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THE INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF BAHRAIN  
THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS CONTINUES  
NUBS-A PART OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN BAHRAIN  
A BAHRAINI STUDENT SPEAKS  
PRISONS OF BAHRAIN

## BAHRAIN

Population .....	250.000 inhabitants
Land Area .....	250 sq.miles
Archipelago .....	30 islands
Capital .....	Manama
Language .....	Arabic
Currency .....	Bahrain Dinnar
	100 BD = \$ 250
International Status .....	Independent state since
	Aug. 14, 1971; U.N. Member
Main Industry .....	oil (Caltex), aluminium (ALBA)
	both multinational corporations



## THE INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF BAHRAIN

By : Håkan Wiberg

Judged by such conventional standards as number of inhabitants or GNP, Bahrain is a very small country indeed. In order to appreciate why it is important in a larger framework, we have to go deeper than that, since it is mainly important by virtue of having a key position in a very important area of the world. It is superfluous to point out that the Persian Gulf has achieved a strategic importance during the last generation that would have been impossible to predict at the turn of the century. Suffice it to repeat that more than half of the known resources of oil in the world are located in states around it.

This strategic importance is also reflected in the rapid military expansion that is presently taking place in the coastal states around the Gulf. Last year only, the importation of major arms to Iran amounted to several times the total stock of such arms imported to all Third World countries annually in the mid-sixties, and official statements from Teheran make it clear that this is only a beginning. The present rate of the arms race between Iran and Saudi Arabia is second only to that between the super powers. The latter state, having skyrocketed its military expenditures during the last few years, envisions spending more than \$10 billion on armaments in its latest five-year plan for the late seventies.

Nor are these arms idle, serving as a threat only: Iran has been waging a war in Oman for years, trying to suppress the liberation movement in Dhofar.

It may be less well-known that precisely Bahrain is of considerable importance in this strategic area of the world. The contribution of natural resources to that importance is close to negligible: with a production of crude oil of only a few million tons a year, Bahrain is dwarfed by such neighbours as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. It appears safe to say that the oil resources of Bahrain itself have hardly been the reason why it has been considered so important in the imperialist structure of the world that it belonged to the very last parts of the British empire to be formally decolonized, attaining its independence only in 1971.

Nor does the importance of Bahrain depend on the fact that some of the main parts of processing industry in the area is located there. The most important enterprises in Bahrain are BAPCO and ALBA. BAPCO, the Bahrain Petroleum Company, is registered in Canada but owned by US interests under a concession given by the sheikh. Since the refinery throughput amounts to about 15 million tons annually, this means that BAPCO takes care of great amounts of crude oil from Saudi Arabia as well as of that from Bahrain itself.

Whereas BAPCO came into being already before World War II, ALBA, the Aluminum Bahrain Smelter, is a creation of the seventies, and has just reached its full capacity, now producing about 120 000 tons of aluminum annually on the basis of ores imported from Australia and elsewhere.

These enterprises, and a few other ones manufacturing building materials and consumer goods, have had a great importance for the socio-economic structure of Bahrain by transforming it in short time to a "modern" society: the two main cities, Manama and Muharraq, including their suburbs, house more than two thirds of the entire population, less than 10% of the economically active population are engaged in agriculture, and the labour force consists to a considerable extent of foreign immigrants. In fact, it is only Switzerland in Europe that has a percentage of immigrants in its labour force that is comparable to the estimated 25% in Bahrain, most of whom come from neighbouring countries but several from Pakistan and even India.

That only small parts of the population remain in the primary sector does not mean that they are all swallowed by the secondary sector, nor that that is the most important one from an international perspective. The tertiary sector contains what makes Bahrain most important to the powers with strategic interests in the area: communications and banking. Thus, Bahrain is the telecommunication centre of the Gulf. It also has the main air field in the area, which can take the largest air craft, and which is presently the destination of one of the two operating Concorde lines in the world. Furthermore, Bahrain is of main naval importance: the Basrec slipway in the modern harbour is probably the largest between Rotterdam and Hong Kong, and the harbour facilities are presently built out by means of investments to the tune of £50 million.

There are two sides to this central infrastructural position. On the one hand, it has made Bahrain increasingly attractive to international capital, especially after the disruption of Lebanon in the last few years. This attractiveness is increased by Bahrain being one of the remaining tax havens in the world: there are no restrictions on importation and exportation of currency, no profit taxes for foreign corporations etc. This has led to a stream of foreign banks and corporations setting up their main Middle East offices in Bahrain, Chase Manhattan Bank and First National City Bank being the first big ones to do so. One of those to follow the exodus to this "Hong Kong of the Gulf" is the Swedish ASEA, which had previous contacts with Bahrain by virtue of Elektrokopper - affiliated to ASEA - formerly holding 12% of the shares in ALBA. After moving from Beirut to Manama, ASEA has increased its profits in the area several times, and they now amount to £50 million annually. Since the ruling sheikh family, Alkhalifa, have made it clear that they have no intention of reducing the privileges of foreign capital within a foreseeable future, the trend indicated is likely to go on, especially since the family secured its position by the coup d'état against the parliament. Some economic observers already predict Manama passing Singapore and Nassau as economic centres, for these reasons.

The other side of Bahrain's centrality is obviously the military one. When imperialism cannot rule by money, it tends to resort to sheer force, and the position of Bahrain becomes important in this context. The military impor-

tance of telecommunications and air and naval facilities need not be further stressed. It should be added, however, that part of these potential facilities are already employed for military purposes now. The former British naval base at Jufair has been handed over to the US, on what was originally stated to be a temporary basis. The Americans should originally have left by 1973, but are still there, and after the coup d'état there is every likelihood that they will go on staying, at least until the present work on building up a base on the little island Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean reduces the importance of Jufair as the only US naval base between the Mediterranean and East Asia.

Thus, Bahrain is a much more important point in the imperialist network than would appear from a reading of conventional statistics: and both the economic and military interests of the states and corporations in the centre of that network make it likely that the struggle for Bahrain's liberation from it will be long and bitter.



The ruling class of Bahrain and its imperialist allies are now at an impasse. They have exhausted all possible ways and means to destroy, split or even keep in check the working class and the nationalist forces. From the farce at the end of 1971 under which the country was declared independent and the servants of colonialism were declared the rulers anew, to the latest waves of arrests, the Bahraini working class has but strengthened its position. It has successfully neutralized all attempts by the regime to divert both the attention and interest of the Bahraini people from their immediate aspirations for justice, freedom and democratic rights. The Bahraini working class has shown that the basic contradiction between the people of Bahrain and the clique of Al-Khalifas-imperialists cannot be solved with the mere cooperation of the ruling stratum. Al-Khalifas have refused the people most elementary human rights. Both during the days they payed service to British colonialism and when they nominated themselves as the rulers of independent Bahrain. During both periods they did not do the least to lessen the exploitation and oppression of the Bahraini masses. They acted instead as the long-reaching hand of reprisals against those who either pointed to the injustices or demanded their rights. The Bahraini working class through its long struggle has also shown where the interest of the present regime lies. The Al-Khalifas, in order to please their imperialist masters, are filling the jails with genuine patriots and people whose only crime is to stand against exploitation and oppression from foreign imperialist companies.

The long struggle of the Bahraini working class for national self-determination and its role as the vanguard of the nationalist movement has culminated in that the Bahraini labour movement, despite its underground character is the only organized class force in Bahrain through which the masses can channel their demands and their opposition to the ruling class as well as express their anger and revolt against the worsening living conditions. The best and nearest example of this historical reality is found in the experience of the short lived first parliament. When the government decided to allow the creation of a parliament, it calculated that first of all a parliament would provide the ruling family with a new face, a face modern in approach and democratic in appearance. The Al-Khalifas seem to have forgotten the 190 years of feudal and ruthless ruling, the hundred years of collaboration with colonial Britain and service to foreign interest, the execution and imprisonment of thousands of Bahrainis. The list is endless. They seemed to ignore history and those actions which have separated them more and more from any identification with the people. "Let us forget the past and start a new era" was the political message of Al-Khalifas when Bahrain was declared independent. Indeed, it was and it still is in such a spirit of cynical forgetfulness that the ruling clique in Bahrain

embarked on the road to democracy, but again rulers are not to be taken for what they say but for what they do. The working class and the nationalist forces understood this reality only too well. They understood that people do not forget their past history how bitter it may be. They also understood that the experienced and politically mature masses of Bahrain were ready and able to struggle against the tyrants even on their own grounds and under unfavorable conditions.

The working class and the nationalist forces through their participation in the election for the first parliament demonstrated that no matter what the Al-Khalifas and their imperialist allies scheme to confuse the issues and split the people, they are bound to fail. The working class and the progressive forces did not only stand undivided under this polarizing threat, they furthermore came out "en masse", presented a coherent political programme and took 8 seats in this first parliament where the majority is almost to its half self-appointed. The participation in this first parliament has also shown to the reactionary regime how unrepresentative the regime was in relation to the Bahraini people, and who were the true representatives of the people.

For the first time in Bahrain's history, the role of the people manifested in the presence of their 8 progressive representatives was not swept aside. For the first time the regime was no longer able to carry out political manipulations as easily as it was accustomed to do. The Bahraini people were being informed directly about how their country was being governed, and what the realities of the regime governing it were. It did not however take long for the government to fulfill its long standing threat "to hit with an iron hand" those judged to be politically uncomfortable. The progressive MPs were excluded from all parliamentary committee work, even from committees which they themselves initiated. One the MPs was excluded from parliament on an alleged charge of age falsification. Bureaucratic and procedural measures were used almost at every session of parliament to silence the progressive MPs. Nevertheless, the struggle continued despite all threats and intimidations.

#### ACTIONS and STRIKES, IMPACTS and CONSEQUENCES

Parallel to the struggle in parliament, the Bahraini working class was struggling in the factories and in other public and private sectors. Their basic demands were still those for which they struggled against British colonialism namely, the right to establish trade unions, betterment of social and health conditions, and measures to be taken by the government to counteract an ever increasing cost of living. It should be recalled that these same demands constitute also the core of the political platform of the progressive MPs. They were the only people in the polity of Bahrain who were striving for a betterment of the conditions of the Bahraini working class.

From January 4th, 1974 until the middle of June, some 28 strikes took place at various points of the islands. The most important of these strikes were those which took place in March where simultaneously ALBA the aluminium plant, BAPCO the petroleum company and other private sectors were immobilized. The achievement of these strikes was decisive. The strikes made a great impact, politically. They proved to the common Bahraini how disastrous was the politic of the government and on whose side it stood. They demonstrated the strength, maturity and organization of the Bahraini proletariat and its capability to stand firm against the tyranny of Al-Khalifas and the imperialist interests in the area. The strikes also proved that the unity of all toiling people of Bahrain was a necessity if betterment of living conditions and socio-economic justice is to be achieved.

There were economic results as well. The Bahraini workers through their courageous strikes succeeded in forcing the multinational corporations and their local protectors to give after to their demands and increase wages by a relation of 15 to 25 %.

Of great importance were developments of labour syndicates. Despite complete governmental refusal to allow workers to allow workers to organize, a trade union was established by the workers of ALBA aluminium plant. Simultaneously, a trade union of the same character was established at BAPCO petroleum company. Soon thereafter, the same action was taken by workers and employees of the health department. Power and energy and construction workers were next in setting up their own union. Many difficulties accompanied the creation of these unions. Workers and employees who joined them were dismissed from their jobs, if not arrested and thrown in the most inhumane jails. The secret service did not only harass the active members but also their families and relatives. Some workers and employees even risked their lives such as the attempt upon the life of the chairman and the vice-chairman of the construction workers union.

Another happening of both political and syndical importance was the celebration of international workers day, May 1st. Popular festivities were organized in the city of Muharraq. Trade unionist leaders were scheduled to speak. Two of them had to abstain as they had been forbidden to speak by the authorities. Although no arrests were made that day, the police interrogated many people and was present everywhere as if on a show of anti-riot force strength demonstration of military gear. Since May, this new anti-riot police which is under the leadership of British and Jordanian officers has played an increasingly important role in the machinery of repression. Having this highly equipped police force under hand, the government and the secret service which is still on the pay-roll of British imperialism as well as the foreign multinational corporations have only to convince one another that workers demands, workers strikes and all kind of other popular unrest are the results of political subversive activities most likely of "the communist type". And that these activities are aiming at undermining the security of the state. In this way, the secret service has been able to legitimize its repressive task and not only use undercover harassment

but more openly arrest workers in the streets and in the yards of the factories, using for this purpose the impressive anti-riot squads. In this way also, the government has been able to present a distorted picture of "tension and danger" against the nation by pointing to the magnitude of police actions. By the same token, the regime has manipulated the affairs of the state by ordering secret parliament sessions. Finally, it is also in this way that the multinational corporations have legalized their collaboration with the repressive forces. On one hand, they presented themselves as careful and serious partners to the government in building and developing the nation of Bahrain and on the other they pressured the government to act on their behalf. They made themselves appear as neutrals whose only interest is the preservation of their property and investment.

An example of this is found in the behaviour of ALBA during the strikes. The leadership of ALBA first called upon the anti-riot police to break the strike and arrest those responsible for it, then it proceeded to lay-off a massive number of workers. But due to scarcity of labour, as well as to international protests, ALBA was forced to re-employ many of the laid-off workers. These workers received a letter shortly after their re-employment in which ALBA leadership pointed out that the actual orders for the lay-off came from the government. Despite that it may look as if the government and the companies are trying to blame one another, there is not a shadow of a doubt that they are in reality the two poles of conspiracy against the Bahraini working class and that their principal aim is to divide and liquidate the movement of the labour force.

On June 25th 1974, a massive wave of arrests struck the country. Twenty seven people among them workers, employees, intellectuals and students were suddenly arrested and thrown in jail without any charges or accusation. Sometimes after the government accused them of collective subversion. The Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior started, in the meantime, a campaign in both the local mass-media and that of the neighbouring countries in which they legitimized the arrests as a measure to safeguard the security of Bahrain.

June 25th, 1974 was not to pass unnoticed. In Bahrain a petition assembling 15000 signatures was sent to the government demanding the release of political prisoners. Wives and relatives of the detainees tried in vain to convince the authorities to release their husbands and sons. An important action was taken by the International Organization of Arab Workers. The president and the vice-president of this organization visited Bahrain and faced great difficulties in their inquiry about the conditions of the detained workers. Nevertheless, in their final report, they pointed out that the labour movement in Bahrain was undergoing a very difficult period. Workers were being thrown in the various jails of the island for ungrounded reasons. That in the large industries such as ALBA and BAPCO, which employ thousands of workers, the majority of the higher positions are held by foreigners, mostly British. The report suggested that the International Organization of Arab Workers should take the following steps :

- To send a protest petition to the regent of Bahrain condemning the handlings of the Prime Minister and refusing to accept the imprisonment and lay-off of workers.
- To reconsider the proposal of establishing an ILO of Arab Workers office in Bahrain as the regional office for the Gulf.
- To demand that the government of Bahrain makes a declaration and answers the questions about the situation of the worker's movement.
- To file a complaint against the government of Bahrain to the International Labour organization in Geneva, and to stand firmly on this point until the release of all political prisoners and detained workers.
- To assign a lawyer from the International Organization of Arab Workers, to act on behalf of the detained workers.

Protests from all over the world, from both individuals and international organizations stormed into the country and demanded release of workers and nationalists. Women organizations expressed their solidarity with the wives and mothers of the imprisoned. Amnesty international adopted a number of political prisoners. The campaign of solidarity with the political prisoners was of such magnitude that parliament was forced to take up on its agenda and to debate some of the protest letters and telegrams which were sent to the government.

Confronted with these ascending protests both from inside and outside the country, the regime had no other choice than that which leads to the release of the prisoners. Two facts stand to reason. First the parliament, despite its conservative character, was not ready to condone any action of the executive unquestionably. And second, repression had not succeeded to minimize popular unrest. On the contrary, it added more fuel to the fire. Between June and September 1974, wildcat strikes hit simultaneously the following companies: The airline company "Gulf Air", the electricity department (state), the health department (state), Cable and wireless, Winyag Delong company, ALBA Aluminium (multinational) and BAPCO petroleum (multinational). A day before the opening of the second parliament, twenty two political detainees were released, obviously in hopes of appeasement.

When the parliament was opened, the first motion was a law proposal presented by the government. This law proposal which came to be known as the "state security law" was designed so as to equip the government with the right to arrest anybody judged to be a security risk for a period of 3 years. This law was nothing new as it was simply a rewording of the old British penal code of Bahrain. The punishment it reserved for those who oppose the regime were about the same except that in the new law "thinking differently" was equated with acting against the government and thus as strictly punishable. However the parliament declared itself against it, and found it to be in violation of the Bahraini state constitution. Seeing that this fascist law proposal was being denounced even by the ruling class' own rank and file, the government withdrew its proposal for reconsideration and rewriting in order to avoid its complete rejection by the parliament and to keep its privilege to use it prejudicially. The contradiction between the government and the parliament was

steadily rising. In the meantime the imprisonment conditions of the five who were still in jail was worsening. In the solitary confinement of the police fort "Khalaa" as well as those of the prison island Jidda, the hygienic conditions were of such a nature that some of the prisoners caught malaria and had to be removed to the hospital. To protest against these precarious conditions, the prisoners started a hunger strike which lasted more than two weeks. At the end of february 1975, Dr Khalaf and Ahmed Al Shamlan were released. They were not however freed from charges or declared juridically free, that meant that they could be arrested anytime there-after if it so pleased the authorities.

#### THE TEACHERS

Since independence, the teachers in Bahrain had on many occasions expressed their disagreement with the rigidity and conservatism in the education system. Not only were they poorly paid and forbidden the right to organize themselves, they had to comply to regulations which were drawn up some decades ago by the British colonial resident and wife. On february 10, 1975 a discussion about teaching conditions and education was organized by a local newspaper. Seven teachers, among them 4 men and 3 women were asked to express their opinions in a panel discussion. Included in this discussion were matters related to the Ministry of Education. A great deal of criticism was made and the teachers expressed openly their disapproval with the undemocratic way the Ministry was administering education. The reaction by the Ministry to this panel was quick and violent. First the teachers were sent a formulaire in which reference to laws forbidding teachers to express their views or criticisms were made. Afterwards three of them received sharp warnings from the Ministry and the remaining four were dismissed from their jobs. Furthermore, they were summoned to appear in front of a disciplinary council. Although on the 17th of february the accused appeared in front of this council, they refused to be judged by it for their opinions. The Ministry of Education decided then that there was no alternative for the accused except to present apologies to the Ministry within a week. In response to this intimidating action, the teachers sent a petition to both the Ministry and the parliament in which they demanded that an end be put to these undemocratic measures and that the teachers which had been dismissed from their jobs should immediately recover their positions, and also that all other measures such as warnings and sanctions should be declared as non-indictive. Furthermore, they urged that the disciplinary council should be demised from the power of judging teachers for their political and personal opinions. The matter was brought up in parliament. The MFs of the National Union supported the demands of the teachers. Parliament decided to mediate so as to create a debate between the teachers and the Ministry. Nevertheless, the Minister of Education disregarded this attempt by parliament and insisted that the teachers had to apologise first.

A final decision of dismissal reached the accused teachers on the 27th of february. This led to that, in solidarity with the dismissed teachers, the rest of

the teaching staff of Bahrain decided to use another method to persuade the regime namely to go on strike. This decision was of tremendous importance. Teachers in Bahrain have been among the most exploited working people . They have always met disregard and disrespect from the authorities and the Ministry of Education both during direct British colonial administration and under the present regime. For the first time in 50 years, they stood up together against their oppressor wiping out their reputation of being a politically apathetic class as well as the myth of absolute control of the regime over them. By their decision to strike ,they demonstrated their solidarity with the rest of the working class exposing once again the vulnerability of this reactionary regime. The 20th of March 1975 was to witness the first general strike of the teachers in Bahrain. The students also went on strike the same day and stayed home. This came as a shock to the authorities who figured that participation in the strike would not be significant. But finding the opposit the Ministry, in order to save its face,decided to suspend all courses in primary and secondary schools. In parliament,the opinon was leaning more strongly toward bringing the situation normal and re-instating the dismissed teachers so as to enable an end to this period of crisis. A recommendation to this effect was made to the government. But,neither the government nor the Ministry of education respected the recommendation of parliament. Instead anti-riot police was sent to the schools and arrested a number of students for questioning. The government,very likely,was trying to create an atmosphere of terror in the hope that the parents of the students will react and denounce the teachers as being the source of all troubles,and that their sons and daughters are only victims. However,this operation failed. Another attempt made by the authorities was to accuse the teachers of creating troubles on the grounds of religious affiliation,namely that the teachers were demanding the replacement of the actual Minister of Education who is a "sunni" by another who would be "shias". Seeing that both attempts failed, the government then arrested one of the teachers and accused him of political subversion. These were in short the methods used by the government to support the Ministry of Education which was under increased pressure from parliament. Shortly thereafter the arrested teacher was released and the striking teachers went back to work putting the matter off until the following term.

