

summit which was held in Algeria, I am justified in saying that all Arab regimes must accept the PLO's move related to this issue. Concerning the non-aligned countries, we expect full support to what the PLO decides, because they have been essential supporters of our struggle for achieving a Palestinian state.

Does what you said about a government-in-exile mean that you accept its establishment to fill the legal vacuum in the occupied territories caused by the Jordanian decision?

The vacuum should not again be filled by Jordan. If a Palestinian government-in-exile is the sole option to fill the vacuum, we will be ready to accept this option, but we know that it is not the sole option. As I mentioned, a meeting of the

Palestinian leaders will be held at the end of this month to answer this question. There should be a united Palestinian answer, and not only the PFLP's answer.

Are you going to participate in the PNC meeting to be held in Baghdad?

The place for convening the PNC has not been decided yet. What happened in Baghdad is that the Palestinian Central Council recommended to the PLO Executive Committee that the PNC be convened as soon as possible, in order to support the uprising. Naturally, the PFLP will participate in the PNC, supporting and being loyal to the uprising and its martyrs. We will participate in order to answer all questions which the uprising and the Palestinian national struggle are facing at this stage of the revolution.

Did King Hussein Set the West Bank Free?

King Hussein's July 31st announcement that Jordan will end legal and administrative relations with the Israeli-occupied West Bank is perhaps one of the most important moves in the history of the monarchy. It is surely one of the most decisive political developments elicited by the Palestinian uprising. Still, there are reasons to doubt that this is such a decisive break as the king presents it to be. It is rather the latest tactic in his historical endeavor to undermine the Palestinian people's adherence to the PLO and their right to an independent state.

For the first time ever, the Jordanian monarchy has publicly and officially conceded its claim to the West Bank. This means abrogation of the results of the 1950 Jericho conference where a small group of pro-Jordanian notables rubber-stamped the monarchy's claim, whereafter the Jordanian parliament legislated the annexation of the West Bank. On this background, the Arab League «entrusted» the West Bank to the Jordanian kingdom until its liberation. What followed, of course, was instead the Israeli occupation of 1967.

This occurred before the definitive rise of Arab nationalism and in the absence of the organized Palestinian national liberation movement. The status quo has since been irreversibly challenged by the rise of the Palestinian armed resistance and the PLO. The onset of the current Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories shattered the so-called Jordanian option for resolving the Palestinian question. The action and slogans of the masses, while primarily directed against Israeli oc-

cupation, have made it unavoidably clear that they will accept neither alternatives to the PLO nor Jordanian moves to contain their struggle for genuine freedom and independence. In the climate of the uprising, pro-Jordanian figures in the West Bank have retreated, exposing the monarchy's isolation as never before.

REASONS FOR THE JORDANIAN MOVE

The impact of the uprising was the main factor, but there were other reasons which contributed to the king's decision. Not least among these were the decisions of the Algiers Summit in June, which reasserted the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people and official Arab support to their rights, including the establishment of an independent state. The summit also asserted that Arab aid should be channeled via the PLO and relevant international organizations, not through Jordan. This marked a big defeat for the Jordanian regime, overturning the

results of the 1987 Amman summit which King Hussein had engineered to eclipse the PLO's role and the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Zionist conflict altogether.

Another factor which drove the king to his fateful decision was fear of the Likud's position. Not only does the Likud reject the very idea of territorial compromise needed to enact the Jordanian option; it goes farther, terming Jordan «a Palestinian state» and thus evoking the historic Zionist option of «population transfer», i.e., driving Palestinians en masse into Jordan. For this reason, the speech in which King Hussein announced his intention to sever ties with the West Bank was replete with statements such as: «Jordan is not Palestine. The Palestinian state should be established on Palestinian land.»

The king's decision was also the culmination of a string of failures for his various plans to foster the Jordanian option. These aimed either to reabsorb the West Bank or to share in