The land we are fighting for

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Results of dependence

The dependence of many former colonies on imperialism hinges on the single-crop character of their economies: they specialize in one or two kinds of primary products, exports of which on the world capitalist market account for the bulk of their earnings. In Jordan, however, the main source of income is foreign financial 'aid.'*

Internal sources provide an insignificant part of state budgetary expenditure. The steadily growing deficit is covered by foreign subsidies and loans, which account for more than 70 per cent of the budget revenue:

	1970-71	Fiscal Year 1971-72 million dinars	1972-73
Internal Sources	37	40	44.2
Foreign 'Aid'	70	84.86	114.992

At the end of 1972, the so-called three-year economic development plan for the years 1973-1975 was adopted. Drawn up by experts from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the Ford Foundation, the Arab-American Chamber of Commerce and similar imperialist organizations, it is based wholly on foreign capital.

Not surprisingly, the guidelines for Jordan's domestic and foreign policies are laid down by imperialist 'donor' states. Thus, when Jordan came out on the side of the Arab countries in June 1967, the United States immediately suspended its 'aid,' which was resumed only after the Government suppressed the Palestine resistance movement on its territory in September 1970 and refused to honor its commitments under Arab unity treaties and agreements.

Jordan's dependence on imperialism hampers its economic development, which has become extremely lopsided. Thus, a huge increase in state spending for non-productive purposes has inflated the service sphere, which now accounts for 68 per cent of the national income.

In 1955, industry accounted for 5 per cent of the national income; almost twenty years later its share was still only 10 per cent. Predominant in industry are semi-artisan workshops with few machines. Only 7,000 workers, 1.4 per cent of the total work force, are engaged at comparatively large enterprises (by Jordanian standards) employing more than 25 persons. Workers in all other industrial-handicraft enterprises constitute 15 per cent of the work force.

Agriculture, in which 45 per cent of the gainfully employed population is occupied, is the key sector of Jordan's economy, and accounts for more than half the exports (but only 20 per cent of

^{*}The British protectorate of Transjordania was officially proclaimed an independent state on May 5, 1946. The act was preceded by a treaty between Britain and the pupper ruler Abdullah, which guaranteed the military-feudal clique continued financial 'aid' to maintain its bureaucratic and punitive machinery in exchange for the preservation of military bases and the stationing of troops. A new treaty signed in 1948 reaffirmed the country's total political and economic dependence on Britain. In 1955, British 'aid' accounted for 10 million of the 17 million dinars on the credit side of Jordan's budget.

The Jordanian Communist Party and other patriotic forces put forward alternative development plans based on the rejection of British subsidies and the rational utilization of natural resources with help from other Arab states.

However, after public pressure forced the abrogation of the shackling agreement in March 1957, Britain's place as the main supplier of 'aid' was occupied by American imperialism. Already in April, 1957, the U.S. granted Jordan a credit of 10 million dollars mainly to maintain punitive forces.

the national income). An agrarian policy geared to preserving the tribal structure of the rural population and perpetuating existing social relations and farming methods has doomed the countryside to extreme backwardness, Primitive farming and obsolete implements make for low productivity and low per capita incomes. There is also an acute land shortage, yet out of more than 13 million dunams* of arable land not more than three million are cultivated.

Even in the fertile lands in the Jordan valley (the Ghor Depression) farming began only recently. Fragmentation of peasant holdings goes along with concentration of land in the hands of the big farmers. As a result poor peasants are forced to hire out for seasonal jobs, join the army or migrate to the cities, where they swell the

ranks of the unemployed.

The three-year plan makes no provisions for a healthier economy through production growth and expansion; its emphasis is again on the services, where it provides for an increase of 18,000 jobs, as against 11,000 jobs in the production sectors. The planned increase in internal state revenues is to be achieved primarily through higher taxation, with provisions for almost doubling direct taxes and increasing indirect taxes by 35.4 per cent, which will affect mainly the working people.

The low standards of agriculture and industry compel Jordan to import mainly food and consumer goods. In 1970, imports totalled 67.8 million dinars, with a balance-of-trade deficit of 51 million. The three-year plan provides for a huge foreign trade deficit. By 1975, imports are to reach 102 million dinars, whereas exports will increase to only 23 million (as compared with 15 million in 1972).