For the teachers as an integral part of the working class in Bahrain,this period has been of unmeasured importance and self-evaluation. Their struggle against this reactionary regime has only started. They have shown their firmness and determination as well as their strength in order to justify their demand for a respected, dignified and democratic life.

In likeness with all other groups of working people,the demands of the teachers cannot be achieved unless all teachers are organized syndically.The consequences for Al-Khalifas and their imperialist allies,as long as they continue to refuse to the people the right to organize,will be to live with the nightmare of all super-profit enterprises namely : STRIKE.

#### THE RULING CLASS : A REGIME IN CRISIS

Undoubtedly, repression and reactionary assaults of all kinds are being committed everywhere in the capitalist world against the working class, but in Bahrain these assaults take greater dimensions as they emanate not only from the capitalist relations of production, but also from the symbiosis between feudalist ruling ideology and imperialist interests. In Bahrain, feudalism had survived side by side with a mode of production historically in contradiction to it. The ruling class in Bahrain does not even seem to grasp this historical truism. The Al-Khalifas do not want to recognize that if there is any class which needs reforms and changes it is their own, that their way of ruling through terror and repression is outdated even by the standards of those who have trained them to carry this miserable mission.

Inhibited by their feudalism and rigidity, the Bahraini ruling class go beyond more than refusing political and syndical rights to workers and citizens, they even refuse them the right to subsist. While Bahraini workers are being laid-off, foreign corporations, with the blessing of the government, are importing huge contingents of foreign labour from Pakistan, India and Baluchistan. While educated Bahrainis are filling the jails and solitary confinement cells, all high offices and leadership positions are held by British and other European "experts". Even when it concerns education and training, which is actually decided upon by the government, discrimination for the benefit of foreigners is committed. It is with the money of the Bahraini taxpayer that various Indian, Pakistani and British members of the GULF AIR company staff were sent for training to England, while equally qualified Bahrainis were refused access. The number of discriminatory measures is great and includes many sectors. The authorities formula to the educated Bahraini seem to be "collaborate, comply or die".

The huge project of building a dry dock is another example of how the foreign corporations and Al-Khalifas are refusing the Bahraini worker access to work in his own country, how through import of foreign labour, they are trying to stragulate the Bahraini working class and undermine their just demands, also how, under crisis and when there exist a national working class consciousness, capitalism and servant states, in order to keep their superprofits, substitute the exploitation of the working class with that of imported foreign labour. In Bahrain, in order to safeguard against any polarization within the imported labour force, the government and the companies involved keep these poor toiling people separated and under strict surveillance. They contract them only for a period of 3 months at a time to insure that there are steady newcomers on the Bahraini labour market, and in this way hindering contact with and understanding of the national labour movement.

We began our article by pointing to the impress in which the Al-Khalifa puppets and their imperialist allies are finding themselves. Indeed, history has already furnished ample proof that nothing can destroy what the Bahraini working class has acquired after many years of hardship and struggle. Various attempts have been made

in the name of anti-communism to undermine the movement of the working people, but they have failed. The ruling clique must face the stern reality of today. If they don't renounce the outdated way of thinking that they are following and persist in betraying the people, there will be no way out. Having failed to destroy the labour movement and suppress the growing opposition, the Al-Khalifas decided in their despair to do away with whatever was left of democracy and civil rights.

Saturday morning August 23rd 1975, the people of Bahrain woke up to a country which looked as if it was struck by war. Military and police troops had occupied various points of the island, the famous anti-riot police was out in all its frightening armour checking the streets. Thus began the tragic-comedy set up by the government. The same morning, in a virulent announcement, the Prime Minister presented his resignation on the grounds that his government was no longer able nor willing to cooperate with parliament. Six hours later, Sheikh Isa Emir of Bahrain ordered the Prime Minister to form a new government of 16 ministers, which is unconstitutional, therewith the Emir announced the dismissal of parliament, suspension of the constitution and declared the affection of marshal law over the whole country. Free hand was given to the troops to start one of the most infernal waves of house searches and arrests ever witnessed in Bahrain. The harbours and airport were tightly surrounded by the troops. Rumours were spread that the country was on the verge of a coup d'etat by the nationalists who were rumoured to be in relation with the movement of "Arab communists", which is a fictive terrorist organization invented by the reactionary Arab regimes in the Middle East in order to legitimize repression and terror against all opposition. Although much larger in scale, what happened on the 23rd of August 1975 was not dissimilar from that of a year earlier on the 25th of June 1974 with the exception of establishment of marshal law, dismissal of parliament, and suspension of constitutional rights. One can describe June 25, 1974 as being the general rehearsal for what was to happen a year later in August.

The worsening of political conditions to this extent are due to two major factors. First, the complete incompetence of the Bahraini government in dealing with the soaring problems of the Bahraini economy and increasing social demands. Secondly, what is happening in Bahrain is but part of the overall plan known as "Gulf security strategy". This plan was designed by the imperialist interests so as to insure their hegemony over the oil and mineral resources of the Gulf. Note, that the new government is not a bit concerned about hiding its active role in this plan. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Information have pointed to the relationship between what is happening in Bahrain and the security of the Gulf.

Bahrain lives today under an absolute dictatorship led by the ruling family of Al-Khalifas and under the control of imperialist interests. The feudal Al-Khalifas are still showing that they cannot cope with democracy; that the only way they know and the only methods they master are those which deny people their

most basic human rights and deny people decent living conditions. Their rule cannot be applied except under marshal law and dictatorship which acts against the Bahraini people and for the interest of imperialism. They reached a point of no return.

The wave of repression which began on the 23rd of August 1975 has already victimised a great number of people. Soon after the declaration of marshal law, about thirty people among them workers, lawyers, employees, students, and journalists were arrested. The security police proceeded to arrest the previous progressive members of Parliament. One of the Mps, Ali Rabia, was thrown directly into solitary confinement and remained there for 25 days. He was later accused of sending a letter to the congress of members of Parliament in London in which he deplored the conditions of political imprisonment in Bahrain and the torture to which political prisoners are submitted. The 15th of December 1975, Mohsen Marhoun also a member of parliament was arrested;he is still to this day in solitary confinement and not even his family is allowed to visit him. Dr Abdulhadi Khalaf was next;he was arrested 24 hours after his arrival to Bahrain on the 3rd of February 1976. It should be important to recall that the political and syndical leaders Ahmed Al Zawadi, Yusuf Al Ajaaji and Abbas Awaji are also still in jail since their arrest in June 1974. A new method of repression appeared in conjunction with the latest development, namely secret beating of workers. Such is the case of the worker Ahmed Sind who is still hospitalized due to the seriousness of the injuries. Also such is the case of Ahmed Zin Al Abidein, a worker in the petroleum company BAPCO, and the Health Department employee, Ahmed Mansour, who suffered a great deal of beating and torture before he finally was thrown in jail.

