

# BAHRAIN

Issued by the "Bahrain Freedom Movement" for Promoting Human and Constitutional Rights

## Political murders replace dialogue

*The ruling family is victimizing the Shia Community for appeasing political circles*

The serious escalation in the Bahraini crisis has made a reconciliation between the people of Bahrain and the Al Khalifa ruling tribe even more difficult. Whether the crisis has reached the point of no-return or not is a matter for debate, but what is clear is that the Al Khalifa are pushing the people to an eventual confrontation the opposition has so far refrained from declaring. It has always been hoped that the friends of the Al Khalifa, both in the Gulf and outside, would pursue the aim of reaching a settlement rather than leaving it to take its dangerous course, but, so far, none of these friends has shown the courage needed to take up a strong stand and tell the ruling tribe to call off its onslaught on the people. Instead, they have unwittingly encouraged the Al Khalifa in their outrageous attack on liberties, human rights and dignity of the people of Bahrain. Money has been poured into the pockets of the rulers to enable them to enhance their capabilities to recruit more torturers, media advisors, public relations companies and professional killers. It is doubtful whether these measures can lead to stability especially in the face of a determined people whose main aim is to reinstate the constitution of the country.

Having failed to dislodge the constitutional movement in the eighteen months of the uprising, the Al Khalifa have now adopted a policy to "break the bones" of the opposition. Last month, a group of young men were paraded on TV screens to "confess" their role in a clandestine plot to overthrow the government. They were allegedly helped by Iran, and had a grand design in Bahrain. The minister of Information had planned a major festival and invited many journalists to report the great event of uncovering the coup plot. In the end what transpired from the propaganda scoop was a collection of uncorroborated confessions, which had clearly been prepared in advance and which eight young men were required to read out in front of cameras. The Al Khalifa sought to exploit the negative image attached to the Shia Muslims community and introduced the terms "Hezbollah" and "Iran" in its attempt to curtail the activities of the people. In the event, none of these plans worked, and the world opinion has been steadfast in its support of the legitimate demands of the people of Bahrain. The support has been so widespread that even those amongst the journalists who accepted the invitation of the information minister, reported objectively and considered the episode of the plot nothing more than a hick-up. Reports in international media virtually ignored the Al Khalifa's allegation and repeated the constitutional demands,

to the annoyance of Mohammed Al Motawwa, the minister of information.

As the government festival faltered, the Al Khalifa became more agitated. Only a handful of governments did send qualified messages of support. The Amir had to intervene personally and write to other heads of government urging them to send messages of support. Inside the Gulf, the only letters of support came from Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates and the Saudis. The Kuwaiti parliament sent a letter of support for the people more than the government. The American president sent a letter of qualified support. The Al Khalifa regime published those parts of it which support them while ignoring a 15-word sentence which apparently urged the Amir to initiate dialogue with the opposition. The official spokesman of the American Embassy in Bahrain issued a statement to the Gulf News Agency expressing annoyance at this "selective" approach by the Al Khalifa, and said that they always preferred the presidential letters to be translated in full. Several observers remarked that if the Bahraini authorities were ready to distort Clinton's letter wouldn't they do the same with the "confessions" of the detainees who are under the most horrific torture? Many journalists observed the discrepancies in the "testimonies" of the alleged members of Hezbollah, pointing to serious flaws in dates, times, names, events. Apparently, the play had not been well-prepared.

The mute international reaction to that episode may have pushed the Al Khalifa to the brink of insanity. They have just passed death sentences (1 July) against three innocent young Bahrainis falsely accused of starting a fire that led to the death of seven Bangladeshis. Four of the seven bodies of the victims were buried in secret and were not handed to the Embassy of Bangladesh. There were protests from the Embassy but the Al Khalifas, with the help of a "friendly" country managed to silence these protests for undisclosed sums of cash. In this dirty war, the clean people of Bahrain are always the victims. If the three innocent Bahrainis are executed, there will be an outcry that could destabilise the whole region. The opposition is attempting in vain to tame the people who are being provoked by the foreign-staffed riot and security police and are being harassed beyond imagination. The Al Khalifa are brandishing their blood-stained swords against the constitutionalists. There seems to be little room to compromise the modest demands of the people, and it is left to those who have interests in the stability of the region to express their support to these demands and condemn the medieval prac-

tices of the ruling tribe. It appears that a showdown between the people and the government is becoming inevitable especially if the government carries out the death sentences against the innocent people. It is in everyone's interest to stop these murders, and there is still some time to act. Failure to take a humane stand may lead to catastrophe. It is a race between the evil of tribalism and those seeking to establish the rule of constitutional law. They must be supported.

