

the Palestinian people, throwing it on the PLO leadership. The most dangerous thing about the speech is that it heralds a new political stage: The regime has initiated a new war against the PLO and Palestinian cause, based on officially withdrawing from the Rabat summit decisions, dividing the Palestinian people and separating the question of Palestinian national rights from that of liberating the land. *Al Mithaq* denounced the 'Jordanized' Palestinians who were only too willing to participate in this war against the Palestinian cause and the people, and the PLO...The people will prove to the regime and its puppets that they are stronger than these new plots.

Palestinian National Personalities in Kuwait

Yahya Haddad, president of the General Union of Palestinian University Professors and Researchers — Kuwait branch

«The king's declaration of halting coordination with the present leadership of the PLO should be a lesson to those who do not read history, and to those who chase the mirage of US solutions. They were betting on being allowed to participate in the liquidationist solution, sacrificing Palestinian national unity and closing their ears to loyal calls to prevent them from following the deceitful mir-

age...This leadership should admit its extraordinary mistake, and abandon this political trend and all the agreements based on it. It should call for a unification PNC to reaffirm the Palestinian tenets and former PNC decisions, so as to set a plan for revolutionizing Palestinian affairs and developing collective leadership...»

Basim Sarhan, doctor of political science and economy; journalist

«King Hussein's stand did not come as a surprise to me...It was clear that Hussein accepted the Arafat leadership in Amman on special conditions that converge with those of the US...Thus it was clear that Hussein would abandon Arafat if he did not accept the US conditions. We have no confidence in the Jordanian regime...Its role is known historically. We demand that Arafat and his leadership be judged for all political deviations committed since 1982.»

Joudeh Al Hindi, independent PNC member

«We were pained by Arafat's surprise at King Hussein's decision, and by his affirmation of the February 11th accord and willingness to resume dialogue with the Jordanian regime. We still had some hope that Arafat, upon reaching the end of this bitter experience, would return to the path of strug-

gle...We are looking for a new stage where the resistance factions and the masses take the initiative to upgrade the PLO's situation on the basis of the PNC charter.»

Abdullah Al Danan, independent PNC member

«We should absolutely not deal with our cause using terms such as 'let us maneuver and use tactics'...»

Ibrahim Al Khatib, independent PNC member

«Jordan wants the PLO as its Palestinian cover, and the PLO wants the Amman accord as a means of gaining US recognition. The king suspended relations but has left the door ajar because he wants a decision (from the PLO) to recognize UN resolutions 242 and 338...The situation now rests with the factions and national personalities who have denounced the PLO leadership. If they can unite their ranks on a clear political program and rally the Palestinian and Arab masses, then they will be able to defeat the deviating trend and reunite the PLO on a sound national basis.»

¹ Assembly of pro-Jordanian notables in 1948, who approved the idea that the West Bank become part of Jordan.

² Agreement of spring 1984 between Fatah's Central Committee and the Democratic Alliance. ●

Peres and Unilateral 'Autonomy'

Towards the end of February, Zionist Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced: «The Hussein-Arafat talks were a total failure and we are back at point zero.» Peres therefore declared that the next step was to give the Palestinians in the West Bank broader powers of self-rule. This idea has always been rejected by policy-makers in the Zionist state. Recently, after Peres announced his plan, there was broad opposition in the government, even among his closest colleagues. Three of those who opposed the plan are ex-chiefs of staff of the Israeli army: Health Minister Mordechai Gur, Police Minister Haim Bar Lev and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir refused the plan. Likud Minister Moshe Arens went even further, proposing annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Gur pointed out that he had discussed the idea of self-rule with Moshe

Dayan at least ten times, and each time they concluded that the plan was not practical or easy to implement.

From where, then, did Peres acquire such confidence to think of implementing this plan? In the wake of the Amman accord, between Yasser Arafat and King Hussein, Peres eyed the chance for the PLO's giving concessions that would eventually enable Hussein to enter negotiations on the West Bank, marginalizing the PLO. The Zionist leadership is now eager to exploit the break-down in the Arafat-Hussein relations, to impose its own conditions. It is important to remember that when Peres speaks of self-rule, he means something more like 'civil' administration which does not tamper with Israeli control over the 1967 occupied territories.

Speaking to the press, Peres said that he supported handing over some

powers in the occupied territories to the local population. He proposed appointing Palestinian mayors, increasing freedom of movement between Jordan and the West Bank, development aid and opening an Arab Bank in the West Bank. However, speaking before the Knesset's Foreign Relations and Security Committee, he stressed that he does not support the idea of evacuating the Israeli army from the West Bank, because «If the forces leave, we may under certain conditions, have to redeploy them.» This reveals the real intention of talk about more powers to the local population and «improving the quality of life». Such phrases are primarily a tactical ploy thrown out to potential collaborators in the occupied territories, and especially to please the US administration and their friend King Hussein. When self-rule is seen in this context, Shamir's opposition is minimal. ●