There are also political prisoners from the colonial period who should have been released after independence but whom the colonial lakays, the Al-Khalifas have never released. These are Abdul Majid Marhoun sentenced by British colonialism to life imprisonment, and Ibrahim Sanad sentenced to 10 years. This is another blatant proof as to in whose interest the fascist Al-Khalifas are ruling. Courts and juridical procedures in Bahrain are of such a nature that sentences of long imprisonment can be given in a matter of two minutes time such as in the case of Abdullah Jaber, sentenced to 8 years.

This is but one example of what the imperialists call "security in the Gulf". There is an ever ready imperialist military force stationed in the Gulf (in Bahrain), also various alliances have been created between the various reactionary regimes governing in the Gulf with Iran and Saudi Arabia at their lead. One should not forget that repression and torture is practice everywhere in the gulf. There are almost daily executions of political opponents in both Iran and Saudi Arabia and these two regimes are arming themselves in all haste because they know that they are doomed to wither away. The wrath of people on both shores of the gulf is rising day by day.



The Al-Khalifas of Bahrain, like the Pahlavis of Iran and the Saudis of Saudi Arabia, can never represent anybody except themselves, their feudalistic ideology and their regime of terror. Also like the two other regimes they will never succeed in submitting totally the people and their demands.

The final word in this article should be given to the glorious Bahraini working class and the courageous political prisoners, who in spite of all injustices and terror endured, stood up united on the 1st of March 1976. On this day a general strike was declared in the whole country, both public and private sectors were immobilized. In the prisons, the political detainees went on a hunger strike. The workers of Bahrain send the following message:

#### AN APPEAL TO ALL WORKERS AND FREEDOM LOVING PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

" We the workers of Bahrain appeal to you and urge you to intervene in this very difficult period we are undergoing until all imprisoned workers and nationalists are released. Our workers and people are suffering the worst kind of tortures committed by Jordanian and British mercenaries who are on the payroll of the Bahraini government. We urge you to expose the manoeuvres of the Bahraini regime through your labour organizations and civil rights associations. The repression we are enduring will not make us give up our struggle, we are determined to continue the battle until our legal and human rights are restored. All actions of solidarity from your side will re-inforce our strength and determination. "

Down with the enemies of our people and our glorious working class  
Down with imperialism

Workers of Bahrain

#### NUBS - A PART OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN BAHRAIN

By : Azzam Khalaf

It is not more than four years since the birth of the National Union of Bahraini Students - it took no less than eight years of preparatory discussions among the students for it to become a reality, but what took it so long from becoming such when in the past we see that all students were agreed upon the principles and almost all the details? This question can only be answered when we realize that the colonialists and the local reactionary regime were against any association that would bring all students abroad together and which would be able to speak for all students. Proof of this can be seen in the fact that the regime in Bahrain were not willing to allow the students in Bahrain to form their own union for they were aware that this would lead to the legalization of demonstrations and strikes, that the Ministry of Education would have to discuss the problems of all the students, both inside and outside the country - questions such as school health, the subjects on the study plan and the type of literature, and last but not least, the school tests and examinations. As for the students abroad, even when the union is allowed, the authorities still try to break it in different ways - an example of this was a meeting between the NUBS Cairo-branch and the Minister of Education of the state of Bahrain when they discussed the problem of housing which faces many of them, and esp. mostly the girls, he stated that the girls who have a problem should themselves go to the embassy and discuss it directly with them but not through the students union. This they rejected and they wanted the union to speak for them, but the minister did not like it.

Another reason why the government was against a student union was that they were aware that the students abroad would be working against the imperialists and their lackeys in Bahrain by making information meetings and propagating for the political parties and movements in Bahrain by showing the real face of the regime who carry out the exploitation of all the working classes of Bahrain, and the way in which they bring foreign capital into the country. The regime was scared of the cooperation between the students and the workers, and this is what they were trying to delay. One important thing was that the regime (the CID and SIS) did not discriminate when the first student and worker demonstrations took place in 1965, when more than a thousand workers were fired upon after many years of employment for the oil company of Bahrain (BAFCO), whose grievances were: no consideration being given to their long-term employment; no rights for forming their own trade-union; no right to ask for a wage-rise; the system of foreign workers which was introduced at a time when many Bahraini workers were unemployed) the students took a solidarity action in the form of a march with strikes and demonstrations following, that led up to a General Strike with school-students, workers from all companies, teachers, most of the government workers participating, a strike that lasted more than a week, and at BAFCO for more than two weeks; with the result that the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) arrested hundreds of workers and students during those two weeks (calling them by the new name of "disturbance persons") and putting them in prison for terms varying from

from one day up till two years but with most of them being imprisoned for three to six months without any trial or of even being accused of anything unlawful except of having being part of the strikes or the demonstrations. The workers who were involved in the strikes of March 1965 were either imprisoned or fired from their jobs for more than three years because of their political beliefs or because they took part in the strikes or the demonstration. Here we saw that the SIS did not only victimize the workers but no less did the students suffer the same fate: many were imprisoned for three to six months and after their term of imprisonment they were not allowed to continue their studies at school nor were they allowed to take up a job, and many of the workers and students were sent into exile. 1965 was then the beginning of united action between the students and the workers.

After so many years of the colonialists trying to delay the unity of the progressive forces, actions were carried out by the three underground movements represented in Bahrain; that is to say, by the National Liberation Front, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Baath Party. These parties had organized the one action against the common enemy, i.e. the colonialists and their local lackeys, but the 1965 strike had taken a great toll on the movements, which necessitated their going underground for not less than two years so as to reorganize the whole movement, to recruit more members and to work at the printing of information which was secretly distributed.

The balance-sheet of the 1965 actions, apart from showing that the people were working for a real independence, proved that:

- 1) The importance of joint actions between the workers and the students.
- 2) The full trust of the people in the underground movements in Bahrain.
- 3) By bringing the women into the actions, it led to the broadening of the base of the nationalist movement.
- 4) It created a greater level of consciousness among the students and the workers.