## ICRC denies agreement on visits to prisons

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has denied that it had signed an agreement with the Government of Bahrain permitting it to enter the country and monitor the situation in the prisons. The denial came after Mr. Jeremy Hanley, the British minister of state for foreign affairs, was quoted by the BBC Arabic Service Tuesday as saying that such an agreement had existed. The presenter of the programme, Ann Richardson, asked the minister, who has just concluded an official visit to Bahrain whether the issue of the violation of human rights as reported by Amnesty International, had been discussed with the authorities. Mr. Hanley was quoted as saying in reply: "I have directed the attention of the officials in Bahrain that we had received numerous letters, and questions were presented in the parliament on the issue of human rights in Bahrain. We discussed these issues in general terms and I felt satisfied with the progress achieved in these fields, especially the important agreement which has been signed with the International Committee of the Red Cross allowing her access to Bahrain". The ICRC has denied an agreement has been signed although discussion has been underway for almost a year. Mr. Stoecklin for the ICRC office in Geneva, said that there are some conditions that the ICRC insists on when dealing with any country, including Bahrain. These are: the ICRC must be given access to ALL prisoners, that the visits are repeatable, that the meetings with the prisoners are held in private (i.e. not in the presence of governmental officials) and that ICRC is given a register for all prisoners for monitoring their whereabouts..

Last year Douglas Hurd, the British foreign secretary was told that Amnesty International (AI) had been invited to Bahrain. No such invitation had ever been given to AI. However, they continued referring to the issue now and again hoping they would be able to deceive the world about their real intentions.



## June 1996: The ruling family creates a fiction of a .....

3 June: The interior ministry decided to announce the uncovering of a conspiracy backed by a foreign country against the ruling family. Mohammed Al-Motawwa, the information minister, wasted no time on 3 June 1996, to claim that "29 Bahrainis" have confessed that they were going to "topple" the ruling family and establish an "Iranian-style regime".

The broadly-based opposition in Bahrain has been campaigning for the peaceful restoration of the elected parliament in accordance with the constitution of the country. The government strategy has always been a desperate attempt to de-rail the constitutional movement by inviting violence to the scene.

5 June: The interior ministry lost its nerve, dragged several persons under torture and ordered them to read pre-prepared "confessions" depicting a fictitious picture of an organization it called Hizbollah. The tortured persons were shown on Bahrain TV after a day in which many personalities were tricked by the information ministry. Mohammed Al-Motawwa kept on phoning many people and insisted that they attend a meeting in the palace of the Amir.

Senior officials in all ministries were also ordered to go the palace. When they arrived at the palace, TV cameras were set to picture them hand-shaking the Amir.

The all-appointed and powerless consultative council was forced to hold a session after which a statement was issued in line with the government's desperate plot to de-rail the constitutional movement. The people of Bahrain have watched the TV programme with disgust as the ruling family proved itself to be beyond rationality. The ruling family lost all argument and resorted to character-assassination. They accused the opposition leaders in jail of involvement in this fictitious organization.

Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, 58, an ex-MP and judge had been released with his friends last August after a deal struck with the interior ministry. These leaders calmed down the situation, but the ruling family betrayed the deal and re-arrested the leaders last January. These figure are beyond doubts and all their sermons and lectures are available for the outside world. The alleged confessions of a coup attempt are not marketable anymore. The cracks in the biggest lie in Bahrain history is beginning to show-up. Mr. Abbas Hubail was made to say that he blasted two places for BBME company on 9 July 1995 and that Sheikh Al-Jamri gave his approval for these two attacks. This is a "true" lie, for Sheikh Al-Jamri was in jail between 1 April and 25 September 1995. On the other hand, Hussain Modaifaa was made to say that he traveled to Syria on 14 April and from there to Lebanon on 30 April. On 11 May he returned to Bahrain across borders. The alleged confessions ends by saying that Hussain Modaifaa signed his statements before an investigating judge on 13 May. This can not be true, for a travel (by car) between Syria and Bahrain takes at least 30 hours non-stop, bearing in mind that the investigating judge stage is much after the detention and interrogation stages. Mr. Hussain Yousif: one can see his right forearm swollen. The first person appearing on TV pronounced his surname in the same

