

# ***Deepening of the political crisis in Jordan***

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DURING NOVEMBER and December 1966, big events took place in Jordan, events which attracted world public attention. On November 13 armed Israeli aggression hit the village of Samu, causing the death of more than fifty of its inhabitants and the destruction of tens of houses. When the people of the district demonstrated condemning that barbaric aggression and demanded from their government that measures be taken to defend the borders and safeguard the lives of the unarmed civilians, the government responded by ordering troops to fire on the demonstrators; this resulted in more victims, this time shot down by bullets of the Jordanian army. This criminal action aroused the wrath and anger of the Jordanian people, and they replied with a sweeping upsurge which lasted more than four weeks. The government suppressed it with fire and sword.

## **I.**

During 1966 the political situation in Jordan was characterized by the ending of the partial and limited easing of tensions which prevailed in the country in 1964 and 1965. This easing of tension was a result of the retreat of the Jordanian rulers, under the pressure of the Jordanian people and their national movement, from certain attitudes of extreme reaction and enmity towards the Jordanian people and the Arab movement of national liberation and social progress. In 1966 the rulers of Jordan began to return to their old attitudes and to follow openly the imperialist plans in the region. At first they renounced the decisions of the Arab summit conferences, and subsequently joined the Saudi rulers in promoting the new imperialist scheme—the Islamic pact. When in February 1966 the Rightists in Syria were overthrown and in their place arose a national progressive regime, the rulers of Jordan instantly concentrated troops along the Syrian border, threatening armed intervention to reconstitute the previous state of affairs. It has been defi-

nitely established that the rulers of Jordan were in close contact with the abortive military coup led by the Syrian officer Salim Hatoum early in September 1966. After the failure of the coup, which aimed at the overthrow of the progressive national regime in Syria, its organizers took refuge in Jordan.

The conspiratorial and subversive activities of the rulers of Jordan against Syria are part and parcel of the general scheme of the USA and Britain in this part of the world. The scheme aims at overthrowing the progressive national regime in Syria, crushing the Yemeni republic, isolating the United Arab Republic and striking it down—all this in order that the imperialist powers may regain the positions they have lost in the region. Roles in this scheme have been allotted to the various reactionary forces and regimes in the region, and especially to the rulers of Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. It was no accident that the rulers of Israel concentrated their army on the Syrian borders and intensified provocative and skirmishing actions against the Syrian army at a time when the rulers of Jordan concentrated their army on the Syrian borders, and continued their subversive activities inside Syria. All this at a time when the Saudi rulers intensify their conspiracy against the Yemenite republic, the United Arab Republic and the revolution of the people in South Arabia.

The warning of the Soviet government, which TASS announced on May 27, 1966, unmasked the conspirators and their objectives. The Soviet statement said:

"... The Israeli army is in a state of alert, the leaves of the soldiers and officers have been cancelled, the Israeli forces are being concentrated on the Syrian borders... Certain reactionary circles in Jordan and Saudi Arabia which are irritated by the policy followed by Syria, contribute also to the plans directed against this Arab country, plans which are supported by the USA and Britain."

In the light of this, it is perfectly clear why

the USA and Britain lavishly bestow money and weapons on the rulers of Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

It was natural that the conspiratorial and subversive activities of the Jordanian rulers against Syria should be accompanied by sweeping oppression and terror against the opposition inside Jordan itself. In April 1966, the police authorities and secret service arrested hundreds of Communists, Baathists, Arab nationalists and members of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Tens of these were subjected to various kinds of persecution. The Jordanian authorities again whipped up the hysteria of enmity against communism, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. King Hussein and his Prime Minister Wasfi El-Tell personally took part in this campaign.

## II.

In this atmosphere electrified with tension, conspiracy and subversive activity, disseminated and inflamed by the imperialist powers and the pro-imperialist rulers of the region, the Israeli aggression against Jordan occurred.

This barbaric aggression shocked world public opinion. Even the imperialist powers which patronize Israel, arm it and incite it to aggression could not help condemning this aggression, and were forced to support the Security Council resolution stamping Israel with the aggression. Most of the leading Western papers commenting on this aggression attributed it to "mere short-sightedness." This aggression initiated a wave of questions as to the causes which prompted the rulers of Israel to direct their aggression against a Jordanian village, for it is known that the rulers of Jordan are pro-imperialist, not opposed to the Israeli rulers, persecute the underground armed Palestinians, killing a great number of them, and are inimical to the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Israeli rulers were quick in answering these questions. The Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban declared that the attack on the Jordanian village Samu was not aimed against the present regime in Jordan, a regime which Israel had no desire to see overthrown. The Israeli spokesmen emphasized more than once that the attack was directed specifically against the Jordanian people, to "teach them a lesson" so that they will obstruct infiltration by armed Palestinians into Israel. In these statements the Israeli rulers only offered a new proof, beside the numerous previous proofs, as to their aggressive criminal nature. Throughout the 19 years since the establishment of Israel, its rulers have hardly let a day pass without providing evidence that they are simply the claw which the imperialist powers use, whenever they need, against the Arab peoples. The barbaric attack on the Samu village is not the only one carried out by the rulers of Israel, it is one of tens of hundreds of barbaric aggression actions which they have carried and still carry out against the peaceful Arab villag-

