

Jordan's War on the PLO

King Hussein of Jordan has continued his attempts to eliminate the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a task made easier by the Palestinian right wing's having signed the Amman accord with the Jordanian monarch.

In his efforts to enter the imperialist peace, dragging the PLO behind him, King Hussein was not satisfied with the concessions given by Arafat. Rather, the monarch wanted the PLO to reduce itself to an appendage of the Jordanian foreign ministry. After Hussein's attempts ran into obstacles, he froze the coordination with Arafat's leadership and pursued his old-new plan for wiping out the PLO altogether. In line with this, the Jordanian regime has taken a series of measures which, taken singly, may appear unimportant, but which add up to a consistent anti-Palestinian policy.

During his last visit to Washington D.C., King Hussein lobbied for his plans of finding an alternative leadership to the PLO. In an interview with the *Washington Post* on June 11th, "He left an impression, without saying so explicitly, that an Arab summit conference might be called upon to endorse a new leadership for the Palestine Liberation Organization or, failing that, to give recognition to leadership outside the PLO that would cooperate with King Hussein in peace efforts." Hussein himself said, "Maybe the Palestinians themselves will find it necessary to reorganize themselves in such a way as to enable this (new leadership) to emerge" (*International Herald Tribune*, June 12th).

Of course, the plans of Hussein caused delight in Washington and Tel Aviv, and he continued on this course. In every public statement, he stresses his suspicions about the PLO's ability to represent the Palestinians. In a press conference in Jordan on July 12th, he opened fire again: "Our difference with the PLO is that they see the Palestinian people as one people, regardless of their location... We see the importance of keeping our family on their land, and after we recover the land for the price of peace, the Palestinians would decide for themselves within the framework of a confederated Jordanian-Palestinian state... The question of self-determination is a Jordanian-Palestinian question. It is totally wrong to discuss it in a (international) conference... The PLO should accept 242 and 338, and denounce terrorism to be able to attend the conference and start relations with the US."

These words need no explanation.

They mean simply the negation of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. The monarch said that the Palestinians "need an institution to play its role fully in representing the Palestinian people," whereas the Palestinians already have their institution, and that is the PLO. The problem facing the Palestinians is the ability of this US puppet to overtly wage war on their sole, legitimate representative. King Hussein is only able to do so because of Arafat's having signed the Amman accord, which resulted in the division and weakening of the PLO. Accordingly, confronting the King's moves demands cancellation of the Amman accord and reunification of the PLO on the national platform, opposed to imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

SILENCING THE PALESTINIAN VOICE

In accordance with the same policy, the Jordanian regime increased repression in Jordan. After the massacre at Yarmouk University and the attacks on the Jordanian national movement (see *Democratic Palestine* No. 17), the regime directed its fire against the Palestinians.

In the beginning of June, the regime decided to incorporate all Palestinian youth centers into the Jordanian Ministry of Youth. The regime dissolved the elected executive committees of these centers, that had the backing of progressive and nationalist forces. Instead, the Ministry of Youth appointed a set of stooge executive committees.

The director of UNRWA in Jordan sent a letter on June 5th, to the Minister of the Occupied Territories, explaining the dangers of the step and its contradiction with UN agreements and specifically article 100 of the UN Charter. The Jordanian regime, however, ignored the UNRWA letter and continued its plan of negating any expression of the Palestinian people's independent identity.

The Jordanian regime took anti-democratic steps against our people in the occupied West Bank. The Jordanian press, radio and television were ordered to boycott news published by the independent Palestinian press in Jerusalem. Besides being an attempt to cut the flow of information between our people in the West Bank and Jordan, this was intended to punish

Palestinian journalists for their support of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The regime placed 34 journalists in the West Bank on a black list. This list included the chief editors of four newspapers -*Al Mithaq*, *Al Fajr*, *Al Quds* and *Al Shaab*- and 10 other editors. These journalists face detention and interrogation if they visit Jordan.

In another move to pressure the PLO and the Palestinians generally, the Jordanian regime revoked the passports of 35 Palestinians who had been expelled from the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. Some of the deported were freed in the 1985 prisoner exchange; most of them are supporters of Arafat's Fatah. The Jordanian regime also placed some of them under house arrest.

SEARCHING FOR 'MODERATES'

The Jordanian regime is also working directly in the occupied territories to create an alternative leadership to the PLO. An Israeli official said that Jordan is pressuring for the appointment of four 'moderate' mayors in the West Bank, in an attempt to weaken the PLO. He added that King Hussein has promised more aid to cities and towns that cooperate with his plans (*Al Safir*, July 2nd).

To this end, the Jordanian cabinet approved a five-year 'development' plan for the West Bank, whereby \$1.4 billion, supplied by the US and Gulf states, will be dispensed by the Jordanian regime. Of this, only \$.25 billion will be spent on agriculture and industry; the rest will be spent on services. This means that the Zionist occupation authorities will be excused from spending any money on services for the people they exploit daily. The term 'services' is also an appropriate guise for dispensing funds as bribes in order to cultivate 'moderate' Palestinian figures who will advertise for Hussein's policy of returning the occupied West Bank to Jordanian rule, in accordance with the framework that was presented in the Reagan plan in 1982.

The Jordanian regime has moreover decided to resume paying the salaries of those employed in the public sector before the 1967 occupation, and to give fuel subsidies. Nimrod Novek, assistant to the Zionist prime minister, expressed support to the Jordanian plans, saying, «We support anything that encourages the moderates.»

The proposed mayors are Mohammed Rashad Ja'abari for Al Khalil (Hebron), Khalil Mousa for Ramallah, Walid Mustafa for Al Bireh and Abdul Fattah Dudeen for Al Dura. These four persons were summoned to Jordan to discuss the question of their appointments. After returning to Jerusalem, Ja'abari said, "Jordan supports