

Hussein And PLO Compete For West Bank Support

JERUSALEM (WNS) — King Hussein explained why he cracked down on the PLO leadership in Jordan and claimed that a "silent majority" in the West Bank supports his policies but has yet to make itself heard.

Hussein, who appears to have embarked on a master plan to "liberate" the West Bank from PLO influence, held a press conference in Amman for the Western media to which he invited foreign journalists permanently stationed in Jerusalem. He told them the image they had that most Palestinians in the West Bank support the PLO was erroneous.

He said he shut down the offices of El Fatah in Amman because of its interference in a parliamentary election in Irbid, Jordan's second largest city, its involvement in a clash between students and police at Yarmuk University in Irbid and because of its constant criticism of Jordan's West Bank policy.

El Fatah is the terrorist arm of the PLO, supportive of Yasir Arafat. It has long been considered to command the support of most West Bank Arabs either

voluntarily or by intimidation. Hussein appears determined to create new political facts in the territory. He made clear however than Jordan would not make a separate peace with Israel. He said he saw no signs of a new American peace

initiative in the region in the immediate future.

Hussein has some influential backers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One of Arafat's former aides, Col. Atallah Atallah -- also known as Abu Al-Zaim -- denounced Arafat as a dictator and said it was time to say

"yes" to Israel. Atallah was formerly head of PLO intelligence.

Rashad A-Shawa, the former Mayor of Gaza, said in Amman that the PLO had done nothing for the Palestinian people but attempt to force its will on those interested in a political solution. Shawa has recently spoken out for

an interim settlement with Israel. He praised Jordan's decision to grant Jordanian passports to residents of the Gaza Strip.

But if there is grass roots support for Hussein's policies in the territories, it has yet to manifest itself. Public support for the PLO on the other hand, continues.

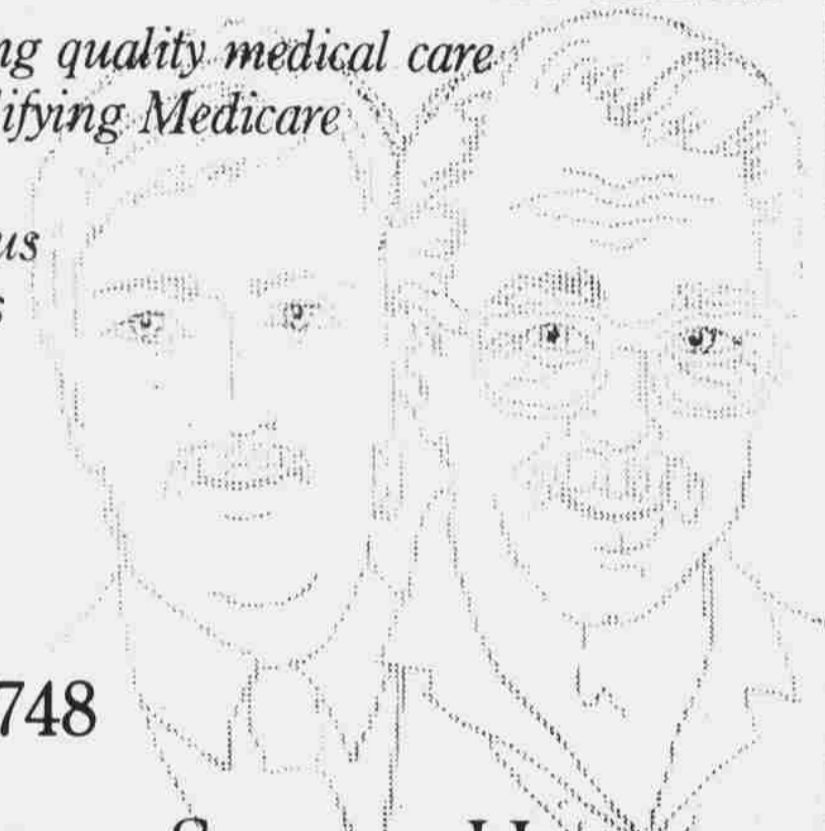
American Jewish Heritage Committee Celebrates Birthday Of Maimonides In Joint Ceremony With The Government Of Spain



Shown here is Rabbi William Berkowitz (left) National President of The American Jewish Heritage Committee, presenting a copy of Maimonides' classic work, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, to Spanish Ambassador Manuel Sassot. The American Jewish Heritage Committee and the Government of Spain recently celebrated the 850th birthday of the Spanish Jewish sage.

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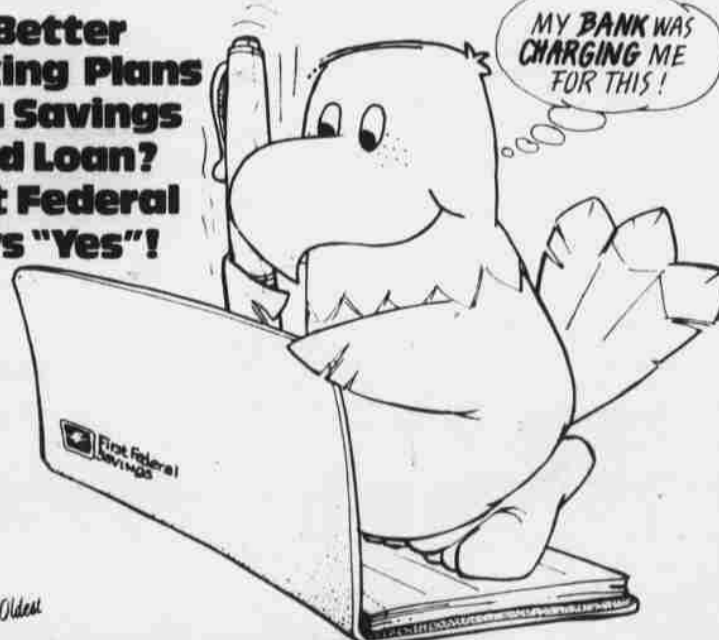
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