The 1965 actions were just the beginning of joint actions between the workers and the students, and these actions threw fear into the regime. Before we leave the events of 1965, we should mention that what was happening behind the locked doors of the prisons was known to the members of the National Liberation Front and this obliged them to carry out an action against the CID agents who were torturing the political prisoners and trying to get information by force. The National Liberation Front then planted two bombs in the cars of the head of the CID department (Mr Bobb) and his assistant (Ahmed Mohsin) who were seriously injured. These people were replaced by Misters Henderson, Hugin and Shore who came to Bahrain to work as the new heads of the SIS. Ever since then the country has never been as quiet as the regime has wanted and never a year goes by without a strike in one or more of the companies or government departments of the country. The secret police has never stopped throwing people into prison without any charge being brought against them.

By 1972 the time was ripe for another action, which was led by the members of the National Liberation Front. In this year a strike was started by the workers of the

Gulf Company (the airport) who organized a committee to write a list of workers demands which was to be signed by the workers. After having collected more than 5000 signatures, they asked for a meeting with the Minister of Labour to discuss their problems, but after he had refused to meet them, these workers went on strike. The strike started at the airport of the Gulf Air Company on the 9th of March 1972 and on this day strikes broke out in other parts of the airport in support; the strike later spread to other companies such as Wimpy and DeLong Company (shipping repairs), the Cable and Wireless Company (telephone and telegraph), the multi-national ALBA company (aluminium) and the oil company BAPCO; and also the government departments of health, electricity and the port department. The strikes were then also joined by the school and college students, with demonstrations and strikes in all parts of Bahrain. This time the strikes lasted for a week and were brought to a stop by the security and intelligence services who brought in a special police force, the "disturbance force", and the military. In putting an end to these revolts, many of the workers and students were injured and many were taken to prison by the police.

The achievements of the 1972 action was greater than that of the 1965 one, in that:

- 1) The reactionary regime, on the orders of their colonialist advisors, were hurried into making a General Election to elect an Assembly (half of whom were to be appointed by the Shiekh) who were to approve the draft of the constitution which had been drawn up by the colonialists and the reactionary members of the government.
- 2) The working class in Bahrain was completely organised to face any threat from the reactionaries side; i.e. by a general strike or by other actions in all parts of Bahrain.
- 3) The students abroad, or those in the schools and colleges in Bahrain, were not to be kept outside of the actions involving the workers.
- 4) Made the government aware that the workers and students had a very strong weapon in their hands, i.e. strikes.

1972 was the year of the birth of the National Union of Bahraini Students (NUBS), with branches in Kuwait, Iraq (Baghdad and Basar), Syria, Lebanon, Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria), the United Kingdom (London), Sweden (Lund) and Soviet (Moscow). The representatives of all these branches agreed on a constitution which has as one of the aims of the union, to work side by side with the National Movements in Bahrain and to work for democratic rights, plus for the building of labour-unions. This gives us the answer to the question of why the government is fearful of a national student union abroad. From the birth of NUBS till today, news about the Bahraini working class spreads very fast around the world, spread by the student union branches or by the National Liberation Front's members working outside the country. If we take the example of 1972: the elections for a national assembly were discussed by all the branches of the student union with the invited representatives of the national movements giving their views on whether to take part in the elections or not.

Most of the members of the student union were agreed that this experience would not succeed but that in any case the National Movements should take part in the elections. However, when the students who were active in the early period returned to Bahrain, they were arrested and put in prison. The NUBS, representing a rather large number of the whole population of Bahrain, could spread the news and information not only between their own members but also to the international democratic students movement, so the regime had to find another way of smashing the student union.

However the student union is stronger than ever and will go on fighting to get their rights and to be able to organize a student union in Bahrain, which has always been refused them on the grounds that they work side by side with the working class and the National Movements. Finally, we must emphasize the role of the student union as a vital part of the whole national movement so that we could understand the most important points which in my opinion are necessary for carrying on the fight and the struggle of the students and the students and working class movements in Bahrain:

- 1) The government does not make any difference between those who are opposing it, whether they are workers or students i.e. repression against them is equally hard.
- 2) There has been certain signs that the government is trying to smash the students movement and split it.
- 3) That the students are completely conscious about their role in the national movement of Bahrain.
- 4) That the workers cannot succeed to get their rights without the cooperation of the students, and vice versa.

The leaders of our national movement have stated that "Students must solve their minor divergencies and unite against the one enemy i.e. the reactionary regime". Indeed it is important to follow this advice which comes from the most experienced and well informed part of the whole national movement in Bahrain.

The following is an interview with a Bahraini student whose name is withheld in fear of retaliations against him, as it has been the case for many others who dared to express their honest views about the situation in Bahrain.

Q- Can you characterize the present political situation in Bahrain ?

A- Historically, imperialism is loosing its power in many parts of the world. The only policy left for those imperialists is to keep full control over their existing, if one may say, "modern" colonies. Among these "modern" colonies, i.e. states of pseudo-independence, is Bahrain. This colony is kept under control by backing and directing the government not only in the foreign policies but also at the level of internal affairs. As one would expect, there are oppositions to such conditions, besides the opposition from the working class, there is also opposition from the students and the highly educated Bahrainis. The government is highly concerned about keeping the highly educated as well under control.

Q- Can you explain in what way the government is concerned about the highly educated ?

A- The Bahraini government is concerned for the following three reasons :

- i The highly educated are well aware of the government's reactionary policies.
- ii The highly educated have the knowledge which is vital for the country since Bahrain is an underdeveloped one, i.e. it is short of specialized staff in almost all fields.
- iii Their number is rapidly increasing with time.

Q- It seems that the government both need and fear those highly educated, how would you describe the behaviour of the government towards them ?

A- Of course, one would expect any of those highly educated citizens to get a job in Bahrain without complications, but that in fact is not the case. The government takes always into account the applicant's past activities especially if he or she was politically involved in one way or another. For example, being a member of one of the National Union of Bahraini Students (NUBS) committees will lead to either delaying the acceptance of the applicant for the specific job, i.e. leaving him unemployed for a period of time, or ignoring his request meaning that the system cannot afford the "risk" of recruiting this citizen. Therefore, a qualified nationalist Bahraini will not be considered a "good" citizen if he had been involved in the NUBS activities which the government consider apparently subversive. So the first thing a highly educated Bahraini is faced by is his "past record", i.e. his activities as a student.

Q- What is the government attitude towards those who have managed to get a job, are there any special measures taken towards them ?

A- If one has been able to get a job, the first thing he will find is that he gets paid much less than a foreigner doing the same job simply because the foreigner

is categorized as a specialist or an advisor. The reason for such a discrimination is meant to force this citizen to look for a job elsewhere which in most cases will be outside his country (Bahrain). Fortunately, in spite of such policies, these individuals insist on staying in Bahrain proving that their main objective is to serve the people of their country and to improve living conditions there. Secondly such an individual will find that his daily life at work is gingerly followed by the system. That is, he is considered a suspected figure if he happened to get along and is in good terms with the workers. In other words the system tries to forfeit this qualified person to be in touch with the working class because the system believes that he will initiate "hostile activities" among the workers. What makes it worse for the system is that the workers consider a nationalist of high education to be able to solve most of their problems and they trust and respect him.