way as it was written for him by his torturers. While his surname is "Al-Mutghawi", he pronounced it as "Al-Mutqawi". There are many more discrepancies which validate the saying "the liar always forgets".

8 June: The biggest lie in Bahrain history and the smoke that followed are dissipating. The government launched all its capabilities in the media in an attempt to intimidate the Bahraini public. They failed. For the last three days, uprising areas in Sanabis, Daih, Jidhafs, Sitra, Bilad al-Qadim, Dair, Duraz, Bani Jamra, Karzakkan and other places, residents clashed with the foreign-staffed security forces. The latter had intended to parade themselves in jeeps to sound horns and declare themselves happy. The press has launched the most chauvinistic attacks on the Shia community.

10 June: 25 European MPs wrote to the Amir of Bahrain stating: "It is a matter of deep concern to us that there are reportedly still 2,500 people imprisoned without charge, who were detained in connection with the demonstration in December 1994, supporting the restoration of the constitution. It is profoundly unsatisfactory that more than twenty years have passed since the constitution was suspended and never restored, following the dissolution of the Bahraini National Assembly on 26th August 1975".

11 June: Riot police encircled Hoora Cemetery for three days starting 11 June. It is believed that they buried a 12-year old Mohammad Abdul Latif Hussain, who had been arrested after falling from a wall which he attempted to jump over to run away from arrest.

15 June: At 7.30 pm local time, the BBC Arabic Radio broadcast a half-hour programme on the events in Bahrain. The panorama programme analyzed the uprising and demands for democracy with interviews from all sides in society. Sheikh Isa Al-Joder, a Sunni religious scholar, stated that "the current protests are part of a national movement aiming for legitimate demands. The reason why Sunnis are not taking direct action is attributed to the propaganda of the government which uses the policy of divide and rule and to the fear from retribution by the authorities".

The programme mentioned that thousands of people have disappeared and none of them had been allowed to see a relative or a lawyer. Moreover, the programme raised doubt about the government claims as the "only evidence" being displayed is a set of uncorroborated "confessions". A pro-democracy activist gave graphic details of corrupt practices by members of the ruling family, thus explaining how a \$9000 per capita ends up in the pockets of the few. The programme voiced the chanting of demonstrators declaring their steadfastness. The father of Saeed Al-Eskafi explained how his son was tortured to death last July. An entire generation of Shia youths have now emerged hardened by events. The programme ended by saying: "if the ruling family continues to ignore addressing the roots of the problems then doubts will not be cast on its policies but on its continuation in government".

On the other hand, Mr. Abdul Mohsin Jamal, the Kuwaiti MP, stated in an interview

that "the story of a coup in Bahrain is a cheap joke". His statements have naturally upset the ruling family in Bahrain which has been attempting to show that the world believed its fiction about a coup attempt.

15 June: Uprising areas of Bahrain witnessed fresh pretexts on the night of 14 June, on the 40th day commemoration of the martyrdom of Fadhil Abbas Marhoon who was shot dead by the foreign-staffed security forces in Karzakkan. Fadhil was buried by police who prevented his family from even attending the preparation for burial, which is forbidden in Islam. Protesters in Sar, Markh, Barbar, Bani Jamra and Duraz raised slogan denouncing the government's attempt to camouflage its oppression by claiming the uncovering of a fictitious coup attempt.

16 June: Residential areas stretching from Sanabis and Daih to Duraz and Bani Jamra have erupted in protests despite all the threats and show of force by riot police. Residents of Daih started in the afternoon (15 June) followed by other areas marking the martyrdom of Fadhil Abbas Marhoon (buried by security forces on 6 May) and Al-Taittoon family (Salman Al-Taittoon, his wife Fadheela and their son Ali). The family, from Sanabis, was blown-up by security forces on 7 May. The people of Bahrain showed their determination and steadfastness and declared their disapproval of the way the ruling family is attempting to victimize the Shia community.

