

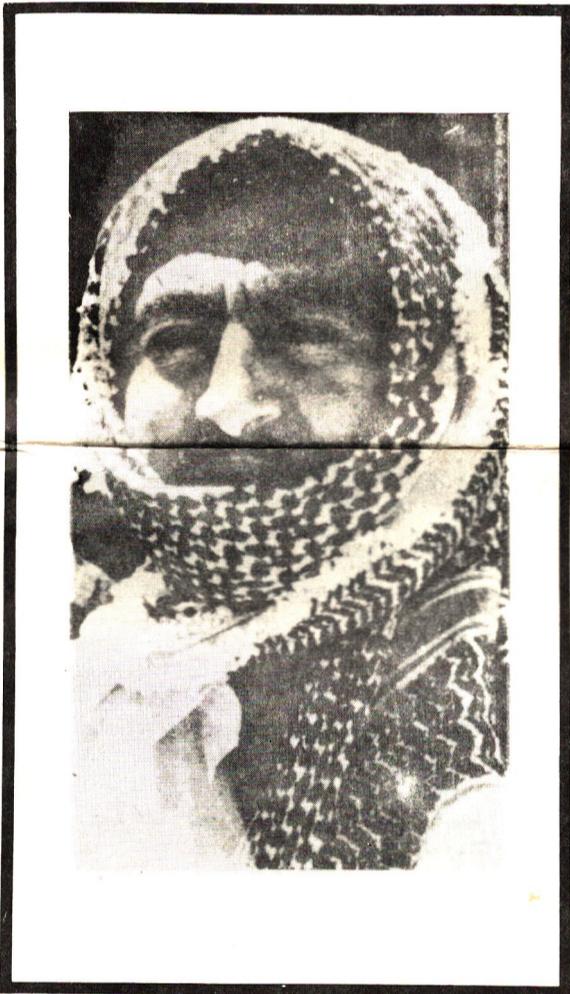


PALESTINE RESISTANCE BULLETIN

In Solidarity with the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

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SEPTEMBER COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN JORDAN ! a critical analysis



NAYEF HAWATEMAH

EDITORIAL:

TOWARDS VICTORY IN THE 70's

This month marks the second anniversary of the establishment of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The formation of the Front in February, 1969, as a principled and armed Marxist-Leninist detachment of the Palestine Resistance movement marked a significant *qualitative* transformation in the revolutionary struggle of the Arab peoples against the forces of Zionism and imperialism.

Recent developments in the Middle East dictate, nevertheless, that the present celebration of the Front's anniversary, unlike last year's, occur under conditions of *revolutionary retreat* for the Palestinian movement. It can now be said

with certainty that the harvest of the September (1970) counter-revolution in Jordan resulted in resolving the dual power situation in East Jordan (between the resistance & the monarchy) *in favor of the reactionary regime*. Events have underlined the warning comrade Nayef Hawatmeh made two years ago: that Arab reaction is preparing the year 1970-1971 to be the year of liquidation for the Palestinian resistance.

Today, instead of greeting the Front's anniversary with slogans of revolutionary optimism, our task is to critically evaluate the circumstances that led to the present retreat. Only thus can we serve the cause of the Palestinian people and the Arab revolution.

The *Bulletin* presents to the North American reader in this issue a very valuable document containing the report of the Central Committee of the DPFLP on the September counter-revolution, it analyzes the origins, the aims, and the consequences of the royalist campaign, and outlines the present tasks of the Palestinian revolutionary movement.

The significance of the report lies in that it contains the first self-evaluation and criticism of the theory and practice of the resistance movement (including that of the DPFLP) during the past two years. It is by no means a thorough or exhaustive study — nor does it claim to be. The editors of *PRB* urge the socialist movement and press in North America to widely discuss and disseminate this document as a contribution to a deeper and more objective understanding of the nature of the present stage of the Palestinian revolution.