The deficit is to be covered by foreign 'aid.'

The power base

So far no minerals or other natural resources capable of whetting imperialist appetites have been discovered in Jordan, and considerations of economic exploitation never played an important part in the policies of colonialism and, later, neo-colonialism. Jordan's importance derives from its strategic situation in the very heart of the Middle East with its huge oil reserves. And that is just why imperialism spends more on our country than it takes out.

Imperialist money has been used to build up an army far in excess of the needs of Jordan's defenses. The United States, main creditor of the Jordanian military, views Jordan as a 'deterrent' against progressive Arab regimes. As noted recently by Time magazine, King Hussein's standing in the eyes of ruling circles in the U.S., which he visited last February, was strengthened by his refusal to allow Palestine guerrilla units back into the country. This explains the promise he received in Washington of help in building up his repressive machinery, especially the army. Jordan's Communists hold that large expenditures to maintain an army are justified only if they are meant to build up its strength to defend the country, contribute to the struggle, together with other Arab coun-

*One dunam = 0.1 hectare.

tries, against imperialism, for the liberation of Israeli-occupied Arab lands. The Jordanian army's main function, however, is to suppress opposition to the regime. That is why about one-third of the budget is designated for maintaining the army and internal security forces, which aggravates the country's economic difficulties. In 1972, these expenditures totalled 53.6 million dinars - as much as the combined investment in agriculture (27.6 million) and industry (26.1 million).

True, dissatisfaction with the mercenary regime has infected even the army and is responsible for periodic 'purges.' Thus, in the autumn of 1972, a hundred officers, mainly Palestinians, were discharged. Still, the army, which is linked with the tribal and bour-

geois elite, remains the throne's power base.

As a rule, in former colonies the big landlords profit from imperialist-imposed programs aimed at exploiting the country (irrigation projects, road construction, etc.). In our country the absence

of such opportunities is compensated in other ways.

Most of the big landowners are sheikhs, tribal chiefs. Traditionally, the state allocates them large sums and supplies ostensibly to meet the needs of their tribes and maintain an 'equilibrium' between them. Formerly this aid was dispensed by the British Chiefof-Staff of the Armed Forces; today it is provided through organizations such as the Tribal Council, the Farm Credit Society, and others.

Sheikhs and members of their families are given lucrative positions in the administrative apparatus and the army, thus consolidating the feudal elite's hold on the armed forces and the government.

State support for big landlords is portraved as aid to the tribe as a whole. A result of this has been the slow pace of class differentiation in the Jordanian countryside. The concentration of property in agriculture has also taken peculiar forms. As the tribal chiefs receive considerable financial help from the state they are not interested in expanding their land holdings and some have even given up agriculture altogether. This explains why most of the land in Jordan is in the hands of smallholders. Big landowners, who constitute 0.29 per cent of the population, own no more than four per cent of the land under use,* a unique situation for an underdeveloped country.

The neo-colonialist policies of imperialist powers have promoted the growth of the local bourgeoisie, which acts as middleman and junior partner of foreign capital. A certain section of the bourgeoisie owns small enterprises which process imported semi-finished products or operate under foreign license. Others are engaged in construction, mainly as sub-contractors for foreign firms filling state orders. As the state gives local businesses direct help and favored status, this section of the bourgeoisie is, naturally, most interested in the regime's pro-imperialist policies. Like the land-

^{*}Naturally, these are the best lands, pasture and watered land, which is why they account for 17 per cent of the total income in agriculture.

owner sheikhs, the bourgeoisie provides much of the military and

administrative personnel.

Such is the power base of the regime. Its cementing force has become the burgeoning bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which is increasingly coming to the fore in both political and socio-economic life.

Bureaucratic bourgeoisie in power

In the last 15 years the state apparatus and army became even more unwieldy. The state is the biggest employer, providing jobs for more than 37 per cent of the work force. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie's influence is extending to the tribes through their representatives in the government machinery. All this enables it to keep different social strata from coming together on a common platform of dissatisfaction with the regime.

The power and livelihood of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie derives from the state budget. And what it gets out of the budget is invested in land, other real estate and business. Since foreign 'aid' accounts for most of the budget income, the ruling circles have a vested interest in maintaining close ties with the countries that subsidize Jordan. In carrying out its pro-imperialist policies, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie readily adopts any measures involving greater budget outlays as this helps it get richer.