17 June: The Associated Press reported that "A bomb-laden car exploded outside a downtown hotel Monday (17 June, 8.30 pm) and an anonymous caller said the blast was intended to pressure authorities to release political prisoners. There were no casualties and the only damage was to the car that was carrying the bomb and a nearby vehicle, police said. The blast took place outside the six-story Bahrain International Hotel, frequented by foreigners and locals alike, and near the Standard Chartered Bank". Reuters said "One of the owners of the Saudi-licensed car said it was damaged by a blast while it was parked but nobody was injured. The Nissan vehicle was parked near a branch of the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, the Standard Chartered Bank and the Gulf Pearl Hotel".

17 June: More Bahrainis were arbitrarily sentenced by the unconstitutional state security court in what is becoming a routine form of punishment for the Shia community which is being victimized to satisfy some political circles. Mohammed Sahwan, who had been in jail since December 1994 was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Another person who had also been in jail since the early days of the uprising, Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Mokhoder was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The name of the latter is on the top list of signatories of the (first) 1992 Petition which called on the Amir to restore the rule of constitutional law to Bahrain. There was no case against Al-Mokhoder, but the ruling family now feels comfortable going on sentencing people arbitrarily. The sentences were as follows: nine people were accused of causing the death of a policeman and using force and violence against security men and demonstrating and burning tyres. The court sentenced one of



## "coup attempt!"

the defendants to 15 years in prison; two other defendants to five years in prison; and five others to three years in prison. In another case, the State Security Court passed different sentences against five other defendants. The first was sentenced to six years in prison; the second and third to five years; the fourth to three years; and the fifth to one year. The court ruled that the first four defendants should also pay 1,950 dinars for the damage they caused by setting fire to the administration offices of the Isa Town secondary school for boys.

The ruling family has re-started a campaign for arresting women. Several ladies were arrested on 17 June including Zahra Ali Isa. Women are being tortured in front of men to force the victimized people to succumb to the feudal dictatorship.

23 June: Reuters stated that "a bomb exploded in Bahrain on Sunday night (23 June), damaging a car and smashing windows in nearby buildings but causing no casualties, a government official and residents said on Monday. The official told Reuters the locally made percussion bomb was planted near a parked car in Manama. "The blast damaged a parked car and caused minor damage to nearby trading stores but caused no casualties," he said. An official at the Le Vendome Hotel said the explosion, the second in Bahrain in a week, smashed some windows in the hotel and damaged a car parked in front of the hotel".

27 June: The State Security Court has jailed seven people, including one for life, on charges of planting bombs at two luxury hotels. They were also accused of carrying out bomb attacks on offices of Bahrain Maritime & Mercantile International. First defendant Abdullah Nasir Muhammad Al Tawq received a life prison sentence. Second defendant Ali Hasan Abdullah Ghanam received a 15-year prison term. Third defendant Hamzah Abd al-Husayn Ibrahim Salih received a 10-year prison term. Fourth defendant Ahmad Haydar Abbas Haydar (Iranian national) received a seven-year prison term, as well as a deportation order after serving his prison term. Sixth defendant Mulla Abbas Ali Ahmad Hubayl received a seven-year prison term. Seventh defendant Husayn Ja'far Sadiq al-Najjar received a 10-year prison term. Eighth defendant Ja'far Khalil Ibrahim Hubayl received a seven-year prison term and was fined 1,000 dinars. The court acquitted fifth defendant Sayyid Ali Ja'far Shabar Alawi, ninth defendant Mahdi Ibrahim Ja'far Ali, and 10th defendant Adil Hasan Abdullah Ghanam. It is worth noting that the sixth defendant in yesterday's "trial", Mulla Abbas Hubail was one of those accused of belonging to "Hezbollah", the theatrical play created by the Al Khalifa earlier this month. Last week, the court jailed 21 people ranging from one to 10 years.