The two major *organizational* tasks facing the left of the Palestinian resistance today are: One, the building of a *united national front* of all organizations and classes capable of fighting imperialism and Zionism, as well as the compradour regime in Amman; and, secondly, *the building of a Marxist-Leninist party* which can assure the hegemony of proletarian leadership for the Palestinian revolution. Obviously this task is not (nor should be) the monopoly of the Democratic Front. As the DPFLP prepares for its third year of revolutionary combat we should heed well the words of comrade Ho Chi Minh on this subject. "The proletarian party," he said, "cannot demand that the [United] Front acknowledge its leadership. Instead it must be the party that provides the greatest sacrifices in the struggle and proves by its actions to be the most determined member of the Front. The masses discover *in daily struggle alone* the correct policies of the party and its capability for leadership. Only then

can it become the vanguard of the struggle".

Note: Due to space considerations the editors were forced to postpone the publication of the second and third portions of the report, "September Counter-Revolution in Jordan" until *P.R. Bulletin* Number 7, which will appear in early March.

SEPTEMBER COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN JORDAN A Critical Analysis

Introduction

The all-out political and military campaign against the Palestinian resistance organized by Jordanian-Palestinian reaction and by American imperialism in September was not the first of such attempts and will not be the last — although it differs from previous ones in its scope and consequences. Moreover, it was not directed against the left of the resistance, as Arab reaction claims, nor was it "provoked" by the left, as right-wing elements in the resistance movement itself have stated.

The September onslaught should be viewed as a link in a chain of counter-revolutionary attacks against the *whole* of the resistance and the popular movement, resulting from *objective* conditions. These conditions are rooted in the perpetual contradiction between the semi-feudalist, bourgeois compradour regime tied to imperialist investments on the one hand, and the Palestinian-Jordanian liberation movement on the other. All attempts to push this contradiction to the background have failed because of the insistence of the reactionary forces to override the secondary (class) contradiction over the primary (national) contradiction with the Imperialist-Zionist enemy — before and after June 1967. It should come as a surprise to no one that Jordanian reaction served as a safety valve for the Zionist movement (before 1948), the state of Israel, and Arab reaction in the region. Local reaction had been continuously attempting to crush and liquidate feda'i activity even before 1967, as the experience of Fateh (65-67) shows very well. After the war of June 1967 — *before the formation of the left*, and before the masses were armed in the cities — the reactionary forces conducted their first campaign (encirclement of feda'i activity in Al-Aghwar during February, 1968) and their second campaign in Amman and

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other cities, still prior to the emergence of the left. This resulted from two factors: One, the class nature of the reactionary regime in Amman and its hostility to the popular movement and the armed revolution. Secondly: the ties of the regime with imperialism and its responsiveness to imperialist plans for striking against movements of national liberation.

Only those ignorant of the modern history of Arab and Palestinian-Jordanian reaction, and of the nature of imperialism in this region, and the rightist elements inside the resistance movement, can believe the distortions of reactionary forces claiming that the campaign was aimed at the left of the resistance, and that the left "provoked" the onslaught. It is time for the resistance to clean its ranks of such elements.

PART I: POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER ONSLAUGHT.

With the advent of 1970 it became clear that imperialist and Arab reactionary forces were preparing for the year 1970-71 to be the year of liquidation for the 'Palestine Problem' and the resistance movement. Witness the key events of that period: Direct American pressures on Cairo, Sisco's [Nixon's envoy] visit to the Middle East, Israel's in-depth attacks on Arab position (especially the UAR), failure of the Arab summit meeting in Casablanca, intensification of attempts at liquidating the resistance in Beirut and Amman, the anti-Palestinian campaign of October 1969, and the attacks of February and June (1970) in Jordan.

The Arab governments, in collaboration with Soviet policy were also aiming at turning 1970-71 into the year of "solving" "the Middle-East crises" — although from different political positions and according to the Soviet-Egyptian interpretation of the U.N. Resolution (of 1967).