es in Jordan, Syria, Gaza and even in Israel itself. The world has not forgotten the shameful role which the rulers of Israel played in the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956.

The Israeli Communist leader Meir Vilner described in an article the services which the Israeli ruling circles render imperialist powers in these words:

"(a) intrigue and conspiracies against the Arab anti-imperialist movement; (b) assistance in operating neo-colonialist policies in Asia and Africa; (c) active participation in the imperialist campaign against the Soviet Union and the socialist camp generally."

This realistic definition of the nature of the role played by the ruling circles in Israel shows clearly that they want to outdo all the imperialist agents in their subservience to imperialism. Their services are not limited to a particular imperialism in general. A case in point is their close cooperation with the Bonn revanchist imperialists, the heirs of Nazi Germany. Their activity covers all the spheres in which imperialism and world reaction are interested. In addition to using Israel as the spearhead against the Arab movement for national liberation and social progress, they actively contribute to imperialist conspiracies and subversion against the national movements in Asia and Africa. They are very active in the cold-war machinations against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. In a word, these rulers make Israel a base for the fight against progress in the world. After all this, why should anyone be astonished to see the "very civilized and democratic" rulers of Israel carry out this "very simple operation," which they call "teaching a lesson," against a peaceful village of unarmed Jordanian peasants? This only proves their criminal parasitic nature. It is not difficult to prophesy what fate awaits such rulers who insist on clinging to the last to the sinking world imperialist ship.

## III.

The aim of the Israeli rulers, in attacking the Samu Jordanian village, was not to eliminate the reactionary regime of Jordan. On the contrary, they want to see this regime consolidated and strengthened. They wanted to provide it with enough justification to continue oppressing the Jordanian people and their national movement, to silence this people in relation to the conspiracy of the Jordanian rulers against Syria. But the calculations of both the Israeli rulers and their Jordanian colleagues boomeranged. The Jordanian people were not silenced, nor did they bend the knee in the face of the massacre committed by Israeli rulers or the campaign of oppression and terror practised by the Jordanian rulers. The masses continued to demonstrate and these demonstrations spontaneously spread to all the towns and villages on the Western bank, where half of Jordan's population of two million live. Within two days the demonstrations grew into

a sweeping popular upsurge, in which workers, peasants, students, the youth, men and women participated. Committees were constituted in most towns on the Western bank to direct the resistance. The masses clashed with the army in tens of places and many fell. The army used tanks and heavy weapons of different kinds to blockade towns and villages and to isolate them. Water and electricity were cut off from towns and a curfew was enforced for many days. The most ferocious and vicious methods were used against the unarmed people. Thousands of young people were arrested.

The heroic popular upsurge aroused the anxiety and fear of the imperialist powers, the rulers of Israel, and the reactionary regimes in the region. All hurried to support the reactionary regime in Jordan which shook under the people's blows. The USA announced its willingness to dispatch arms quickly to Jordan, and the commanding officer of the U.S. Sixth Fleet stationed in the Mediterranean declared the fleet's readiness to move in in the event of the situation deteriorating in Jordan. The Saudi rulers announced their willingness to send 20,000 soldiers to Jordan to serve under King Hussein. Official spokesmen and the press in Israel repeated more than once that Israel will not stand idle should the regime in Jordan collapse. They threatened to seize the Western part of the country.

The forces of imperialism and reaction in the region converged on the unarmed, small people of Jordan and thus enabled the Jordanian rulers to suppress the heroic upsurge after they had drowned the people in blood, with fire and sword.

#### IV.

The temporary success achieved by the Jordanian rulers in defeating the Jordanian people and suppressing their courageous upsurge does not cancel the great significance of this upsurge or its great influence on the future struggle of the Jordanian people and their national movement.

This spontaneous upsurge exposed the true nature of the Jordanian regime and laid bare its face as an utterly reactionary regime inimical to the people and indifferent to the lives of their sons and daughters. The upsurge dealt the regime a strong blow from which it will never recover. It forced the imperialist powers and the Jordanian rulers to reconsider their plans as to the use of Jordan and its army for intervention against the progressive national regime in Syria. They had to take into account the Jordanian people.

