

The Omani Revolt Between Deviation.

Betrayal of Trust and Treachery

What is the Function of the Omani Imamate Office
Which Will be Opened in Kuwait?

(A frank word on the occasion of the Seventh Anniversary of the Omani revolt)

Seven years had elapsed, on the 18th of July, since the declaration of the revolt in Oman, and we feel it our duty to say a frank, cursory, word on the occasion of this anniversary, so to throw light on this revolt on which we Arabs had at one time pinned great hopes and which we had considered a starting point and spark for the liberation of our Arabian Peninsula.

But the leaders of the revolt in Oman proceeded, since early 1959, to betray the trust, and with this the Omani revolt deviated towards a direction other than that for which the free man of Oman had carried arms and entrenched themselves in Jebel Al-Akhdar.

And so the Omani revolt started to oscillate between deviation, exploitation and personal gain, then fraud, deceit, distortion, and finally treason.

We have ample confirmation that the basic function of the Imamate of the State of Oman office, which is to open in Kuwait, and permission for which had been sought by Imam Chaleb and the delegation which had accompanied him on his visit to Kuwait last month, will be to establish contact with the British for the purpose of facilitating the return of the leaders of the Omani revolt to Oman and their assumption of the governorship of specific areas there, and the discarding through this of the whole idea of the revolt.

We have also learnt that Abdullah Al-Chezaly, who needs no introduction, has been appointed head of this bureau.

This may appear strange to some of our Omani brethren, but would appear ordinary if we hold in review the history of the Omani revolt and its leaders.

The Story of the Revolt in Brief

Towards the end of 1952, the British occupied Ibbi, one of the largest Omani towns in the Al-Zahira region. On 15th December 1955, the British occupied the capital, Mazwa, without resistance, and Imam Chaleb fled with his brother to Saudi Arabia, thus leaving the door open to the British to occupy the whole of Oman.

Al-Harithy

The story of the flight of Saleh ben Issa Al-Harithy is told in a booklet, published by the Imamate of Oman office in Baghdad in August last, under the title "How Saleh ben Issa Al-Harithy betrayed the people of Oman and stabbed the revolt in the back". The event is described in these very words: "When the situation developed in favour of the imperialists, and their forces encircled the capital (Nazwa), Imam Chaleb ben Ali despatched a messenger to Saleh ben Issa Al-Harithy, in his capacity as one of the tribal heads in the eastern region, which is some 100 kilometres from the capital, Mazwa. The messenger carried a written message advising Saleh ben Issa Al-Harithy of the

aggression of the imperialists and calling him to Nazwa to discuss the general mobilisation of the population. Saleh Al-Harithy received the Imam's message. In his reply, he disclaimed any responsibility for the struggle and said, word for word: "We have advised Iman Ghaleb not to oppose the Sultan and told him that Britain protects and supports the Sultan with force, and opened that the country should be surrendered, as this was preferable to resistance without avail". Saleh Al-Harithy then hastened to Dhofar to meet the mercenary Sultan and to congratulate him on his victory over the Omani people. As God, blessed and magnified be His name, willed, the true facts of the situation and its causes became apparent through the mouth of Saleh Al-Harithy. The treacherous Sultan betrayed the covenant which he had made to his companion in treachery, when he appointed him head of the Al-Harith tribe, for he replaced him by his nephew, Ahmad ben Mohammed Al-Harithy.

Return to Oman

Let us leave this booklet for a moment and see how events developed.

According to our own information, when Al-Harithy went to Dhofar, the Sultan refused to receive him and ordered his expulsion by military force. And so Al-Harithy travelled, by sea, to Saudi Arabia, where he agreed with the Iman and his group to train an army of Omani commandos who had the firm desire of liberating their country from the imperialists. A large number of Omanis joined this army.

In 1957, Taleb returned to Oman at the head of a force of Omanis, who had received elementary training in Saudi Arabia. Taleb and his men established themselves in the region of Sait - his birthplace - where his brother had resided after fleeing Nazwa. Taleb did not deploy his men in more than one strategic point, in the interior of Oman at least, but all remained in the town of Sait. The news became known to the imperialist authorities, who sent a large force, led by Tarek ben Taimour, (the Sultan's brother), to attack the Sait region. The Omanis attacked this force and compelled it to retreat after bloody battles which lasted for several days. They then pursued the vanquished force as far as Nazwa, and were able to recover this town and the region surrounding it, capturing in the process large quantities of munition and equipment. These battles lasted for about a whole month, when the Omanis fought with great courage, despite the fact that the two sides were not evenly matched, as the Omanis fought with light armament - for which ammunition was not amply available - while the enemy used aircraft, tanks and heavy armament.