Together those factors gave birth to the U.S. sponsored Rogers proposals (May 1970) which were accepted in Cairo and Amman (end of July 1970), thus preparing the Security Council (UN) Resolution for implementation. The primary consequence of this new arrangement was the transformation of the struggle with the main enemy (Zionism-Imperialism) into a struggle within 'the Arab Front' — between Arab reaction and the resistance movement. The leaflets of the (Democratic) Front had made it very clear at that time that "the Rogers Proposals were the first steps towards the 'Vietnamization' of the Middle-Eastern war." (Communiques of July and August, 1970).

Military Preparations

Jordanian reaction, having learned its lessons from the June 1970 onslaughts, undertook preparations for a new major attack on the resistance forces. A bloodless coup d'état occurred within the ranks of the army, security and all intelligence agencies which resulted in giving the upper hand to extreme right elements in the regime. Those forces consolidated their control over the repressive agencies of the state and conducted a campaign of political and psychological mobilization in preparation for the onslaught of September. A new "Trojan Horse" government was established including certain patriotic bourgeois elements to deceive the resistance and the people. The palace reorganized its forces around Amman to ensure the complete

encirclement of the capital by loyal elements, while the King's new government openly insisted that the siege around Amman was being withdrawn.

The final arrangement for the campaign occurred when the King went to Cairo (August 20-23, 1970) to demand that the liquidation of guerrilla activity be given top priority in the ensuing negotiations. Rifa'i's right-wing "moderate" government provided a suitable cover for those activities especially when joined by the ("Supervising") Arab Committee sent by the Arab League to "coordinate" relations between the resistance and the reactionary regime. The palace, meanwhile, did not forget to test the reliability of its troops (in siege of Amman) by executing orders against the people. Such a rehearsal occurred in the bombardment of the city during August 31-September 1, 1970. Throughout this period (from the beginning of June until September 16th) a continuous air supply of ammunition and equipment for the barbaric onslaught kept pouring into Amman from imperialist sources (Washington, London, and through West Germany). All those events were known to the resistance movement, and the campaign did not come as a surprise to any organization or to the Central Committee of the Resistance.

Position of the Arab Regimes

The Jordanian monarchy made full use of Cairo's acceptance of the Rogers Plan, and of the opposition which ensued between the Egyptian government and the resistance movement, in order to complete its "bloodless coup d'état" in the ranks of the army and State Security forces. It also took full advantage of the Nasserite consciousness among the masses in general, and of the historical affinity of the national bourgeoisie towards Cairo. The monarchy also made use of the political conflict which developed within the popular movements as a result of Cairo's acceptance (of the Rogers Plan), and of the conflict between the resistance and the popular Arab regimes (which supported the Security Council resolution).

The Jordanian regime appeared to have been confident of Iraq's (non-interference), despite the show of muscles practiced by the Iraqi regime in favor of the resistance movement (i.e. the famous warning that Iraqi troops stationed in Jordan would join the revolutionary forces in case of an attack by the Jordanian forces). This confidence was born by subsequent events before September (especially after the failure of the June, 1970 campaign, and during the end of August when royal forces bombarded Amman with heavy artillery and the fifth campaign!

The Democratic Front carried those warnings to the masses and the resistance. In the document presented to the seventh Palestinian National Congress (May 27-31, 1970) the Front pointed to the coming campaign of liquidation of the "Palestine Problem", and stressed that the current efforts were aimed at defeating the resistance movement in Jordan and Lebanon. In fact the Congress meeting was hardly over when the fourth military assault began in Amman and Zarqa (June 7th), even before the Palestinian leadership arrived in Amman.

The Front furthermore aimed at resolving essential matters connected with the *security of the revolution and the correctness of its national line in the Jordanian-Palestinian area* during the seventh Congress. Certain elements in Fateh and the right-wing of the Congress had obscured those matters in the sixth Congress (September 1969). Chief among those questions were:

1. Assertion of the unity of the Jordanian-Palestinian arena, in response to a tendency within Fateh to "Palestinianize" the Palestine problem without paying sufficient attention to what was happening in Jordan. This meant in practice the necessity of stressing the daily connection between the continuation of the armed struggle against Zionism and the protection of the revolution in the East Bank, and the necessity of securing a solid national base in Jordan which can paralyze local counter-revolution.

