

## PROTEST AT THE RECENT EXECUTIONS AND ARRESTS IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

At a time when the western media are devoting considerable attention to the Arabian peninsula's oil reserves, other news from the area tells of a spate of savage executions and arrests by pro-western governments. This news has received far less attention than the developing oil industry, a bias inseparable from the fact that the governments responsible for such brutality are those on whom, the west relies. These events are therefore a result of the overall policy of the oil companies and western governments who continue to interfere in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries and encourage repressive regimes.

In the Gulf state of Bahrain over 150 people have been arrested within the past three months in an attempt by that state to crush the democratic opposition movement. Trades Unionists unemployed workers, intellectuals and state employees have been imprisoned for demanding free political activity, free elections and national independence. Their demands and the government's response have disproved the official pretense that Bahrain is now adopting a more liberal regime. None of the detainees, who are held on Jidda prison island, have yet been brought to trial, and a recent delegation by the Kuwaiti lawyers association was refused permission to visit them.

In Kuwait, the chairman of the Bahraini Students Union, Ahmed Madar, was arrested and deported two weeks ago. Another eleven South Yemenis working in Kuwait were also deported, in the latest of a long series of victimisations of non-Kuwaiti workers by the Kuwaiti government.

Even more horrible than these detentions are the secret trials and executions reported from the Sultanate of Oman and North Yemen. It was announced in Oman's capital, Muscat, on June 21 that 10 people had been shot, 23 sentenced to life imprisonment and 24 to other jail sentences. All were accused of membership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf but no other details of the trial were announced. No independent enquiry has ever been allowed by the Omani authorities into their prison system and hundreds of political opponents are now being held in Kut al-Jalali jail in Muscat.

On the very same day that the Muscat executions took place, it was announced from Sanaa, capital of North Yemen, that eight opponents of the regime had been executed. Four had been shot and four had been nailed to crosses until they were dead (The Times June 22 1973). On July 2 a further six executions took place and the bodies of those killed were exposed in the main square in Sanaa. As in Oman no observers were allowed and no outside enquiry has been possible. Those killed were accused of being 'saboteurs'.



The government in North Yemen has arrested several hundred opponents in the past year, and few of them have even been brought to 'trial'. Under the pretense of fighting other 'saboteurs', the Sanaa regime has been burning villages and dispersing their inhabitants in parts of the countryside which reject its decrees. The recent executions have been preceded by months of repression and further deaths, announced or concealed, may well occur.

All of these states are ones which enjoy good relations with the west and those present regimes favour western control of Arabian oil. Bahrain was a British colony until August 71 and enjoys the presence of a US naval base. Oman's army and air force are officered by British personnel and in April of this year Defence Secretary Carrington visited Muscat to confirm British interest. North Yemen relies on financial subsidies from pro-western Saudi Arabia and Iran, and, with Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, forms part of a pro-western defense network in the Red Sea. All are opposed to any democratic movement and to the continued existence of the popular government in South Yemen.

We protest at these arrests, detentions and executions. We consider that they are barbaric violations of every basic human right and of the most elementary political justice. We call on all democrats to protest to the governments and embassies of these states. We believe that, while these local governments are quite capable on their own of the most ferocious brutality, their present repression reflects imperialist interest in the Arabian peninsula. The violence committed by governments against their political opponents in this area is therefore one for which all people, in the Middle East and the rest of the world, must express deep concern.

London, 13th July 1973.

The Gulf Committee, c/o ICDP, 6, Endsleigh street, London, W.C.1

The Yemeni Workers' Union.

The Committee for the support of the revolution in Palestine and the Gulf (Arab committee, U.K).