a keen interest in American Jewry," said Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an umbrella group of 55 Jewish organizations.

Hussein's ambassadors to the United States maintained ongoing communication with Jewish community leaders, Hoenlein said, recognizing "that American Jewry is an active community in the political process, and obviously has close ties to Israel." Part of what made the Jewish leaders so willing to cooperate with Hussein, it seems, was his

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Orthodox boycott council

A meeting of the Jerusalem local religious council was canceled when nearly all of the members boycotted to protest the inclusion of representatives from the Reform and Conservative movements. Council head Rabbi Yitzhak Ralbag called the session after being ordered to do so by the High Court of Justice.

### Abdullah names successor

Jordan's King Abdullah named his younger brother, Hamza, as crown prince. Abdullah designated his successor within hours after the death of King Hussein. Meanwhile, Abdullah told a group of foreign journalists two days before Hussein's death that he will remain committed to peace in the Middle East and to close ties with Washington.

### Likud Party holds primaries

Israel's Likud Party held primaries to determine its slate of Knesset candidates in the May elections.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had sought to postpone the vote because of the funeral of Jordan's King Hussein, but party lawyers said the Likud constitution does not allow for a postponement.

### Crime increases in Israel

Crime increased in Israel by 3 percent during 1998 over the previous year, with a total of 516,000 incidents reported, according to police officials. The 1998 murder rate was down by 10 percent from 1997, with 146 reported homicides.

### Doctors help Palestinians

Hadassah health care professionals are working with a group of Texas doctors and a non-profit international relief organization to send 85,000 pounds of medical supplies to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The AmeriCares relief group and the Jerusalem-based Hadassah Medical Organization will distribute the materials.

warmth and personal charm. During a Presidents Conference mission to Jordan several years ago, Hoenlein recalled, the king and Queen Noor invited the group to a reception at the palace in Amman.

"He bantered with everybody. He took each person aside individually," Hoenlein said. Hussein had an "incredible ability to focus on people and a sincerity which I think was genuine."

When Grossman and his 14-year-old son, Ben, visited Jordan in 1994 on a United Jewish Appeal mission, they accepted the king's invitation to lunch and missed the group tour of the ancient city of Petra.

At the end of their 45-minute meeting with the royal couple, Grossman remembered, the king approached the teen-ager and said, "I understand your friends left for Petra many hours ago" and then arranged for his American guests to fly to the site by Royal Jordanian Air Force helicopter for a private sunset tour.

One of Hussein's strongest interests seemed to be creating open exchanges of ideas and opinions, an interest he exercised at every meeting with American Jews.

Gail Pressberg, a consultant for Americans for Peace Now, had her first of several audiences with the king in 1986. At a subsequent lunch with him and Queen Noor on the patio of his private residence, Pressberg recalled, they debated different aspects of Israeli society.

In January 1994, months before he signed a peace treaty with Israel, Hussein addressed a select group of 30 Jewish leaders in Washington at a meeting organized by Project Nishma, an educational project on Israeli security and the peace process.

Introduced by Mann, who then co-chaired Project Nishma, Hussein delivered some brief remarks stressing the leaders' duty to think about future generations "to give them a better chance, to give them a better life, to give them what they deserve, long after we are gone."

He then immediately opened the floor to questions "to start a dialogue."

"It was a good exchange," recalled Lawrence Rubin, executive vice chairman of the Jewish Public Affairs Council, an umbrella organization.

Coming on the heels of the 1993 Oslo peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians, Rubin said, it was "a period of optimism."

"Obviously the principle was to move Jordan toward recognition of Israel," and to discuss the decades-old Arab boycott of Israel.

Hussein's role as peacemaker re-emerged with new vigor after the Gulf War, during which the king had remained neutral, failing to join the American-led coalition against Iraq, which was launching Scud missiles against Israel.

Phil Baum, the executive director of the AJCongress, was among the delegation that met with Hussein in 1986.

He met again with the king and queen shortly after the end of the Gulf War.

"We had lunch with him at the palace," he said. "He took pains to make sure the food was kosher. It was haimish," said Baum, using a Yiddish word meaning friendly and warm. □

## Swiss extremist escapes prosecution

BERN (JTA) — A Swiss parliamentary committee has voted not to prosecute an extremist politician for calling last July for a Swiss boycott of Jewish and American products.

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

Keller had called for the boycott to protest pressure placed in recent years on Switzerland by the world Jewish community and the U.S. administration regarding the Alpine nation's dealings with Nazi Germany.

Switzerland should "hit back" when it is "blackmailed," Keller wrote at the time.

The decision by the committee overturns a December vote by the lower house of the Swiss Parliament to allow Keller's prosecution.