2. Assertion of the unity of the Jordanian-Palestinian people through their common labor-unions and professional organizations, in view of Fateh's incorrect regional line toward trade-unions and professional organizations. This incorrect policy had negative consequences not only in endangering the unity of the people, but also in exposing the safety of the revolution, by *objectively isolating the East-Jordanian masses, and subjectively preventing them from identifying their common class and national interests with the Palestinian revolution.*

3. Strengthening national alliances by bringing all contingents of the resistance into a common frame work (the P.L.O. and the formation of the Central Committee by order of the National Congress).

Although these steps were agreed upon by the National Congress, they came about far too late, and the revolutionary mass movement was to suffer the consequences of those incorrect policies in September 1970!

The acceptance of the Rogers imperialist "peace plan" by Cairo and Amman following the failure of the June (1970) attack against the resistance, brought to a head the confrontation between the resistance forces and the ruling class in Jordan. It now became essential for the new resistance forces to defeat the U.S. plan. *To do so necessarily required the establishment of a popular regime in Amman opposed to imperialism, Zionism, and the liquidationist schemes.* This was the key link in defeating the Rogers Plan.

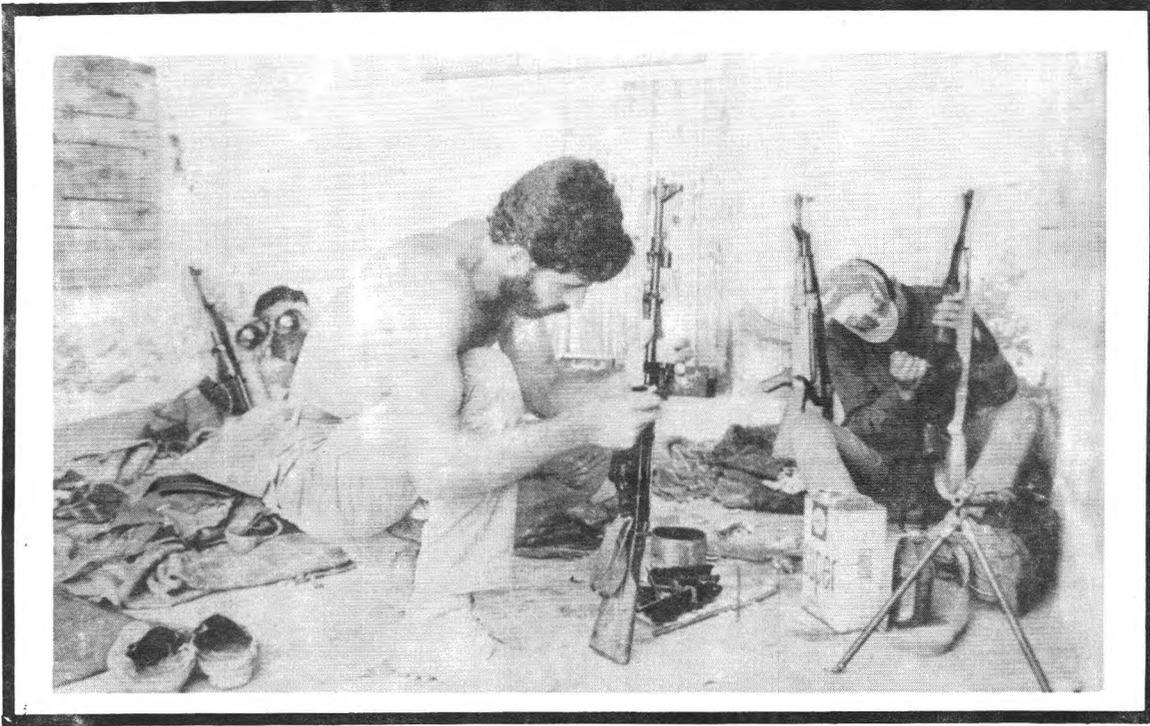
The Democratic Front put this question to the masses, to the Central Committee (of the Resistance) and to all the resistance contingents, (communiques in *al-Sharara* — organ of the DPFLP Central Committee). The Central Committee of the Palestine National Congress called for an emergency session (August 27, 1970) in which the Front participated in formulating the decisions of the Congress. The positions of the different resistance organizations were moving in the direction of obstructing the liquidationist schemes. Unfortunately, the Congress arrived at a consensus as to the roots of the present conflict, but failed to make the proper conclusion (i.e. the struggle for the establishment of a popular regime in Amman). Thus the Congress stressed the following issues:

