

This week in history: September 28-October 4

This column profiles important historical events which took place during this week, 25 years ago, 50 years ago, 75 years ago and 100 years ago

27 September 2026

25 years ago: Bomb attack in Indian Kashmir kills dozens

On October 1, 2001, a devastating terrorist attack struck the state legislative building located in the Indian-controlled territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiri militants, members of the Islamic extremist Jaish-e-Mohammad, hijacked a government communications vehicle, filled it with explosives, and drove it through the security cordon. After the driver detonated the bombs, more militants dressed in police uniforms rushed inside firing weapons and pulling the pins off grenades. They barricaded themselves inside and were killed after an intense seven-hour battle with Indian soldiers and police.

The death toll reached 38—plus the 3 attackers—and included Indian security forces, legislature employees and other civilians, with at least 75 more injured, 10 critically. Most legislators were not in the area, having just left a nearby temporary building. Some 150 buildings and stalls were damaged in the crossfire.

The fighting between India and Kashmiri separatists—dating back to the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent—had intensified the week before the attack, with 70 people dying, and was inflamed by the fallout of the September 11 terrorist attacks. With US preparations for an imminent military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the region's geopolitical situation sharpened and reshaped itself.

Several Kashmiri separatist groups had links to the Taliban and Islamic fundamentalist organizations in Pakistan and were stridently opposed to Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's support for the US military. Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and others organised a September 21 strike in support of protests inside Pakistan against Musharraf; protesters in Srinagar burned US flags and chanted slogans backing the Taliban.

New Delhi was desperately seeking to regain favor in Washington after the Bush administration abruptly shifted its stance toward Pakistan's military junta following September 11. Over the previous three years, the US had been shifting support away from its Cold War ally Pakistan toward a closer strategic and economic relationship with India. The Vajpayee government had welcomed this realignment, seeking foreign capital and military support. But within weeks, Washington dropped its criticisms of the Pakistani military junta and provided desperately needed economic aid in exchange for Musharraf's support for the war against Afghanistan, effectively passing over India's offer of partnership.

The conflict in Kashmir, which was the trigger for two India-

Pakistan wars over the preceding half century, could never be solved under any capitalist regime or political party vying for the support of imperialism. It demonstrated yet again the failure of "independence" under the various ethno-nationalist groupings that had separated India and Pakistan, as well as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, after World War II and the end of direct British control.

50 years ago: British Labour government applies for record-setting IMF bailout

On September 29, 1976, the British Labour government under Prime Minister James Callaghan formally applied to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$3.9 billion credit facility, the largest emergency bailout in the institution's history. The application followed months of speculative runs on the pound sterling that brought Britain's foreign exchange reserves near total exhaustion. In return for the credit, Wall Street and European central bankers demanded unprecedented, savage cuts to public spending, social services and wages for workers.

The decision to seek out the loan represented a major ideological shift within the Labour Party to the right. Just one day earlier, on September 28, Callaghan had delivered a landmark address to the party annual conference in Blackpool, explicitly repudiating what had become the dominant postwar economic policy. "We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending," he told delegates. "I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists."

Commenting on the report of IMF Managing Director Johannes Witteveen to the Fund's annual meeting in Manila, the *Bulletin*, (US predecessor of the WSWS), summarized the policy of the global capitalist class. It warned: "Witteveen's statements make it clear that the price the international bankers are demanding for their loans is the destruction of the British welfare state and millions more unemployed."

Callaghan's class-war policy marked the end of the Keynesian reformist program that had been the backbone of the post-World War II welfare state. With the collapse of the postwar boom, government deficit spending was proving incapable of serving both the social

needs of the working class and continued profits for the private corporations. The Labour leadership chose the latter unconditionally.

Unlike in 1931, when Ramsay MacDonald split the party to form a National Government with the Tories to slash unemployment benefits, Callaghan did not need to break with Labour. Instead, the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour “left,” fronted by Employment Secretary Michael Foot, lined up behind the government to enforce the IMF’s dictates on the working class. Union leaders like Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers Union suppressed strike struggles and policed real-wage cuts under the so-called “Social Contract” policy.