29 June: The State Security Court jailed five Bahrainis, including two for life, on charges of planting a bomb at a Bahraini bank. Aqeel Naji Khalaf and Mohammed Salman Mahmoud Moukhtar were jailed for life. Another man was sentenced to 10 years in jail and was fined 500 dinars (\$1,326). Two others received seven years imprisonment and were also fined 300 dinars each. A sixth suspect was acquitted.

## UK Press Conference in support of the people of Bahrain: Restoring the constitution is the way out of the crisis

A press conference in the UK Parliament held today, 13 June, called on the UK and USA to take positive steps towards assisting the people of Bahrain in attaining their basic rights. The press conference organized by the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group was addressed by journalists who have recently visited Bahrain and produced TV and radio programmes.

Lord Avebury the Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group outlined how events developed in Bahrain following the submission of a petition signed by 25,000 calling on the Amir of Bahrain to restore the Bahraini parliament that was dissolved in 1975. He then invited other speakers to deliver their contributions.

Dr. Majid Al-Alawi, of the Bahrain Freedom Movement said "when the government started inviting journalists from all-over the world to attend for a major announcement on 3 June, we thought that a wise member of the ruling family decided that it is time to take a step forward in the way of reforms. Opposition groups issued a joint statement stating that if the changes are not in accordance with the constitution, then they would be rejected. We never anticipated that a big lie was in the making".

Sue Lloyd-Roberts visited Bahrain few weeks ago and made a BBC TV programme on Bahrain said: "My first encounter with Bahrain was in 1965 at a boarding school, when a tanned girl by the name Linda Henderson joined us. She said that her father was in Kenya and Rhodesia and that he is now working for the government of Bahrain. She refused to elaborate then. When I visited Bahrain few weeks ago, I attempted to make my first contact with her father, living behind fences in Bahrain. As I started my undercover filming in Bahrain, I remembered where I saw the same conditions. It was in Romania when I was producing a similar programme. I went to film some of the devastated villages there, but the Romanian "Securitat" reached the area before my arrival and later arrested me. I found the Bahraini people living under the same conditions.

I met scores of people who had been tortured and forced to sign confessions condemning themselves as members of Hizbollah. The other option was for them to stay in jail. I saw old men, young boys and women beaten-up just because they happen to be in the wrong place and at the wrong time. Two school girls explained how they were arrested following a demonstration in their school. They were taken to prison, beaten by hose pipes and stripped naked. I spoke to two members of the dissolved parliament, both of whom were Sunnis. They wondered, why on earth are both the US and UK not doing anything to assist democracy in Bahrain?

I saw young men rounded-up and beaten at the end of a football game. I saw the people of Bahrain with affections to the British and many of them were nostalgic about the time they spent in the UK. They admire the UK for such things as the Hyde Park Speakers' Corner and Spitting Image. I met with Businessmen who were wondering where is Bahrain heading at the turn of the 21st century. All those I met spoke of the

demand for democracy....."

Julian O'Halloran, the BBC journalist who produced a programme on Bahrain for Radio 4 said: "When I wanted to go to Bahrain last March, I phoned the minister of information. I was told it was not convenient to visit Bahrain now. I persisted and managed to get a permission to visit Bahrain. My approach was to tackle the government head-on. I agreed to follow the official agenda and informed the information ministry that I will be carrying out other work. I visited Sanabis and other villages.

I met first with a group of young people. They were skeptical of talking with me in public. Had they been found out, they would all end up in jail just for talking to a foreign correspondent. I asked them: will you continue going out on the streets?

They replied: Of course. We have rights and we deserve them. I went through the villages and saw nothing other than slogans calling for democracy and parliament. I met with the foreign minister who blamed Hizbollah and Iran. I found no compelling evidence to substantiate these claims. I met with the family of Saeed Al-Eskafi, the 16-years old boy, whom the security forces came to arrest last July accusing him of spraying graffiti. Saeed had not been at home, but his father trusted the police and handed him over. Eight days later, his father was called to collect the dead body from a military hospital. No one ever had any access to the boy other than the Bahrain authorities.

I spoke to Jasim Murad, a Sunni businessman, who said that Bahrain can't go on functioning without an elected parliament. I fear that the Bahrain government, by claiming that there was a coup attempt by a Hizbollah, would push the youth of Bahrain in the arms of radical groups rather than solve the problem...."