The president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Switzerland, Rolf Bloch, said in a telephone interview with JTA that he is shocked the committee voted not to put an anti-Semite on trial. □



## Daily News Bulletin

Caryn Rosen Adelman, *President*  
Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*  
Lisa Hostein, *Editor*  
Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

## JEWISH WORLD

### Wiesenthal Center honors king

The Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center held a ceremony at its Museum of Tolerance to honor the memory of King Hussein.

"The unprecedented step of a Jewish institution holding a tribute for an Arab king speaks miles as to what we thought of him," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, the center's dean and founder.

### Russian Jewish center robbed

A Jewish welfare center in central Russia was robbed in what Jewish leaders believe was an anti-Semitic attack.

Local police, who are treating the incident as an ordinary burglary, opened an investigation into the incident at the offices of the Chasdei Yerushalayim center, where office equipment and a small sum of money were stolen.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and local donors give financial support to the center in the Volga region, which serves 1,500 elderly and poor Jews.

### Ukraine to look into extremism

Ukrainian Prime Minister Valery Pustovoitenko promised to look into anti-Semitism in his country's media.

At a meeting last week with Jewish officials in Washington, Pustovoitenko also said he would investigate the recent interruption of cooperation between his country and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on a project to open Ukrainian archives.

### Lithuanian justice criticized

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is calling on the United States and European Union to investigate Lithuania's handling of two Holocaust-era war crimes trials.

Calling the country's handling of the cases a "travesty of justice," Efraim Zuroff, the head of the center's Jerusalem office, said foreign nations should give the cases "major consideration" when determining whether Lithuania should be admitted to NATO or the European Union.

Lithuanian medical panels recently ruled that the two elderly defendants, Aleksandras Lileikis and Kazys Gimzauskas, are too ill to face charges that they turned Jews over to Nazi death squads.

### French Jewish leader visits Tunis

French Jewish leader Henri Hajdenberg visited Tunisia, where he met President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.

The two attempted to improve the relationship between Tunisia and French Jews, many of whom emigrated from Tunisia in the 1950s and 1960s.

## Russians cry foul over funds from Germany to Nazi victims

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Resentment is growing in the former Soviet Union over compensation being given to Jewish survivors of the Nazis.

This resentment is at least partially responsible for a recent move by Russian legislators to ask Germany to allocate more funds to non-Jewish Nazi victims in the largest of the former Soviet republics.

The non-binding resolution approved last Friday by the Duma, Russia's 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.

The approval of the motion, proposed by a member of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party, came as ex-Nazi slave laborers living in the former Soviet Union are demanding speedy and fair compensation from Germany.

At a one-day conference on the issue last month, participants from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus said former Nazi slave laborers should receive equal payments regardless of their nationality or ethnic background. While many Nazi victims living in the West have been receiving German compensation for decades, residents of the Soviet bloc were barred by the Soviet Union from requesting any money.

Since the fall of communism in 1991, residents of Eastern Europe have begun receiving some funds, but at lower levels than in the West because of different standards of living.

Many of the conference's participants said they support the idea of a national German fund that they hope would iron out what they call inconsistencies in compensation.

Jewish and German officials arrived at an agreement in principle on such a fund in Washington on Monday.

Nearly 6 million Soviet citizens — most of them Slavs — were enslaved in Germany during the war, according to the Fund for Mutual Understanding and Reconciliation, which was created by Germany in 1993 to compensate those in the former Soviet Union who had suffered under Nazism.

Beneficiaries of the fund include thousands of Slavs who were forced to work in Germany during the war on the Soviet front, as well as Jewish survivors of ghettos and concentration camps, who make up about 1 percent of fund beneficiaries.

Individual one-time payments from the \$235 million fund range from \$350 to \$800. Six years after the establishment of the fund, however, some of the ex-slave laborers in the former Soviet Union have yet to receive any money.

The issue of compensation gained particular attention in the former Soviet Union after the Swiss Holocaust Memorial Fund began distributing one-time payments to Jewish survivors in the former Soviet Union.

Recently, *Zavtra*, a leading nationalist newspaper in Moscow, said the money allocated by Swiss banks to compensate needy Jewish victims of the Holocaust undermines Russia, and last week, *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, the Communist Party's mouthpiece, published a reader's letter suggesting that Germany should pay more to Slavic victims of Nazism than to Jewish ones because 20 million residents of the Soviet Union perished in World War II compared with 6 million Jews.

Russian Jewish leaders have voiced their support for the idea of compensating non-Jewish victims of the Nazi regime.

"People who were humiliated by fascism should receive a compensation from those countries who directly or indirectly participated in the persecutions," said Vladimir Goussinsky, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

"A country that lost dozens of millions of lives in World War II would look strange if it only considered compensation to a part of its population," said Goussinsky, who also chairs the National Committee on Issues of Compensation and Restitution, the body created last year to oversee distribution in Russia of the money from the Swiss fund. □

**THE LEGACY OF KING HUSSEIN****King Hussein's death leaves immense void in Middle East***By Matthew Dorf*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The death of Jordan's King Hussein has created an immense void in the Middle East at a critical time for Israel, the Palestinians and, of course, Jordan.

