

its administration alongside the Israeli occupation. Above all, they aimed at promoting the Jordanian kingdom as the lynchpin for any solution to the Middle East crisis. The failure of the king's plans applies both to those aiming to create an alternative to the PLO and those aiming at coopting the PLO into a false partnership, as with the ill-fated Amman accord of 1985 which was eventually cancelled by the PLO. The uprising served to accentuate the Palestinian people's abhorrence of the aims behind the Jordanian regime's five-year development plan and joint administration of the West Bank.

On the other hand, the Labor Party has showed itself unwilling and/or unable to forge an Israeli consensus for settling the Palestinian issue via a «land for peace» exchange involving Jordan. The US, for its part, has done very little to help King Hussein make the Jordanian option a reality.

Added to these larger reasons is a trend within the Jordanian regime itself which has always advocated washing their hands of the Palestinians. This trend gains weight in times when Arab officialdom, for whatever reason, appears to side with the Palestinian option rather than the Jordanian one. For example, after the 1974 Rabat Summit which recognized the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the regime began pursuing a «Jordanization» policy whereby many state departments, ministries and especially the security services were virtually closed to Palestinians. Today very few Palestinians are heads of labor or professional unions, despite the fact that Palestinians constitute somewhat over half of the population in Jordan. Recently, a decision was also taken to limit Palestinians' admission to Jordanian universities so that they would not constitute more than 15% of the student body. In several major newspapers, Palestinian editors have been replaced by Jordanians.

## THE CHALLENGE

On this background, the king cancelled the five-year development plan, abandoned claims to the West Bank, and dissolved the lower house of the parliament where half the seats are

occupied by Palestinians from the West Bank. The Ministry for the Affairs of the Occupied Territories was subsumed under the Foreign Ministry. Less than a week later, the regime announced that it would halt salaries to West Bank civil servants, health care personnel, teachers and policemen as of August 16th, while giving them severance pay and maintaining their right to pension.

While the PLO and Palestinian people welcomed the regime's acknowledgement of their independence, it is also clear that the real intention was to entrap the PLO and make the masses despair. The Jordanian regime tried to create a vacuum in the West Bank, betting on the PLO's inability to see that people have basic health, educational, legal and administrative structures to sustain everyday life - and especially the needs of continuing the uprising.

Besides depriving over 20,000 Palestinians of half or all of their income, the Jordanian move intended to make every West Banker, and many other Palestinians as well, fear for their passports. Originally, Jordanian Interior Minister Dajani stated that 90,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, holders of Jordanian passports, had lost Jordanian citizenship as of July 31st, and that they would henceforth hold only Jordanian travel documents. However, after a PLO delegation's August 13th visit to Jordan, it was decided that West Bankers would hold temporary passports to be renewed every two years instead of every five years, as has been the case. As of July 31st, no Palestinian will be granted Jordanian citizenship. Also visiting permits for West Bank Palestinians coming to Jordan were restricted to one month, as opposed to the previous three.

With all these measures, the Jordanian regime planned to preoccupy the PLO with endless discussions on how to solve the material problems that arose for West Bankers, and how to respond to the political challenge contained in the Jordanian decision. This would be at the expense of work to further the uprising, and optimally the king hoped to elicit divergences among Palestinian leaders as to how to face the challenges, possibly leading to new splits. Concurrently, the Jordanian measures were an

assault on the uprising on two fronts - that of daily survival of the masses and that of political unity. The grand finale of the king's scenario would have the PLO, much weakened and possibly divided, begging the monarch to resume its interference in Palestinian affairs.

There are other indications that the king's real intentions are divisive. Despite claims that these measures aim to accentuate the Palestinian identity, in essence the regime aims to partition the Palestinian people according to where they now reside. In his speech, the king said that Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanians. This is meant to provide a model for resettling Palestinians in the countries where they presently live. As a result, the PLO would in the end represent only those Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## PRELUDE TO MORE REPRESSION

The king also warned that no party would be allowed to interfere in Jordan's internal affairs. This is most likely the prelude to new attacks on the national movement in Jordan. Lists are already being drawn up of PLO cadres present in Jordan; they would be required to declare whether their loyalty is to the monarchy or to the PLO; those who choose the latter would be expelled on the principle of «love it or leave it.» In the same vein, everyone working with the PLO and carrying a Jordanian passport would be considered a spy.

The «Jordanization» policy may be escalated to limit Palestinians' access to education and jobs. Palestinians from the West Bank who work in the public sector in Jordan, where they reside on the basis of travel permits, may have their contracts terminated; they would be treated like other Arabs working in Jordan, i.e., required to obtain residence permits. In this light, the Jordanian moves appear as a way of taking revenge on the Palestinians for having charted their own course of struggle.

## IS THE KING BOWING OUT?

There are many reasons to doubt that this move means the Jordanian