

problems. These are mainly internal problems such as stomach ulcers, kidney problems, inflammation of the duodenum, intestinal problems and rheumatism as well as tooth decay, inflammation of the gums, etc. A number of the prisoners' health condition is so critical that their lives are at stake. Needless to say, continued demands to allow the prisoners to set up a system for obtaining fresh fruits, vegetables and canned foods, have been ignored.

The bedding provided is insufficient to protect the prisoners from the desert cold at night. Lack of hot water for washing has led to the development of skin diseases, as well as contagious



diseases, among the prisoners. For reading material, only the local newspapers are allowed into the prison. One radio is allowed for every 25 prisoners. Demands to allow visiting between the cells have been rejected. Most brutal is the collective punishment imposed on the prisoners if any one of them is accused of the slightest misdemeanor. The stick and carrot policy practiced by the prison administration leaves prisoners at the mercy of the jailers' moods.

Suffering is not limited to the prisoners, but is extrapolated to their families as well. They have to suffer in the knowledge that their sons are constantly subjected to these brutal conditions, while they remain helpless, prevented from providing any medical treatment, food or clothing, at their own expense. When visiting, they are prevented from bringing anything which might alleviate their sons' conditions, even in a minor way. The trip to Jafre is extremely difficult. (See parents' letter for details.) Moreover, no proper facilities are provided after the long trip; there is no water, toilet,

shelter or proper waiting room. Visitors have to withstand the summer heat or winter cold before it is their turn to be allowed in for a ten minute to one hour visit. The length of the visit is dictated by the mood of the prison authorities. All this intentionally inflicted physical strain hits the elderly especially hard. Despite repeated demands to provide proper facilities for visitors, nothing has yet been forthcoming.

The deliberate psychological and physical suffering inflicted on families and prisoners alike is no less than inhuman. It is required that all democratic forces shoulder their responsibility in the campaign against the inhuman practices of the reactionary Jordanian regime. The struggle for the release of these political prisoners is a must for all who consider the defense of human rights a just cause.

Parents' Appeal

The following letter was sent by families of political prisoners in Jordan to the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan. At the same time, a protest letter was sent to the Jordanian Minister of Interior.

We are the families of the political prisoners in Jafre prison, who were transferred there on September 2nd, from a number of other prisons, particularly from Mahatta central prison in Amman. We condemn the decision to transfer them, considering it an intentional measure to harass them and us.

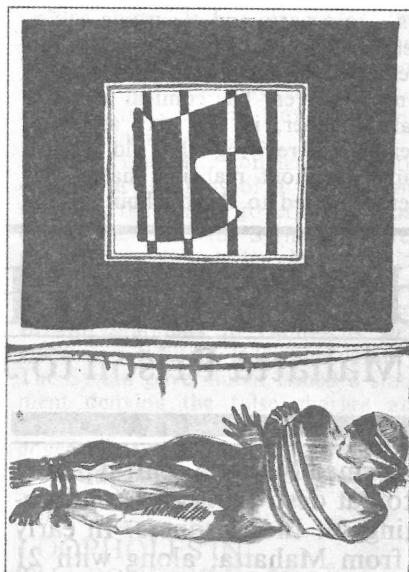
To brief you on what happened: In mid-August, the security forces stormed Mahatta prison, destroying and confiscating the prisoners' belongings,

However, we were forcibly prevented from doing so by the security forces.

On the fifth day of the strike, our detainees were transferred from Mahatta, and from prisons in Irbid, Salt, Zarqa and Al Joweideh, to the desert prison, Jafre, 300 kilometers from Amman. They were transferred late at night and taken for a seven-hour journey. Eighty-two prisoners were put in three barracks. Lack of proper medical care and a polluted water supply caused the spread of dysentery. This is not to mention the complete absence of reading materials and basic daily needs, added to inhuman treatment.

This unjust measure is a harsh blow to us as families. It means we have to travel 300 kilometers from Amman to be allowed a maximum of one hour for visiting. This means spending five hours going and another five hours returning, in addition to humiliating body searches and the strictest observation during the visit. Moreover, we have to arrange for a means of transportation ourselves, for there is no public transportation to the area of the prison.

As the party concerned with preserving the human rights of our imprisoned sons, we appeal to you to send delegations to visit this desert prison as soon as possible, in order to assess the reality of the situation and try all means to alleviate the harsh conditions.



ings, as well as bodily and verbally abusing them. This was followed by arbitrary measures preventing families from providing food and clothes, without the prison administration's providing for these needs. Visiting hours were shortened, and families body-searched in a humiliating manner before entry. As a result of all this, our prisoners declared a protest strike on August 29th, refusing the visits of their relatives. As families, we tried in our turn to protest to the International Red Cross regional office in Amman.

NO COMMENT

While registering at the Jordanian University, students were surprised to discover that the course on the Palestinian cause, which had hitherto been obligatory for high school and university students, was no longer given such a status. It had been reduced to an elective, to be taken only by Christians in the science departments, whereas Muslims take a religious course. As yet, the Ministry of Education has voiced no justification for this.