

(28%). Karak province, on the other hand, contains 4% of the population but is allotted 12% of the seats. This distribution is intended to deprive the democratic and nationalist forces of the power they have in urbanized areas, while giving more weight to backward forces

No date has yet been set for elections, but they will be held under the martial and emergency laws enacted in 1967, on the pretext that Jordan is in a state of war with 'Israel', whereas these laws are actually used to suppress opposition to the regime. The Jordanian authorities have already started preparing a 'democratic, honest atmosphere' for the elections, waging a broad campaign of arrests against patriotic and progressive figures. The latest preparation was closing down the offices of the well-known Jordanian Writers' League.

## TOWARDS FREE AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Given the fact that the Jordanian regime sees the upcoming elections as an opportunity to impose its 'representation' of the Palestinian people, the PLO Executive Committee issued a condemnation of holding elections in the Palestinian camps in Jordan and for the West Bank. Meeting in Tunis in May, the PLO Executive Committee termed such elections an infringement on the PLO's sole right of representation. All the organizations of the Palestinian revolution have determined to boycott the elections in the camps.

The other aspect of the planned elections is aimed against the Jordanian masses and democratic forces. It is an attempt to falsify the masses' will. In the face of this, the patriotic and progressive forces in Jordan should unite to make these elections a mass political struggle against the reactionary election law and the regime's policies. Entering this battle under the current conditions requires the broadest popular and nationalist work to end the state of emergency and martial law. It requires unified efforts by the masses in Jordan, Palestinian as well as Jordanian, to struggle for democracy while safeguarding the PLO and the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. ●

## Committee for Democratic Freedoms: Release Abu Mashour!

On May 17th, the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan issued a communique to the effect that the prominent militant Ahmed Saleh Musleh, otherwise known as Abu Mashour, is still being detained by the Jordanian General Intelligence in Amman, two months after his arrest on March 17th. Abu Mashour is a member of the Palestinian National Council.

This is not the first time Abu Mashour has been jailed. In 1967, he was arrested by the Zionist occupation authorities and imprisoned for nine years. After his release, he was deported to Jordan in 1976. In April 1980, the Jordanian authorities arrested him and detained him until July 18, 1980. He was rearrested on November

17, 1981, and detained until late 1983. All told, Abu Mashour has spent about eleven years of his life in Zionist and Jordanian prisons. Still, in March, the Jordanian regime arrested him for the third time, without specifying charges. He remains in jail, deprived of the minimal human conditions.

The Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan strongly condemns Abu Mashour's detention. It calls on all Arab and international humanitarian and juridical organizations to work for his immediate release, and for the release of all political prisoners in Jordan. These organizations are called on to work to put a stop to the overall human rights violations of the Jordanian authorities.

