

followed the increase in oil prices in 1973, the increased aid from oil-producing countries and the relocation to Jordan of the regional headquarters of many companies and industrial complexes after the civil war in Lebanon. An additional factor is the Iran-Iraq war which has increased Iraq's demand for Jordanian products.

Normally these new factors would have opened great work opportunities but, on the contrary, the emigration of workers has increased while the immigration of expatriate workers to Jordan has risen. A study published by the Royal Scientific Society regarding the Jordanian labor force indicated that in 1983, the number of Jordanians working outside the country totaled approximately 305,000, according to the Ministry of Labor. Most of these are working in the Gulf states. In the same year, there were 125,000 non-Jordanians working in Jordan, of which 89.6% were Egyptians.<sup>4</sup> The number of expatriate workers has continued to rise. For example, non-

Jordanians now constitute half of the 4,500 workers in Jordan's ports.<sup>5</sup>

The two sides of this issue - the emigration of Jordanian workers and the immigration of non-Jordanian workers - clearly reveal that this situation is the result of a planned policy in accordance with the regime's political, security and economic considerations. The Jordanian regime aims at forcing the largest number of the country's workers to emigrate in order to achieve a number of results, chiefly:

1. To disperse the working class and its vanguard forces in order to weaken its ability to confront the regime's corrupt policies on the social, economic and political levels. Related to this, to make it impossible for the working class to organize and prepare to struggle for the social, economic, political and union rights which have been violated regularly.

2. To remove the largest possible number of citizens from Jordan which is potentially a main arena for confronting

the Zionist enemy. This should reduce the mass pressure on the regime to adopt a nationalist position opposing the US imperialist and Israeli policies, for this would definitely be contrary to the regime's class structure and interests.

3. To gain additional income for the country through remittances (the money which those working abroad send back to their families). This money is channeled into service projects that strengthen the existing corrupt structure. Also the regime benefits from this money when it is deposited in banks, for it can then be invested in new projects that serve the regime's interests.

4. To assist other reactionary regimes with their labor crisis: Jordan exports labor to countries where there is a shortage, like the Gulf states, and imports labor from countries, such as Egypt, where there is a surplus.

## Workers - an import-export commodity for the regime

For more than a decade, the number of Jordanian workers emigrating has been on the rise, as has the number of expatriate workers entering Jordan. The number of Jordanians working abroad jumped from 250,300 in 1980, to 305,000 in 1983. Parallel to this was the doubling of expatriate workers in Jordan, from 61,300 in 1982, to 130,000 in 1983. This figure obviously points to the dire need for workers in Jordan. This then raises the question of why and to whose benefit does the Jordanian regime force native workers and qualified personnel to emigrate, substituting expatriate labor.

Jordanian officials claim that Jordan benefits from labor emigration due to the remittances sent back to the country. They fail to admit that this money is not utilized for production or development projects. This is not the only fact that exposes the falsity of the claims made by Jordanian officials concerning the 'benefits' of labor emigration. A quick glance at statistics shows the real extent of this trend: 50% of those working in production are expatriates, as are 60% of construction workers. Non-Jordanians constitute 52% of the total population of the Irbid province which is Jordan's agricultural center; from this figure one can infer that a large majority of the agricultural labor force is imported.

The Jordanian Labor Ministry has tried to justify this trend by attributing it to three main factors that have been pressuring the labor market since 1974:

