

Gulf monarchies seem to have nightmares of the possibility of an Iranian victory that might overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and bring radical pro-Iranian forces to power.

Also the US fears such a development. In the past, Washington characterized Iraq as «the terrorist government no. 1» in the Middle East. The recent reestablishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries reflects new alliances and the strengthening of reactionary factions within the Iraqi regime.

For the US the war has provided a convenient opportunity to enlarge its military expansion in the area. More than 60 American warships are waiting outside the Gulf to intervene if necessary. To bring the Rapid Deployment Force into action the US is dependent on access to their local military bases. In order to manifest the «self-reliance» of the Gulf regimes, Washington has stressed that they will use the bases if they get an official invitation from the countries concerned. However, there is not much doubt they will get it. Following the visit of Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy in the Gulf in April 1984, he declared that: «The Arab Gulf states gave the impression that they wanted US intervention, but they were not yet prepared to say so» (9)!!

The progressive forces

The Gulf area is for sure «a vital zone». There is widespread feeling in the rich capitalist countries that in the Gulf the right of sovereignty has to be limited for the sake of their own economies. Military bases, sophisticatedly equipped interven-

tion forces, large-scale military maneuvers - more than ever imperialist power policy is conducted in this way.

But in Oman, as in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, this policy stands against the popular desire for independence and democracy. Therefore it is of essential importance that the progressive forces, the national liberation movements, are strengthened as an alternative to the ruling dynasties.

All over the Gulf the revolutionary struggle takes place under very difficult circumstances due to lack of democracy and the huge military build-up. However, the example of Iran proves that even the strongest and most brutal regime can be overthrown when the masses rise in revolt.

In the long run, the reactionary Gulf monarchies are doomed and their desperate efforts to stay in power through their alliance with imperialism could very well become the spark that lights the fire. A progressive development in the Gulf would be a big leap forward in the struggle of the whole Arab liberation movement against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

1. The Middle East, November 1983, p.13
2. Saut al-Thawra, No. 16, March 1982, p.4
3. Ibid, p.5
4. The Middle East, November 1983, p.14
5. Merip Reports, No. 125-26, July 1984, p.47
6. The Middle East, September 1984, p.18
7. Amnesty International: Report 1984, p.345
8. Merip Reports, No. 125-26, July 1984, p.46
9. Middle East Economic Digest, June 1st, 1984, p.20

WORLD

Solidarity with the Prisoners of Apartheid

The Story of Nelson Mandela

October 11th is the day of solidarity with political prisoners in South Africa. On this day, the voices of millions in the African continent and worldwide are raised, demanding the release of those imprisoned in the horrible jails of the racist white minority regime in Pretoria.

As part of the campaign to release the political prisoners of South Africa, *Democratic Palestine* publishes the story of the most prominent of them: Nelson Mandela, who has served 20 years of a life sentence. Even from behind the bars, he is a challenge to the apartheid regime and a leader of his people's struggle in the face of bloody oppression and state terror. We present Nelson Mandela's experience in the context of the struggle of the African National Congress (ANC), benefitting from the lessons of this struggle and its development from non-violent resistance to revolutionary violence.

Nelson Mandela was born in 1918. His father was chief of a tribe, which

gave him the privilege of being one of the few South African Blacks to get a higher education and earn a degree in law. After this, he joined the ANC and helped form its youth organization. Through the influence of Mandela and his comrades, the ANC in 1943 adopted a more radical, non-violent program. Mandela was elected vice-president of the ANC, which made him increasingly popular. This worried the racist regime, and in retaliation it prohibited him from meetings, deprived him of his civil rights, and ordered him out of Johannesburg.

The popularity of the ANC increased; it received support from the Indian Congress of South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade



Unions, the Organization of Colored People and the Democratic Congress. On this basis, a decision was taken to hold a congress of the people of South Africa. On the 26th of June 1955, in