The brutal offensive against living standards would spark a mass strike movement in 1978–79 known as the “Winter of Discontent,” which ultimately brought Callaghan’s government down. The monetarist policies set in motion by Callaghan and the Labour Party set the stage for Margaret Thatcher to come to power in 1979 to enforce even greater attacks on the working class.

75 years ago: Britain evacuates Abadan as Iran oil crisis deepens

On October 3, 1951, the last British personnel of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) were evacuated from Abadan, Iran, under the protection of the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Mauritius. Some 280 remaining employees were taken aboard the warship and transported to Basra for the flight home. The evacuation marked the culmination of a crisis that had been building since April, when Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh took office and the Iranian parliament nationalized the AIOC—the principal source of overseas profit for British imperialism.

The skeleton staff at Abadan were all that remained of a much larger British workforce. Iran had ordered the expulsion of most of the company’s employees in late August, leaving fewer than 300 essential administration staff. This was a direct response to the punitive sanctions Britain had imposed on August 22: a naval blockade, a ban on exports of sugar and steel, and the freezing of Iranian accounts in British banks.

The sanctions were only one front in Britain’s campaign to reverse nationalization. On May 26, the UK lodged a case with the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The ICJ issued its interim ruling on July 5, ordering Iran to permit the company to continue operating “free from interference,” essentially asserting that a sovereign nation had no right to take control of resources on its own territory.

Now, on September 28, Britain went to the UN Security Council and argued that Iran’s expulsion of the last 300 employees violated that provisional ruling. The Council voted to postpone debate for several weeks to give time for Mossadegh to travel to New York and address the Council, which he did on October 15. As that was past the deadline Iran had set for the removal of the AIOC employees, the evacuation proceeded on October 3.

The evacuation was a political humiliation for Britain during a general election campaign. Winston Churchill accused Attlee’s Labour government of “inadvertence, incompetence, indecision and final collapse,” branding the withdrawal an “economic Dunkirk.” Labour had blockaded, sanctioned and pursued Iran at the UN—but for Churchill and the Conservative opposition, this was not enough. The logic driving British imperialism was already pointing beyond economic coercion toward the removal of

Mossadegh himself. Churchill won the 1951 election and was prime minister when MI6 collaborated with the CIA to overthrow Mossadegh in August 1953.

100 years: Armed uprisings in Mexico against government’s secularization policies

On September 29, 1926, the Cristero rebellion against the secularization policies of Mexico’s government entered a new and more violent phase when a Catholic Church attendant, Trinidad Mora, led an armed rebellion in the north-central state of Durango. Mora and his forces were primarily villagers and peasants loyal to the church, who used guerilla tactics against the Mexican army in the rugged mountains of Durango.

In 1926, Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles had enacted the “Calles Law” to enforce anticlerical articles of the 1917 Constitution. These sought to diminish church power by expelling foreign priests, shutting religious schools and seizing church property.

This sparked mass protests and a consumer boycott as well as government violence throughout the country after the law was implemented in August 1926. But it was only after the Mexican parliament overwhelmingly rejected, on September 22, a petition written by Catholic bishops and signed by over 2 million Mexicans to amend the Constitution that the military phase of the rebellion began.

In addition to Mora’s detachments in Durango, at about the same time Navarro Origel, the mayor of Pénjamo in the state of Guanajuato, also in north-central Mexico, gathered around 80 Catholic youth and local ranch hands who assaulted the municipal police detachment, seized government firearms, cut the telegraph wires and issued a proclamation that they would no longer recognize federal authority.

On October 4, former General Rodolfo Gallegos led a rebellion in southern Guanajuato. Gallegos mobilized a force of roughly 200 ranch hands who rode into small rural administrative centers, publicly burned tax and land-titling records, disarmed the local civil defense, and seized money from federal post offices to fund the purchase of weapons and ammunition.

Other actions by church supporters took place especially throughout north-central Mexico including the secret storing of munitions and establishment of safe houses. The organizers of the mass protests and the petition to parliament, the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty, however, did not officially call for armed insurrection against the government until January 1, 1927.



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