Sarah Shah, the Channel 4 TV journalist who visited Bahrain last February and produced a programme on Bahrain said: "The reaction you get when you are in Bahrain is that all are touched by the events. I visited Sanabis two days after a security operation. I saw how the houses were systematically raided one by one marking them with the sign X. In another area, I saw how five flats of middle-class standard were ransacked. I saw an old lady with a broken arm following her clubbing of her boy to prevent his arrest. The police let her boy go. Some 40-50 people aged 14-25 were arbitrarily snatched that night. I saw a person who had been arrested, blind-folded all the time, tortured and released without asking him any question. His body was full of burns a little bit bigger than the size of cigarette. I saw how a government can turn an entire community against it...."

George Galloway, an MP for a constituency in Scotland said: "I am sorry to say, as a Scott, that a Scottish person, Ian Henderson, is victimizing the people of Bahrain following what he did in Kenya many years ago. I pray for the day the people of Bahrain are relieved of this torture". The conference was attended by representatives from the media as well as representatives from diplomatic circles who raised several questions about the validity of the government's claims.



## Victimization of the Shia Community for political expediency Failure of theatrical show

The theatrical show organised by the Government of Bahrain on 5 June ended with no tangible results in favour of its cause. The world has been disgusted by the scene of people of dignity reading out incriminating "confessions". In the words of one western diplomat yesterday: "only dictators and rulers devoid of legitimacy resort to this old-fashioned practice". Many of those who saw the televised episode realised immediately that the whole episode was stage-mangled but with a bad taste. The times when the shepherd led his herd to houses of slaughter were thought to have gone, but that is not the case in Bahrain. The government had claimed to have foiled a coup attempt by a group of young some of whom had studied at the seminary in Qom. Some people were paraded unceremoniously in front of TV screens (on 5 June) to tell the Bahraini people about their plans to stage an armed rebellion. They were reading a text phrased in the most incriminating language apparently written by the foreign advisors to the Government of Bahrain.

This is the sixth alleged "coup attempt" since the suspension of the Constitution by the Amir in 1975. In that year, the first of the attempts allegedly took place. The government claimed to have discovered a cache of arms which came from Aden to assist a leftist group to stage the coup. In 1981, 84, 86 and 88 coup attempts were allegedly made by various groups and a campaign of terror was unleashed by Ian Henderson against the "conspirators" in each case. Many Bahraini young men were tortured to death and thousands more were either detained or expelled. When the present crisis started following the signing of the famous petition in 1994, the regime did not hesitate to use lethal methods to extract information. In the last eighteen months more than twenty citizens were either killed by police bullets or tortured to death by Henderson's men. When the Al Khalifa realised they had lost the political war against the people of Bahrain, they produced their traditional ploy to justify their repression and human rights violation of the people.

What made the latest episode more absurd is the attempt by the regime to show that almost all Shia religious and political figures were part of the plot to unseat the government. The alleged "confessions" went too far and was therefore discredited even by circles close to the Al Khalifa.

The ruling family has been cornered in the past 18 months and could not explain to the whole world the rationale behind its repressive measures. The Al-Khalifas failed even to obtain the support of their reactionary forces in the country. Hence the idea of a coup attempt by the Shia Community linked with names (Iran, Hizbullah, etc.) that frighten the West and provide an opportunity for those whose interests are linked to the continuation of oppression to come out in the open.

However, the fictions of the government polarized the situation into two camps, a tiny minority which is linked to dictatorship and a vast majority of the population seeking a better life with dignity as specified in the constitution of the country. The information minister, Mo-

ammed Al-Motawwa, telephoned leading personalities and families of Bahrain and offered to advertise on their behalf in local papers free of charge to declare their denunciation of the opposition. He failed miserably and those businessmen who were scared into doing so are now facing an angry population that decided to boycott their goods and products, such as soft drinks, tissues, dairy products and other consumer goods.

Before 1923, the ruling family used to depend on death squads called "Fedaweya" which used to attack innocent people refusing to succumb to the arbitrary wishes of the local Al-Khalifa sheikhs. The modern "Fedaweya" have now been mobilized against the people of Bahrain in the media, in state security courts, in government, on the streets as riot police and in jail as torturers. These modern groups of "Fedaweya" are becoming the joke of the day as they attempt to turn the clock backward and as they go on thinking that the fictions about coup attempts will enable them to enslave the people of Bahrain.

