

and its partners in the Labor Alignment. They envision the possibility of token military withdrawal from parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in return for economic and cultural occupation of the entire Middle East, and gaining historical legitimacy for the Zionist entity.

Recent polls show a clear increase in the popularity of Peres. This explains the Labor Party's continuing attempts to divide the national unity government with the Likud, and the calls for new elections. In an attempt to deceive public opinion, Peres has continued to make remarks about readiness to negotiate with Palestinians from the West Bank in the framework of a solution with Jordan.

In his opening speech to the Labor Party congress in early April, Peres said, «We want to say to the Palestinians that we recognize you as a people and it is not our intention to destroy you. We don't want to solve our disputes by force...The only way to solve the conflict is through dialogue between Israel and representatives of the Palestinians willing to work for a settlement.» This means Palestinians who have submitted totally to the Zionist conditions.

As quoted by the Zionist radio, the prime minister clarified that: «Israel will continue the transfer of local and municipal authority to the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will be ready

to transfer additional powers in that field. We will be ready to give all or part of these areas, like the Gaza Strip, self-rule as a first stage...Israel recognizes the fact that all inhabitants of the West Bank are Jordanian citizens...represented in the Jordanian parliament.»

These political developments in the Zionist entity are clear echos of US policy in the Middle East. There is nothing new in essence, just the Zionist poison being offered with a sugar coating. The US may, however, be faced with the need for resolving the political differences in the Zionist government in a way whereby the Labor Alignment takes the majority in the Knesset.

## *Jordan's Iron Fist — Update*

The Jordanian authorities have continued the repressive campaign begun in November 1985, against the nationalist forces, trade unions and other mass organizations. Towards the end of January, they arrested the writer Subhi Taha, member of the Jordanian Writers Association and the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists. On January 26th, a military court sentenced Ali Hamdan Zayoudi to five years imprisonment on charges of belonging to the Jordanian Communist Party, without having provided him with a defense lawyer.

According to information received from the relatives of detainees, the authorities are in the process of bringing many other detainees to 'trial' in the military court. This ignores the calls of international human rights organizations, local politicians and trade unionists for the release of these detainees. It also ignores their calls for an end to the fierce campaign of arrests and military trials which violates all civil and democratic rights.

At the same time, the intelligence service has been repeatedly calling a number of citizens for interrogation. Three members of the elected administrative board of the youth center in the Hussein Palestinian refugee camp were summoned: Director Akram Habash, Majed Hamam and Musa Odeh. For a whole week, they were beaten, insulted and threatened, and had their passports confiscated, for no other reason than their membership in the board. In view of the regime's current efforts to make a deal with the Zionist enemy, bypassing

the PLO, it is imperative to silence the popular forces on all levels.

Member of parliament, Doctor Nawaiseh sent a protest to the parliament concerning the security forces' attempt to attack him while he was speaking to a group of citizens at the trade union building in Karak on February 24th. (Dr. Nawaiseh's subject was the new election law which increases the members of parliament, providing for more 'Palestinian' representatives, as part of the regime's plan to act as their political spokesman.) As Dr. Nawaiseh was speaking, a large group of policemen and security officers barged into the trade union building; they ordered him to be silent and to disperse the audience. They surrounded him, pointing their automatic rifles in his face, when he tried to discuss the matter reasonably. In the face of what he called this «democracy at gunpoint», he deemed it better to ask the audience to leave and end the speech.

More recently, the Jordanian authorities moved to silence cultural and journalistic circles. A number of writers were banned from writing in local papers, including: Khaled Mahadin, Bader Abdel Haq and Ziad Al Shilah of *Al Rai*, Abdul Raheem Omar and Tawfiq al Abed of *Saut al Shaab*, and Lamis Andone of *Jordan Times*. Previously, the authorities had banned the famous journalist, Fahd Al Remawi, from writing in *Al Ra'i*.

### **Solidarity with political prisoners**

Several local and international

organizations have begun a solidarity campaign with the militant, Breik al Hadid, who has served eight years in Jordanian jails. They are demanding his immediate release. On February 18th, Hadid began a hunger strike to protest his continued detention. Other political prisoners in the same jail joined in the strike. Hadid's health is deteriorating and the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan issued an urgent appeal for efforts to save his life.

On March 14th, the General Assembly of Insurance, Bank and Accounting Workers sent a warm greeting to their fellow unionist, the militant Abdul Razaq Saed, secretary of the union, who is serving a five-year sentence, passed by the military court, for charges of membership in the PFLP.

### **How King Hussein 'celebrated' Land Day**

The real indication of the Jordanian regime's respect for Palestinian land and rights came in its crack-down on activities held in Jordan for the occasion of the Day of the Land. The authorities stormed the headquarters of the Bank Workers' Union and forbid a planned conference for the Day of the Land. The following members of the administrative council of the union were interrogated by the intelligence forces: Hayder Rasheed, Mohammad Kasem, Musa Kwidil. Another member of the union was detained. The security authorities also forced the dismissal of three members of the administrative council of Zarqa camp's youth center, and three of Wehdat camp's youth center. A number of youth were interrogated on the Day of the Land.