1. The need for unity of struggle in the Jordanian-Palestinian arena.

2. The prevention of any negotiations with the enemy, and illegitimacy of any Jordanian authority that does so.

3. The transformation of the Jordanian-Palestinian arena into a stronghold for the Palestinian revolution, in which the popular armed forces will coordinate their struggle with regular soldiers.

The Congress failed, however, to specify the nature of the "authority that will represent the people's armed forces united with soldiers to build the strategy of coming struggle" etc... and the means of arriving at this



authority. Despite these weaknesses the meaning of the decisions was clear.

For the protection of the revolution the Front crystallized the main task around the slogan of "All Power to the Resistance, the Soldiers and the Armed Masses" and posed it as an alternative to the authority of imperialism and reaction in order to mobilize the masses as well as the resistance and the soldiers against the liquidationist schemes, (*al-Sharara*, popular rallies, "Invitation to the Soldiers and Officers to Form Revolutionary Soldiers' Committees", etc.). Meanwhile *Fateh* [daily organ of the Central Committee of the Resistance] editorialized that "the defeat of the Rogers Plan will lead to a clash which will definitely be the final confrontation with the compradour regime."

The resistance movement did not resolve this question until after the events of August 31-September 1 (1970) when royalist forces began to strafe Amman (to test the responses of the resistance) under direct orders from (Hussein's) Himmam Palace and behind the back of the Supreme Command of the Army under General Mashhur Haditha [a "moderate" general] and Prime Minister's Rifa'i's government.

From then on the trend became very clear. The King's "coup" was prepared for an inevitable final confrontation. Only then did all the resistance organizations (and especially *Fateh*) become aware that the battle could not be avoided, given the imperialist pressures on the palace. The Central Committee (of the Resistance) came out with its famous proclamation calling for a "struggle for the establishment of a popular authority and for the overthrow of the compradour regime — without eliminating the King."

What now after the slogan of a "Popular Authority" has become the adopted slogan of all resistance organizations? What about the strategy for facing the accelerating events leading to the confrontation between the resistance and counter-revolution?

The resistance movement remained vacillating in defensive positions. Its strategy was characterized by the predominance of planning *defensive political and military tactics without attempting for once to take the initiative from the forces of counter-revolution and organize a campaign of offense.* The plan of the resistance can be summarized here:

1. Politically, it raised the slogan of "struggle for the establishment of a popular (national) authority" with specific tasks (i.e. rejection of liquidationist plans, purging the state apparatus from extreme elements, and the dismantling of reactionary political and military agencies within the state — without eliminating the King).

2. Militarily, it coordinated a common defensive plan for the resistance in case of attack. All contingents were to be at the disposal of the newly created Joint Military Committee.

3. The governments of the UAR, Syria, and Iraq were contacted by the Central Committee of the Resistance (immediately after the June attack) to specify their positions from the coming developments. The Central Committee, however, did not make clear its demands on those regimes and the methods of implementing them. Their relations remained unresolved.

The negative aspects of these developments are directly related to the internal composition of the resistance and to the nature of relations it had with the Arab regimes. The Front had repeatedly invited the Central Committee of the Resistance and the resistance contingents to *act on the historical necessity of taking the initiative from the palace.* The Front put the question directly to the masses after the June (70) campaign. It sought to ripen the revolutionary crisis not only in the country, but also within the ranks of the resistance organizations under the banner of "All Power to the Resistance, Soldiers, and the Armed Masses."