The heroic upsurge broke the comparative lull which prevailed among the people and characterized their national movement during the past ten years, following the imperialist reactionary coup d'état in the spring of 1957. It ended the artificial relative stability which prevailed during these ten years due to pressure and terror, and as a result of the partial eco-

nomic prosperity caused by the inflow of financial "aid" and imperialist loans.

This upsurge shook the new social and political basis of neo-colonialism in Jordan. It is common knowledge that up to a few years ago, the feudalists, tribal chiefs and a number of the compradore bourgeoisie comprised the social base of imperialist domination in Jordan. But with the infiltration of neo-colonialism in Jordan and its strategy aimed at pushing Jordan further on the road of capitalism, circles of the middle bourgeoisie and upper sections of the petty-bourgeoisie are being attracted—out of fear of socialism and deep-going social reforms—to the whirlpool of the neo-colonialist strategy. In time, as these bourgeois circles grow richer and their ties with neo-colonialism grow stronger, they gradually tend to become the new social and political bases of neo-colonialism. But this does not eliminate their contradiction with imperialism completely, nor does it change their vacillating nature.

Thus, though these bourgeois circles make a common front with the present regime in Jordan and support it, especially in its strong opposition to deep-going economic and social transformations, such as are being carried out in the United Arab Republic and the Arab Syrian Republic, they were forced during the popular upsurge to take an attitude opposed to the regime. In a big national issue like the rights of the Palestine Arab people usurped by Israel, or in such a fateful issue as the armed Israeli aggression on Jordanian territory and Israel's expansionist objectives in respect to Jordan, or in the issue of transforming Jordan into a den for the imperialist powers to conspire against the fraternal Arab countries, these bourgeois circles are unwilling to go all the way with the king and the extremely reactionary circles which have sold out completely to imperialism.

King Hussein admitted as much when he stated to *U.S. News and World Report* (December 26, 1966) that among the reasons for the upsurge was the attitude of "some people . . . of what you might call bourgeois background who have resented the ability of the government to reach the mass of the population . . . without passing through them . . . Some of the trouble can be traced to their activities."

Thus it is possible to see the fundamental reason which caused the King to rescind his approval for the convening of the mass congress scheduled to open in Jerusalem, although most of the delegates were bourgeois and it was supposed to calm things. The King seems to have feared that under the general conditions, the congress was likely to pass resolutions castigating his policy and condemning the methods used in dealing with the Israeli aggression. The attitude of these bourgeois circles throws light on the reasons for the ministerial reshuffle and the dissolution of Parliament. The foreign minister and four of his colleagues were not included in the reformed

ministry, and these represent the new social and political base of neo-colonialism in Jordan. They strongly opposed any deep-going economic and social transformations in Jordan, yet they had to go or were ousted because of their opposition to the policy of the King and his Premier Wasfi El-Tell on a number of issues mentioned above.

The importance of this phenomenon lies in the fact that the present regime in Jordan is forced in future to fall back on the old social and political base comprising feudalists, tribal chiefs, some of the big bourgeoisie, and the exposed imperialist agents, i.e., on the long-bankrupt social and political forces. By doing so, the regime deepens, to the limit, its isolation internally, on an all-Arab scale, and internationally.

## V.

The November upsurge showed the extent of the profound hate of the people towards imperialism and the present reactionary regime in Jordan; it indicated the preparedness of the masses to continue the struggle, resolutely and consistently, to achieve their aim—the establishment of a progressive national regime. If the upsurge was unable to succeed and secure the objectives and hopes of the Jordanian people, this was due among others to the following basic reasons:

First. The Jordanian army of 60,000 men, predominantly bedouin, is a professional army financed and armed by Britain and the USA. It remained, generally, loyal to the regime and executed the orders of the authorities, except in few cases where some officers and men refused to fire on the masses.

But the popular upsurge on the one hand, and on the other hand the openly treacherous attitude of the Jordanian rulers, their indifference to the lives of the people, and their open covering up of the repeated Israeli aggression on Jordanian territory, affect growing numbers of decent officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who are beginning to feel that the rulers, instead of ordering them to defend the country's borders and safeguard the lives of citizens, direct them to fire on their brothers and sisters, whose only guilt is their demand that the government defend their homes and land, and safeguard their lives against the Israeli aggressors. The incidents of refusal by some officers and soldiers to fire on the people, though few, indicate the beginning of the loosening of the adhesion of the Jordanian army and of its loyalty to the present regime. This phenomenon will certainly develop more and more with the spread of the struggle of the Jordanian people, and with the increased exposure of the present regime and its growing isolation.