The Economist of London (15 June) published a sarcastic report on the claim of the ruling family that it discovered a coup attempt saying: "On June 3rd they openly accused Iran of financing a plot by an armed group - Hizbullah Bahrain, they called it - and they later produced confessions from six of the (officially) 50-plus detainees to prove it. On June 12th they announced the arrest of the alleged mastermind, a Sanabis shopkeeper. And the eight guns he is said to have smuggled in? These, said local media, came from - well, in fact, Saudi Arabia. Which does not prove they were not bought with Iranian gold. Whatever the truth - guns and gold alike rest on the confessions of people held in the caring hands of Bahrain's police - Sanabis is paying for it. It was the scene of demonstrations earlier this year. The mosque later had its windows smashed, and was daubed with slogan - 'Centre of Pimps' runs one - by the police, most of who, say villagers, are recruits from Pakistan and India. The damage goes beyond glass and insults.....".

Meanwhile, the vice-president of the commission of the European Communities, has called for dialogue between the government and the people. In a letter dated 6 June 1996, to one of the Members of the European Parliament, Mr. Manuel Marin Gonzalez, said: "The European Commission is closely following the developments in Bahrain and I share your concern over reported human rights violations. I would like to emphasize that a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms is at the heart of EU policy world-wide. I believe that the espousal of international standards of human rights and their respect are essential for long-term social and political stability. In this context, Bahrain should be encouraged to promote democracy and to become a signatory party and fully apply international instrument in relation to human rights". He further added: "I would like to stress the importance that the Commission attaches to the promotion of human rights in the framework of the Co-operation Agreement concluded between the Euro-

pean Community and the Gulf Co-operation Council in 1989. The reinforced political dialogue between the EU and the GCC decided last year during the Troika Ministerial meeting in Granada, should further contribute to discussions with the GCC authorities on questions of human rights, democracy and prevention of terrorism.

Referring to the case of Bahrain Mr. Gonzalez said: "The situation in the country has been aggravated by a number of serious terrorist attacks in which several people have already lost their lives. The Commission, while recalling its commitment to the full respect of human rights, condemns all forms of violence which hinder the finding of a peaceful solution to the conflict opposing the Government and opposition groups. I am sure you will agree that the problems Bahrain is facing should be solved by opening channels of dialogue between Government and opposition in a spirit of tolerance and without foreign interference".

It is in these circumstances in which the world calls for a dialogue between the Government and the people, that the Bahraini Embassy in London was organising a public relation exercise at the House of commons to introduce the new Ambassador to London. He is Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, the foreign minister's brother. The meeting has been called for by Dr. Omar Al Hassan, the chairman of the Gulf Centre of Strategic Studies. Dr. Al Hassan was dismissed from his post as the representative of the Arab league in London in 1982 for misappropriation of the league's funds.

### Intimidation policy

The intelligence department summoned Sheikh Mohammed Jaffer Al-Jufairi, a judge in the Religious Court and detained him. Sheikh Al-Jufairi was shown on TV on Tuesday 4 June visiting the Amir following the decision of the interior ministry to author the uncovering of a "coup attempt".

The media claimed that some seven Shia religious men, including Sheikh Al-Jufairi, had visited the Amir to declare loyalty and condemn their own people. This claim was revoked by Sheikh Al-Jufairi on 6 June. In his sermon (available on tapes inside Bahrain) he said: "We were urgently called to attend for an audience with the Amir in Rifaa palace.

I can not accept lies. What has happened is a kind of a play. I support the civilized demand of the people, namely the restoration of parliament".

These statements were received warmly by the oppressed people of Bahrain and the sermon-tapes were distributed in mass numbers. The security forces lost their nerves again and decided to punish the judge.

Moreover, the prime minister started phoning leading Shia personalities in an attempt to drag them to his office for a TV show. Many people risked their lives and refused to attend.

Having failed to convince the world of the "foreign conspiracies" against the Al Khalifa regime, it has now resorted to tactics of threats and intimidation.