The September Campaign: Its Aims and Results.

Only one hour after the signing of the joint agreement with the resistance (supervised by the Arab League Committee) the Jordanian government began its military campaign against the resistance. Until that moment, the resistance movement was diligently working to avoid the shadows of civil war within the country. The monarchy and its imperialist masters decided otherwise. Their counter-revolutionary aims can be outlined briefly here:

One, the total elimination of the resistance movement by isolating it from the historical "protective umbrella" of the revolution: the masses that supplied its resources and protected its back.

Two, terrorization of the Jordanian and Palestinian masses as a prelude for the restoration of the pro-imperialist class dictatorship, in order

to facilitate the implementation of the "settlement" plans.

Three, attempting to destroy the historical unity of the Jordanian and Palestinian people through false regional claims. (The blind tanks and artillery of reaction, however, failed to make such 'national' distinctions. Nor did they distinguish resistance partisans from uninvolved civilians).

Four, to prepare the country for the acceptance of defeatist "peaceful" solutions and the final liquidation of the "Palestine Problem." It was hoped that in the face of the barbaric treatment of the royalist forces, the Palestinian people will be forced to accept *any solution that will relieve them from the reactionary dictatorship of the monarchy.*

These were the common goals of the palace, Arab reaction, and imperialism. The Jordanian regime, however, had its own special goals concerning "the fate of the throne and the monarchy in Jordan as part of an overall settlement of the Palestine Problem." As it stands now there seems to be a common agreement within the imperialist camp on the need for the establishment of a Palestinian mini-state in the West Bank and the Gaza strip as the first step towards a final settlement. The Palestinian people — according to this plan — will be forced to participate in this settlement when faced with the *fait accompli* (Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in return for recognition of Israeli sovereignty). Nevertheless, there are tendencies in imperialist circles (especially in the U.S.) which consider the proposed mini-state as inadequate — for economic and demographic reasons — to solve the problem of absorbing the total Palestinian population currently living in East Jordan (about 900,000) and over half a million Palestinians living in other Arab states (140,000 in Syria, 300,000 in Lebanon, and the rest in neighbouring states). Thus, American imperialism is prepared to "sacrifice" the monarchy in Jordan to consolidate the proposed Palestinian state. On the other hand, the British imperialists — concerned about protecting their oil monopolies under more limited considerations — favor the establishment of the Palestinian state within the boundaries of the West Bank and Gaza, and continue to support the 'independence' of the Kingdom of East (Trans) Jordan.

King Hussein was aware of this bargaining on the future of his throne between his two imperialist masters. When he conducted his fifth campaign of liquidation in September he was deliberately asserting to the U.S. and Britain that while he was capable of maintaining his 'law and order' in Jordan, he would not succumb easily to a situation where his throne will be the price for settling the 'Palestine Problem.' This he stressed in more than one public announcement in which he declared his acceptance of the Palestinian state project in the West Bank and Gaza, by frequently stressing the "connections of unity" this state will have with his kingdom.

The Attack and the Response

The palace announced the formation of the fascist Military Government on the morning of September 16, one hour after signing the joint agreement with the resistance in the presence of the Arab Committee. The scope of the impending battle became clear from the first moment, when the fascist government demanded that the people hand in their arms.

The central committee of the Resistance met immediately and undertook the following political and military preparations:

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1. A proclamation to the masses to fight until the military government is overthrown and a progressive regime is established. The people were urged to join in a general strike, and to declare themselves in civil disobedience until the government falls.

2. All fighting forces were united under one command. The Military Central Committee of the Resistance was put in charge of executing a plan of defense.

3. In the event of civil war the northern territories (from Baq'aa to Al-Ramtha) were to be proclaimed liberated zones. A new national regime was to be established to protect the revolution. All revolutionary elements were to be mobilized, armed and sent to Amman.

4. The Arab governments were demanded to stop the massacre, and to support the revolutionary forces against the campaign of encirclement and liquidation.