Second. One of the biggest elements of weakness in the upsurge was that it remained, principally, confined to the Western bank and did not spread to the Eastern bank. This is due to:

(a) The quick government measures; the strong military precautions, and the method of barbaric suppression imposed on Amman and the other cities and towns of the Eastern bank. The authorities rushed to Amman and other cities the bedouin soldiers and tank units. The police authorities and secret service arrested hundreds of youth and students, they surrounded the university and other educational institutions and the refugee camps with large army forces, and isolated the Eastern bank completely;

(b) The relative influence of feudalists and tribal chiefs, completely loyal to the regime, and their threats against the masses of peasants, in case these peasants carried out anti-government activity;

(c) Fear of friction and clashes between those of Palestinian origin and the other citizens settled on the Eastern bank (known previously as Transjordan). The ruling circles constantly fostered local prejudices between Palestinians and Jordanians in order to divide the ranks of the national-liberation movement.

Third. The inability of the upsurge to free itself from its spontaneous character. This prevented its development politically and organizationally so much so that it could not crystallize slogans and demands compatible with the interests of the popular masses on the Western and Eastern banks. The demands remained confined principally to requesting arms, recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the entry of Arab armies into Jordan.

Fourth. The upsurge showed the relative weakness of the different national and progressive political parties due to the strong oppression and suppression to which they have been subjected over the years. It also showed the great damage caused by the disunity of the national and progressive forces and the absence of a national program for the whole national movement capable of rallying the widest popular masses and all the national and democratic forces.

Nevertheless, the spontaneity of the upsurge and its accompanying shortcomings do not change its profound anti-imperialist, anti-reactionary nature; it has opened up new horizons for developing the struggle for far-reaching political, social and economic changes in Jordan.

## VI.

The Political Bureau of the Jordan Communist Party made an analysis of this popular upsurge and its far-reaching results; it studied the present conditions in Jordan and the balance of class and political forces, taking into consideration the nature of the struggle and its complexities, i.e., the interconnection between the struggle for completing the political independence of Jordan, achieving its economic independence and its advance along the path of democracy and social progress, on the one

hand, and the struggle for the usurped rights of the Palestine Arab people on the other; it examined the possibilities for rebuffing the continued Israeli aggression in Jordan, and for resisting the expansionist ambitions of the Israeli rulers, taking into consideration the organic inter-connection between the struggle of the Jordanian people and the struggle of the fraternal Arab peoples to obstruct the conspiracies of the imperialists, the oil companies and the reactionary regimes in the region. The Political Bureau, taking all these elements into consideration, reached the conclusion that in the conditions of present-day Jordan the circumstances are emerging for the establishment of the broadest national front to continue the struggle for the achievement of a minimum program corresponding at the present stage to the interests of the working class, the masses of the peasantry, and wide circles of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. This program can be summarized as follows:

The establishment of a government of national coalition which should work to carry out the following:

First: (a) release all political internees and prisoners unconditionally; (b) insure all freedoms and abrogate all laws limiting freedoms; (c) eliminate all elements loyal to imperialism and inimical to the people from the government apparatus; (d) carry out free and fair parliamentary elections.

Second: (a) follow a policy of national liberation, safeguarding the political independence of the country and opposing imperialism in all its forms, its alliances and conspiracies; (b) resolutely uphold the rights of the Palestine Arab people; (c) stop accepting financial "aid" and loans with conditions attached.

Third: (a) free the national economy and build it up; get rid of the chronic trade deficit and correctly orient trade in the right direction; (b) fight against unemployment; care for the workers and toiling masses in town and village, and improve their conditions of work and life; (c) fight against rising prices.

Fourth: (a) free the Jordanian army from the financial and military domination of the imperialist countries, increase its capacity and arm it through friendly and fraternal countries; (b) join the joint defense agreement between the United Arab Republic and the Arab Syrian Republic; (c) fortify the front-line villages and arm their inhabitants to defend themselves in the face of Israeli aggression; (d) adhere to the decisions of the United Arab Command.

Fifth: foil the imperialist attempts to make Jordan a base for conspiracies and subversive activity against the liberated Arab countries, and follow an Arab policy corresponding to the policy of the liberated Arab states and especially those Arab countries with progressive national regimes.

Sixth: (a) follow the policy of positive neutralism and non-alignment, against imperialism and war; (b) establish diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

The unity of the national and progressive forces in Jordan on the basis of these objectives and demands, and the struggle to achieve them, will create the objective conditions for carrying out far-reaching political, economic and social transformations which would take Jordan onto the path of democracy and social progress.