Virtually overnight Jordan has lost the only leader it has known since 1952. Hussein's death from cancer, combined with his decision last month to sack his brother and former heir, Prince Hassan, has created uncertainty and concern among many Middle East diplomats and analysts.

"Without King Hussein and Prince Hassan, Jordan loses the two most forward-thinking Jordanians on the issue of peace," said Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Filling this gap will be tough."

Hussein, 63, who had occupied the Jordanian throne for 47 years, returned from the United States last month, and in a surprise move removed his brother and appointed his son Abdullah, now 37, heir to the throne. Hassan had held the title of crown prince for 34 years.

Along with the throne, Abdullah has inherited an unpopular peace accord with Israel and an unstable domestic economy.

Nonetheless, many Israelis believe that Jordan will continue on the path Hussein set.

"Jordan has never been just a one-man show," said Asher Susser, senior fellow at Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Hussein "leaves Jordan a country with an institutional foundation capable of maintaining itself. His departure does not mean the destabilization of the Jordanian state," he said.

But others believe Hussein's loss "poses a challenge to the stability of Jordan as well as to the Arab-Israeli peace process," said Joseph Nevo, professor of Middle East history at the University of Haifa. "Abdullah may find it a trying task to follow the footprints of his father."

Who rules Jordan and how is of immense importance for the region. Israel's longest border is with Jordan, which acts as a strategic buffer with hostile states. In addition, Hussein's charisma and skills were central to breaking many impasses in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In its last major military conflict with Jordan, Israel seized the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem in 1967. Since then, Hussein followed a more pragmatic path, which culminated in the 1994 peace agreement with Israel.

Indicative of the importance Israel places on its relations with Jordan, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon had scheduled a meeting with Abdullah last weekend. The meeting was canceled when Hussein became gravely ill.

Instead, Netanyahu and Sharon attended the king's funeral Monday along with Israeli President Ezer Weizman. Former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Labor Party leader Ehud Barak rounded out the large delegation.

"King Hussein was not a consensus-builder on the issue of the peace process — he was a trailblazer," Satloff said. He cited as an example Hussein's decision to ignore the unanimous advice of his advisers to enter a "fortress Jordan" mindset after Israel and the

Palestinians signed their 1993 Oslo peace agreement.

In a speech last week to a handful of Western journalists in Amman, Abdullah promised to remain committed to peace and to close relations with Washington.

"I am the extension of His Majesty's outlook and His Majesty's beliefs," Abdullah said, according to The New York Times.

Jordan's hope for peace between "our friends in Israel and our friends in the PNA," he said, referring to the Palestinian Authority, will remain the chief diplomatic priority, the Times reported.

But over time, the new king is likely to be tested by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, Syrian President Hafez Assad and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Abdullah, as the head of Jordan's armed forces, has had much experience in dealing with world leaders. He is one of only a handful of people to meet with Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi, Assad and Iraq's Hussein.

Abdullah's ability to handle foreign policy may depend on domestic issues.

Adam Garfinkle, senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Group, said, "What most concerns Israel and the United States is domestic stability in Jordan."

With this in mind, it's important to shore up Jordan's economy, he said.

In a sign of probable stability for Jordan, Kuwait is said to be on the verge of restoring diplomatic ties that were suspended after King Hussein backed Iraq during the Gulf War. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also expected to expand economic ties and may send aid.

President Clinton, who attended Monday's funeral with former Presidents Bush, Carter and Ford, has asked Congress to accelerate the aid package of \$300 million over the next three years. The aid was promised to Hussein after his intervention at the Wye peace conference between Israel and the Palestinians in October.

Abdullah has already met with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and is a known entity at the Pentagon, where, as head of the military, he has met on numerous occasions with top U.S. military officials.

Albright said in a television interview she is "impressed" with Abdullah's devotion to Hussein. She noted his "very simple statement of 'I'm going to carry my father's flag,'" which, she said means that "he would continue to work with us."

Some in Washington and Jerusalem are still lamenting that their work developing relations with Hassan was thrown out the window last month when he was replaced by Abdullah.

Still, Israeli military leaders have quietly developed good relations with Abdullah that began when he studied at Georgetown University in the early 1980s. An Israeli professor and teaching assistant guided the new king in his thesis, which examined Israeli treatment of Palestinians following the 1967 Six-Day War.

For now the big question is what Abdullah will do in the short term.

"The bottom line is that Jordan has enduring interests which any new king would pursue," Satloff said. The question is how he pursues them.

"King Hussein has always lived by the axiom: Deal with today's problems today, tomorrow's problems tomorrow. For a country in Jordan's position," Satloff said, "this appears to be good policy. What remains to be seen is whether a new king can live by it, too." □