The reactionary domestic policy line is based on exploitation of what is called in Jordan the 'territorial factor.' What is involved is the fanning of hostility between the indigenous Transjordan (East Bank) partly Bedouin population and the Palestinians of the West Bank who, together with the refugees, constitute the majority of

the population.

Since 1950, when the West Bank territories were incorporated in the state of Jordan, the authorities have invariably discriminated against Palestinians. No national consolidation occurred, and two groups based on the territorial division formed within each social stratum.

The Palestinian bourgeoisie, though it thrived in industry and trade, was relegated to second-class status in the bureaucratic and military hierarchy, and its political weight is much inferior to that of its counterparts from the East Bank. Several factors contributed to the regime's policy of discrimination against the Palestinian bourgeoisie. It lacks influence among the masses, even on the West Bank, because Palestinian society is much more advanced socially and tribal ties have all but disappeared. Besides, imperialism had always resisted the promotion of Palestinians to important political posts.

As a consequence the bureaucratic bourgeoisie consists almost exclusively of East-Bankers. The ruling elite has also drawn large sections of the East-Bank petty bourgeoisie into the civil service and the army, thereby additionally strengthening the state's links with the rural population and the tribes.*

*The urban petty bourgeoisie preserves close tribal and family ties with the peasants of the East Bank and supports them. For most peasants with poor, inefficient farms, this is the main source of income.

The peculiar position of the Jordanian petty bourgeoisie reduces its revolutionary potential as an ally of the working class and poor peasants in the struggle for democratic socio-economic change and in the national movement as a whole.

By contrast, the Palestinian urban middle and petty bourgeoisie participate actively in the national struggle. They do not belong to the bureaucratic hierarchy, and therefore their attitude toward the state is determined by their own interests, which demand participation in the struggle against imperialism, for independence and progress.

Differences in attitudes toward the state can be observed among the peasants, too. On the West Bank the peasants, unlike those of the East Bank, had no help from the state, no guaranteed prices for agricultural produce. Most farms were able to make ends meet only with help from relatives working in other Arab countries.

It would be wrong, of course, to imagine that government policy genuinely serves the interests of the Transjordanian peasants, but nevertheless, geographical discrimination has bred differences in the contradictions between the state and the population on either bank of the Jordan. And these differences are an obstacle for effective united action by a given social stratum. Moreover, the reactionaries set one section of the same social stratum against the other. Nor is Jordan's small working class (mostly Palestinians) an exception.

All of which suits the ruling circles, insofar as it allows them to obfuscate the class objectives of their policy with talk of 'national' problems and reduce the national struggle to the level of a territorial issue. This policy has undoubtedly distorted the class struggle, restricted its influence on the national movement and fostered

Right-wing tendencies.

At the same time the policy has contributed to a leftward shift among Palestinians and to the spread of anti-imperialist and democratic attitudes. Sharpened reaction to geographic discrimination has accelerated the growth of political consciousness among Palestinians, whose confidence was strengthened by the intensified struggle against the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. The Palestine Resistance Movement (PRM) became a real force. In these circumstances the bureaucratic bourgeoisie decided to buttress its positions by striking at the PRM and the national movement as a whole. Exploiting trerritorial discord, it organized a bloodbath of Palestinian and Jordanian patriots in September 1970.*

A new alignment of forces have developed. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie no longer cares to remain a mere partner of feudalbourgeois circles, it is no longer satisfied with positions of influence in the executive apparatus as in the 60s, and seeks to gain de facto and de jure political leadership of the society.

Attempting to fill the political vacuum following the rout of the PRM, King Hussein's regime decided to set up a mass political

^{*}See N. Ashhab, To Overcome the Crisis of the Palestine Resistance Movement, WMR, May,

organization, the Jordanian National Union (JNU). Parading as spokesman of the people, its real aim is to promote the interests of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and tribal leaders and be a faithful support of the royal regime.

In mid-1971, a committee consisting of ministers, senators, MPs, mayors, municipal councilmen and business leaders was set up to

prepare the organization of the JNU.