The day of September 16 was completely quiet — the lull before the storm. With the twilight hours of the next morning the all out assault on Amman began, spearheaded with the tanks and the blind straffing of the city — with special concentration on working-class districts. We make here the following observations:

1. Two battalions and one armoured brigade were surrounding Amman and entered the initial battles.

2. The royalist forces were under unified political and military leadership throughout the country.

3. The royalist forces maintained their cohesiveness during the whole campaign. Defections from their ranks to the revolutionary forces were few and isolated.

4. The initiative remained in the hands of the royalist forces. The regime *imposed a war of positions on the revolutionary forces* in Amman and Zarqa — which made the fighting closer to a conventional war rather than to guerrilla warfare.

5. The Royal High Command through most of its forces in the city of Amman. The plan was to liquidate the resistance in the capital within three hours at the minimum and three days at most — then proceed to clean the rest of the country.

The resistance forces defended the people and the revolution using position warfare in Amman and Zarqa, and forms of guerrilla warfare (mostly raids and ambushes) in Ajlun and as-Salt. On the revolutionary side the following observations can be made:

1. The resistance forces fought the battle under fragmented political and military leaderships. Almost every city had its own

separate command. This situation allowed the reactionary regime to deal with each leadership in isolation from the Supreme Command despite the unified political resolution issued by the Central Committee and the repeated calls to the North (Irbid, Ramtha) and the middle sector (Jarash, Ajlun, As-Salt) for aid.

2. The city of Amman was the center of the fighting. The High Command of the revolutionary forces was formed in practice from three organizations: Fateh, the Democratic Popular Front, and as-Saiqa.

3. The Central Committee of the Resistance (which, for the first six days of the fighting, was composed from the above named organizations, to be joined later by the rest) maintained a correct political line and a solid military front until the cease-fire.

4. In the northern and middle sectors the resistance was paralyzed, both politically (inability to transform their administrative control over their areas into a political coordinated plan with the rest of the country), and militarily (their forces locked inside the cities). Most of these forces belonged to Fateh (in Jarash, Ramtha and Irbid), the D.P.F.L.P. Liberation Army (in Irbid and Ramtha), the Democratic Front (in Irbid and Ajlun) and to as-Saiqa (in Irbid, Ajlun and Ramtha). Most of these forces remained inactive despite the repeated call from Amman. They did not even make use of the Syrian support which succeeded in linking the northern region to the middle sector and broke the Jordanian army encirclements around Ramtha, Naima, and the Jarash-Irbid road. When the Syrian support withdrew the resistance forces did not sufficiently protect the deserted areas thus allowing the remaining contingents of the 40th royalist brigade (most of it wiped out during the fighting) and the 99th brigade (coming from Zarqa) to recapture the above positions and prevented the middle sector from communicating with the North.

The Amman command of the resistance under conditions of total encirclement and faced with the depletion of its ammunition (especially anti-tank equipment) and unable to receive reinforcements from the northern and middle commands — was forced to negotiate a cease-fire, after ten days of the bloody fighting in its history!*

Brother Yasir Arafat (Abu Ammar) was sent by the Central Committee with the single purpose of signing a cease-fire. The purpose was to gain time to allow for reinforcements to arrive from the north. The conclusion of the Cairo agreement the next day came as a surprise to the Central Committee in Amman. It decided to disregard the agreement for three days in anticipation of new developments from other regions, but the total silence in the north if effect put the agreement into execution, especially when the Arab ('Supervision') Committee arrived in Amman.

PART II: THE CONSEQUENCES AND LESSONS OF THE FIFTH WAR OF LIQUIDATION IN SEPTEMBER'.

(Next issue). (This section includes the following: 1. The internal structure of the resistance movement. 2. The activities of the resistance in the cities and the rural areas. 3. The class nature of the Jordanian regime). The third and final section of this document deals with the composition of the Jordanian army and the practices of the mass movement in East Jordan, and finally analyzes critically the relations of the resistance movement with the Arab regimes and the present tasks of the revolutionary movement.

NOTES

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