Q- Would you say that the government deliberately attempts to separate the highly educated from the rest of the people in order to control him ?

A- Indeed, on the social level the government expects (demands) this citizen to stick to the "educated class" which means that his friends and companions must not be of lower educational level than him, and if one has workers, clerks and students as friends, then he will be followed by some of the government's enumerate intelligence members. In addition any social meeting with such friends is considered to be an attempt to organize meetings which are forbidden by the "state security law" and is punishable by indefinite period of imprisonment.

Q- What you feel should be the role of the highly educated nationalist ?

A- The system is facing a lot of problems as the number of the highly educated nationalist Bahrainis increases. They are respected by the students and admired by the working class, thus their role and responsibility should be in :

- exposing the character of the government's policies
- aiding and supporting the workers in their struggle to organize
- to work for the official establishment of trade unionism in Bahrain

#### PRISONS OF BAHRAIN

The following article is about prisons, arrest procedure and the conditions of imprisonment in Bahrain, an account will also be given of the methods used by the SIS (Security and Intelligence Service) against both the detainees and their families.

#### ARREST ROUTINES and DISTRIBUTION OF CELLS

In general the SIS tries to be very discreet while waging a campaign. In most cases no one knows what is going on in the neighborhood if not told by the searched family. In these cases the SIS will use a private car which will be parked some hundred meters away from the house. A secret police officer will walk to the house, ask for the person in question, wait for him to dress and walk back together to the waiting car. The person might come back after a short questioning and check-up or might be held for months or years.

The above type of arrest does not have to include an arrest order nor does it necessarily include a house search. The police might, however, return some time later to carry out a house search.

Otherwise the SIS might employ a more spectacular type of arrest. This type has been frequently used in recent years, yet, not exclusively.

The police will arrive in one or two police jeeps, sometimes accompanied by one or more private police cars. The police will take positions around the house while the officer in charge marches to the door, accompanied by some policemen and undercovers, knock on the door and announce that the house will be searched. Immediately, following the opening of the door and the announcement, the policemen in his company will storm into the house. If the door is not opened quick enough, for whatever reason, the policemen then force their way into the house by breaking the door. This type of arrest is mostly carried out after midnight. This gives an optimal effect. The timing of the arrest seems to be very important in the police methods. In cases where discretion is sought, the time is after midnight, usually about 04<sup>00</sup>.

"Nearly all arrests carried out by the SIS during the campaign of the 25th of June 1974 were of the so called discreet type."

The police officer knocked on the door at about 04<sup>00</sup> and asked for the person in question, told him that they had come to make a search. The officer showed, on request, a search warrant, signed by a judge. With the warrant all formalities were satisfied. Then the officer, accompanied by at least four policemen, one or more in the group plain-clothed, proceeded to search the house. The plain-clothed men differentiate themselves from the uniformed policemen in that they belong to the secret police, the SIS. The plain-clothed men are authorized to see to it that the search is carried out and that neither the police officer, nor the uniformed policemen are lenient in their search.

The police officer corps is formed exclusively by members of the ruling family and from families near to it, yet, the SIS does not seem to trust them completely.

According to Bahraini law the search warrant shall specify the person whose dwelling is to be searched. This is necessary from the point of view of the personal integrity of others living in the same house ( One should bear in mind that a normal family compound in Bahrain might be the unmarried brothers and sisters of the person named on the warrant also the married brothers and sisters and the parents). According to law and practice ( followed to the letter in criminal cases) the search is to be carried out in the room or part of a room considered as normal dwelling of the named person. The SIS does not let itself be bound by such law and practice. A search by the SIS is a thorough search, meaning that every corner of the house is searched, be that the dwelling of the person in question or any other person, no matter how far related. Normally the search is carried out in rather orderly fashion, things being put back in their places and so on. Yet it is not unusual that the whole house is turned into a mess and left as such after a police raid.

It seems that this is employed as part of the psychological pressure on the person in question. The police will collect books, letters and other things considered " evidence " ( most of the time this "evidence" includes the most absurd objects, such as religious literature or simply a family picture album ), and tell the person that he is required to follow them. Another warrant might be shown to him on request. This new warrant, the arrest warrant, should be signed by a judge and specify the nature of the crime for which the person is suspected and the date of the arrest. These last two conditions are not fulfilled at all time. In the 25th of June 1974 campaign many persons were searched and arrested after being shown a stenciled warrant in which their names inserted by ink.

They felt that the judge had signed blank warrant, that were later filled in when needed. The arrested person is photographed by the police before being left in the custody of the prison department. The prison officer locates the different detainees in different cells according to the directives given by the SIS.

The detainees are usually confined to solitary cells in the prisons. The golden rule followed in political detention is that no political detainee is put in the same cell or yard as "normal" convicts. It is very difficult to uphold this practice at all times, especially when the number of political detainees became too large. Another factor against this practice is the ever fluctuating number of political detainees, at times no more than three and at other times over two hundred.

One can speculate, of course, about why the SIS wishes to separate its detainees from other "normal" convicts and detainees. One important factor is to strengthen their isolation. Although the distribution of detainees to the different solitary cells might appear accidental, thus is by no mean the same standard in them.

The solitary cells vary in the degree of degradation and inhuman conditions so that one rightly suspects the location of political detainees to be carefully studied. Each one gets the type of cell that hurts him the most.

The known as No.1 is the worst from the point of view of hygien. The police toilets above these cells gives the most unacceptable smell one could imagine. Water (urine) drips all day long, drop by drop, onto the cell floor. The cell is humid, therefore,

and stinking. The window near the ceiling of the cell is blocked from the outside by a sheet of plywood, thus preventing any light from coming into the cell. The two cells near to the police toilets at the south-east corner of the fort ( known as kunara ) are known for the strong difficulty they impose on the detainee because of their complete isolation. In these cells one does not have the slightest chance of seeing or talking to anyone aside from the three occasions every day when food is brought. One should not get sick in those cells because nobody outside the cells will be able to hear the shouts for help. It is ghastly feeling of being deserted and neglected as an existing human being.

The same can be said of the cell located in the tower, the two cells located within the secluded area of the SIS in the fort are cells that indicate that you on stand-by for interrogation, when, how nad how much are questions that you have to live with in the complete isolation of the cells ( The SIS area is prohibited ground for anybody not employed by the SIS, regardless of position or rank). The cells in the police stations are similar to those on Jidda Island. They are by far cleaner than those in the fort. They differ in the fact that detainees are seldom confined to solitary cells on the Jidda Island.

#### PRISONS OF BAHRAIN

##### Al - Qala

Al-qala "the police fort", is situated not far from the centre of the capital of Manama. It was built in the 17th century by Nader Shah of Persia as a headquarters for his occupation forces in Bahrain. It has gone through a number of renovations but the main building still has the original architectural style, squared and with a tower in each corner. The fort has expanded during the last twenty years, so much so that the original building is now but a smaller part of the fort. Yet, it is the most important section because it contains the headquarters for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID ), the training staff offices and other police administration offices, the offices of the Ministry of the Interior, the director general of the police department and the police tele-and wireless communication centre ( see the Manama prison diagram).