The constituent congress was held in Amman on November 25, 1971. The West Bank was represented by Palestinians who had long since lost all touch with the people and faithfully supported the regime. The majority of delegates came from the East Bank. The congress declared King Hussein general president of the JNU. He appoints all 36 members of the Supreme Executive Committee (SEC) and the General Secretary of the Leading Bureau. The JNU Rules (modelled on the country's reactionary Constitution) and its structure are designed to establish even more rigid control over the nation's social and political life while creating an illusion of national unity, absence of antagonistic classes and class struggle. Its purpose is to mislead the masses, keep them, by demagogy and deceit, from gravitating towards revolutionary parties of progressive Arab regimes and the socialist countries.

Steadfast vanguard

These are the extremely difficult conditions, with socio-economic and 'territorial' contradictions aggravated by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, in which the Communist Party of Jordan, constantly harassed by the authorities, must fight. The JCP has always been guided by the desire for unity of all the country's healthy, democratic anti-imperialist forces.

In 1954, our Party initiated the formation of a National Anti-Imperialist Front of Communists, petty-bourgeois democrats and progressive representatives of the national bourgeoisie. It should be mentioned that cooperation was facilitated by the fact that all patriotic parties regardless of their class nature proclaimed their acceptance of the ideals of socialism. This was a reflection of the mood of the masses, who saw social progress as the only means of

ensuring genuine independence.

Joint actions by the opposition parties brought down the reactionary government in December 1955. However, lacking experience in political struggle, the progressive forces were unable to make use of the change to achieve a fundamental advance in national development, Taking advantage of this, Jordanian reaction, helped by U.S. imperialism, toppled the progressive government in spring 1957. Exploiting the disunity that followed the split in the antiimperialist forces in 1959, Jordanian reaction, supported by imperialism, American in the first place, launched an all-out offensive against the Communists and all democrats to shore up the proimperialist, feudal, tribalist regime. The Party was driven even deeper underground.

Since the June 1967 war our Party has set itself two tasks: first

and foremost, to liquidate the consequences of the Zionist imperialist aggression and ensure the return of all occupied Arab territories; second, to fight Jordanian reaction, which is following in the wake of imperialism and Zionism and is flouting the legitimate interests of Arab countries and, especially, the national rights of the Palestinian people. Thus, our Party exposed the proposal for the creation of a so-called 'United Arab Kingdom' put forward by Jordanian ruling circles in March 1972. Its implementation would not only reduce to naught the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. but would also serve the expansionist objectives of Israel's leaders with their plans of dominating a West Bank formally controlled by Jordan.

After the liquidation of PRM bases in Jordan our Party emerged as the only organized political force upholding the interests of the working people; the correctness and realism of its policies has been confirmed by the course of events. This imposes additional obligations on us in the fight to resolve the problems facing the people and the country, while at the same time promoting the

Party's prestige and influence among the masses.

In the summer of 1971 the CP proposed the creation of a broad united national front of all anti-imperialist forces opposed to the Israeli occupation. It could become a basis for the formation of a government of national concord capable of mobilizing the nation's manpower, political, economic and military reserves for the liberation of the occupied Arab territories, overcoming the conflict with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the PRM by allowing them to fight the occupation forces from Jordanian territory, and take an active part in the movement for Arab unity on a democratic basis. The government would maintain close relations with all genuine friends of the Arab people, the socialist countries in the first place.

The Communist Party's mounting political activity and the masses' growing confidence in it and its program has infuriated Jordanian reaction, which has thrown its punitive apparatus against the Party, its activists and leaders. It is stepping up repression, organizing raids, kidnapping activists, who are thrown into jail and tortured. Communist Party membership or 'communist activity'

can be punished by jail sentences of three to 15 years.

Despite all trials the Party is stepping up the struggle. Publication of its illegal newspaper continues, and leaflets explaining the Party's policy on the issues of the day or exposing the anti-popular regime are distributed regularly. In the occupied Arab territories our Party fights tirelessly for the unity of all patriotic forces and the expansion of resistance in different forms. The Party does everything to achieve understanding with different PRM detachments and bring about their unification. Having purged its ranks of Rightwing opportunist splitters, the Jordanian Communist Party is taking part in armed resistance.

Its great experience of struggle will help it to surmount all obstacles and faithfully carry out its duty as revolutionary vanguard of two fraternal Arab peoples, Jordanian and Palestinians.