



Cairo demonstration: «Change comes by people's struggle, not through Mubarak and the guards.»

latter having so far hindered all peace efforts. Jordan has made concentrated efforts in Washington, hoping that the US will shoulder its responsibility as a «super power» desiring to preserve international peace. Hussein made no attempt to conceal his willingness to make concessions to imperialist and Zionist pressure. Moreover, he announced his readiness to enter into «direct and immediate negotiations with Israel» on the basis of UN resolutions which make no mention of the political rights of the Palestinian people: «We are ready to begin negotiations with Israel under the auspices of a suitable and acceptable party as soon as possible, according to UN resolutions 242 and 338...»

On September 29th, Mubarak described Peres as being «flexible» and said: «We can come to an understanding with him on peace.»

Concessions meet violence

US imperialism and 'Israel' lost no time in responding to the concessions made by Arafat and King Hussein. A few days after Arafat and Hussein made their statements, Israeli Phantoms bombed the PLO headquarters in Tunis, causing devastating losses, 60 Tunisian and Palestinian martyrs and hundreds of wounded. Then Peres and Rabin levelled a direct warning at countries which harbor Palestinians, meaning Jordan in particular. They stressed that the arm of 'Israel' is long, and there is no safe

refuge for the PLO. They presented the raid on Tunis as a lesson and a warning.

Of course, the US did not delay in making a statement on the Israeli terrorism, describing it as a justifiable act and expressing understanding. Richard Murphy, US envoy to the Middle East, commented on the results of the raid, saying that it will not slow down the peace process in the Middle East. He added that he thought there was a possibility that the PLO would reconsider its policy with regard to armed struggle.

This is on the level of statements. On the practical level, the US Administration, a few days after the raid, gave orders to its planes on the US warships in the Mediterranean, to hijack an Egyptian civilian plane which carried the hijackers of the Italian ship, Achille Lauro. By this, the Reagan Administration aimed at achieving more than one goal:

- 1) To draw the attention of international public opinion away from the Israeli crime in Tunis, and to justify this as «a legitimate act against terrorism» as Reagan put it.
- 2) To indicate to Hussein and Arafat that they have no choice but to accept the US-Israeli conditions for a settlement in the Middle East.
- 3) To revive the confidence of imperialism's reactionary allies in the region by showing that the US is ready to use force to implement White House policy.
- 4) To demoralize the Palestinians into giving up armed struggle, attempting to

show that it results in nothing but devastating those who adopt it.

5) To weaken the Soviet position in the Middle East especially before the Gorbachev-Reagan summit, showing that the US can flex its muscles in the region without affecting its relations with the reactionary regimes, flaunting its privilege over the Soviet Union.

The Reagan Administration was not content with hijacking the civilian plane, but also used the incident of the Achille Lauro to pressure the British government into refusing to meet with the Palestinian members of the joint delegation, unless they agreed to sign a statement including the US-Zionist conditions for solving the Palestinian cause. Thatcher's government complied with the US pressure, and Foreign Secretary Howe refused to meet with the Palestinian delegates.

The right's response to US and Israeli insults

Yasir Arafat declared that «US and Israeli terrorism and piracy are conspiring to destroy the Palestinian and Jordanian peace initiative in the Middle East.» Arafat went on to underscore his determination to continue with Hussein in chasing after the US solution, despite the fact that the US Administration shows no intention of solving the Palestinian cause.

Abu Iyad, member of Arafat's Central Committee, stressed that the reason for the Israeli raid was «Israel's finding