Surrounding the main building are various offices of the different police department and a police barrack for bachelors, as well as some houses for police families, the police clinic, the horse stables and a number of villas occupied by European security officers plus the new police headquarter which is in its final stage of construction. All this is surrounded by a 3.5 Meter high wall topped by barbed wire. The fort has three main gates: the northern gate, used by the traffic police and the people coming to the traffic department, the north-east gate for public use, and the western gate for the security police and prisoner transportation.

##### The prison

The Manama prison has an isolated section in the north-western part of the main building of Al-Qala as a prison, it contains eight cells, a kitchen and prison guards room. The cells vary in size, four of them (numbered 2,3,4, and 7 ) are the largest.

2,3, and 4 are ordinarily used for detainees including political ones, they have only one window looking onto the prison yard and measures about 4x2.5 M. The other cells are usually occupied by short term prisoners. Connected to this prison are two cells which are effectively isolated from the rest of the prison and are used for solitary confinement. These cells measure 2x2 m. Above them are the toilets of the policemen and the prison guards. Both these cells are called No. 1 (i.e. the worst cells ) and are dreaded by the convicts because they are used as punishment for them. Across the yard towards the south-east are two cells about 3x2 m each which are also used as solitary confinement cells. The towers is used for this purpose, the north-western one. It could The towers have previously been used as confinement cells but nowadays only one of the towers is used for this purpose ,the north-western one. It could contain more than 25 beds. The south-western tower, which was used until just some years ago, is on the contrary so small that a person can hardly sit in it but has to half-stand. The SIS headquarters on the opposite side has two cells used mainly as temporary cells for interrogation, but are also used for ordinary confinement purposes.

#### Jidda Island

Jidda Island was first used as a prison by the British advisor to the government. From the beginning it was a hard-labour camp because of the rocky structure of the islands, which provided stone cutting. Forced labour for stone cutting continued until 1972 in spite of the fact that stones cut were not transported anymore to the mainland or used on the island. The island has two wharves of which only one is currently in use and is overlooked by the residence of chief officer of the prison, who is at the same time in charge of all prisons of Bahrain. On the opposite side of the island, about 2 km away, is the islands police headquarters and its tower. The offices are also used as a clinic. The tower overlooks the prison yard some 50 meters away. The prison yard is also overlooked by the quarters of the policemen employed as prison guards. The prison yard includes a bakery, a kitchen, a shed used as a club premise, a library, toilets and 36 cells divided into 4 blocks, with 10, 14, 6 and 6 cells respectively. The last two blocks are of greatest interest. One of them had, once upon a time, the only cells available on the island and was reserved for commonwealth prisoners ( hence the name it was given, The State House ). Bahraini prisoners were chained to the ground and to each other. These six cells are by now very old, damp and extremely unhygienic even by Bahraini prisons standards. It was not in use until 1974 ; but when the detainee cells were crowded in 1973, the state house was used as a detention for political prisoners. The other 6 cell block is used exclusively for political detainees, and is surrounded by an extra barbed wire fence to separate it from the prison yard. There is barbed wire and a door dividing this block into two halves. The cells on the island vary in size depending on the age of the block. The state house for example, has cells

which measure 1 x 2 m, the 10 cells block 2 x 2 m and the rest 2 x 1.5 m.

#### Al-Khamis prison

Only unconfirmed information is available about this prison. It is used, however, exclusively for juvenile delinquents and women.

#### Other prisons

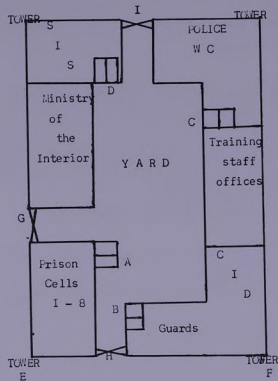
Officially there exist no other prisons apart from those mentioned above. However, the Bahraini security forces employ a number of police stations as political detentions. Of these the following can be mentioned :

- 1) Safra police training camp. This desert camp, situated between the towns of Rifa'a and Awali, was used as late as June 1974 to detain ALBA workers, following the labour strikes at the company.
- 2) Rifa'a police station, situated outside the town of Rifa'a, used as a maximum isolation detention.
- 3) Zallaq police station, outside the coastal village Zallaq. It functions similar to the Rifa'a police station.
- 4) Mana Salman police station, near Manama harbour, functions as the above.
- 5) Muharraq police station.
- 6) Bab-al-Bahrain police station in Manama.
- 7) Qudaiibia police station.
- 8) Muharraq airport guards station.

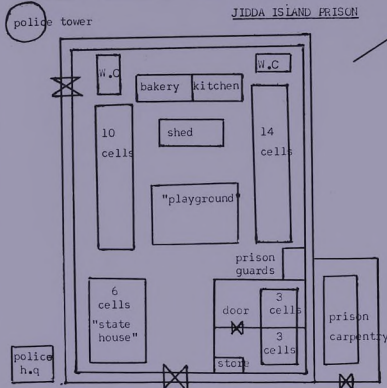
These are some of the police stations which are used occasionally for temporary or transitional detention of political activists. Muharraq and Bab-al-Bahrain are also used as detention for non-political detainees.

All of the above mentioned stations were used during the workers strike in 1974.

AL - QALA



- A-F = Solitary confinement cells
- G = Northern gate
- H = Western gate
- I = Eastern gate



to prison officer house and to main wharf.

رغم ارباب السلطة والمخابرات البريطانية  
وقوات الشعب والقوانين الفاشية

التيمة العامة ستفزع حقوقها المشروعة  
من الشركات الاحتكارية  
والسلطة الرجعية في البحرين



Police interference in workers demonstration in Bahrain  
أعدى المظاهرات العمالية والبوليس بصدى لها

الحرية للمعتقلين الوطنيين البحرينيين

عبد الهادي خلف  
موسى مرهون  
أحمد المنصوري  
فايز زبيعت  
عباس عواجر  
محمد جنيب  
أحمد الذواوي  
عبد الحميد محمد علي  
بدر صلالو  
أحمد ز ينال  
محمد السيد يوسف  
يوسف العجاوي  
أبو ابراهيم بشموي  
قاسم حداد  
جاسم سيادي  
إسماعيل العلوي

- ABDULHADI KHALAF
- MOHSEN MARHOUN
- AHMED AL MANSOUR
- FAIEZ RABIAA
- ABBAS AWAJIL
- MOHAMED JANNAM
- AHMED AL ZAWADI
- ABDULHAMID MOHAMMED ALI
- BADER MA
- AHMED ZA
- MOHAMED ESAYED YUSUF
- YUSUF AL AJAJI
- IBRAHIM BACHMI
- QASIM HADDAD
- JASIM SYAADI
- ISMAEL AL ALAWI