After about one month, the Omanis withdrew to Jebel Al-Akhdar and entrenched themselves there. British aircraft carried out continuous raids, daily, on them. The British burnt the farms on the slopes of Jebel Al-Akhdar killed innocent women and children, and destroyed most of the villages on the mountain slopes.

In 1959, the Iman, his brother, and Suleiman ben Hinyar, and some of their followers fled to Saudi Arabia. It is said that the British facilitated their flight.

This is the story of the Omani revolt. All that we heard during the months following was no more than individual attempts made by the heroes of Oman, who persisted in the revolt in their land, before they were recalled by the "heroic leaders of the revolt" to Saudi Arabia, to be immobilised there.

The reader's patience is solicited to record one small point in the context of the revolt, in relation to Sheik Suleiman ben Himyar Al-Nabhani (Emir of Jebel Al-Akhdar). Before the British proceeded to occupy the Nazwa (the capital) Sheik Suleiman travelled to Dhofar for an interview with the Sultan, when they agreed on the operation of the raid of Nazwa, on condition that the Sultan leave Sheik Suleiman in possession of all his property and endowed with complete authority over Jebel Al-Akhdar. No sooner had the Sultan promised this, than he broke his promise, so adding another leader to the Omani revolt.

What Happened After This?

The leadership of the revolt - if it may be called as such - has followed another direction, an easier one; and so instead of studying its experiment and reverting to the true course of revolt along sound and firm minds this leadership has been endeavouring ever since it quit Oman, to open negotiations with the British. The reason for the formation of the negotiating delegation in 1959 was given as: "The uneagerness of the assistance extended to the rebels, especially after agreement between the American and British oil companies row, the Buraimi Oasis appeared possible. This agreement led to a clear and defined effect on the Saudi Government's stand, which found expression in a tipping of the balance in favour of negotiation".

Several meetings were held early in 1959 between the British and the leaders of the Omani revolt, in Bahrain first, and later in Beirut and Geneva, but no results were achieved by these meetings owing to the harshness of the British conditions and the pressure applied by certain liberated Arab quarters.

Saudi Arabia's Role

Saudi Arabia played a clearly negative role in aborting the Omani revolt after the patching up of the Buraimi problem. The following are examples of this role:

1. Shipments of arms collected for the revolt from Arab countries and gathered in Dammam were immobilised. The activity of those desirous of pursuing the revolt was hampered and they were prevented from smuggling hundreds of young men who had arrived in Dammam on their way to Oman.
2. Control of land and sea routes, which were used for the passage of arms to Oman, was tightened.
3. According to information received the majority of those who were trained in Saudi Arabia, and who went to Oman, were surprised to find their names and photographs in possession of the British authorities in Muscat (the same photographs as were posted on the rebel's bedsteads in their camp in Saudi Arabia).
4. Saudi Arabia, in co-operation with the Imam and his following,

worked towards diluting the revolt in a decided manner. There are now in Saudi Arabia more than 700 trained soldiers, some of whom have fought in Oman and others who are waiting to enter Oman. All these are neglected, and suffering privation. Some work as labourers, others as speakers, and the fortunate amongst them receive SR.3 from the Saudi Government.

5. The tribal heads and leaders, however, lead a comfortable life in Damman. It is said that the Imam and Al-Harithy receive from the Saudi Government monthly salaries estimated at thousands of riyals.

And Now, What is the Situation of the Rebels and the Revolt?

And now, where does the revolt stand? Where are its leaders? These are two questions which must be answered before closing this hurried note.

The Fact of the Revolt

Regrettably the revolt no longer exists. Oman is completely calm, but it is the calm of a volcano before the hour of eruption. What we hear every now and then from broadcasts on battles between the rebels and the British, and on burning and explosions, is in actual fact the result of mere forgery of faked telegrams, undertaken by the Oman Imamate office describing fictitious events. The employ of fraud by these "leaders" has reached an extent which has caused them to fall into serious predicament; when they attributed to their activities fires in Muscat and its suburbs (these fires occurred recently and caused destitution to thousands of inhabitants), without realising that the British and Iranian infiltrators had carried out these acts in application of an imperialist plan, about which "Al-Tali'ah" had written earlier.

State of the Leadership

In stressing repeatedly the leadership of the Omani revolt, we aim at proving that this leadership is responsible, primarily and ultimately, for the situation into which the revolt has developed today. The leaderships class structure, and its ideological and national status induce us to pass judgement that it is not fit to be the base for a popular revolt, for a popular revolt cannot be undertaken except by rebels, with all the meaning that this word implies. The present state of the leadership of the Omani revolt and its conduct divests this leadership of its function. The following are examples proving this:

1. Certain of the leaders today, and at their head Suleiman ben Himyar and his son, Himyar ben Suleiman - director the Oman Imamate office in Cairo - live in more than one flat the cost of furnishing which runs into thousands of dinars.

2. It has transpired that the reason behind the dispute which occurred between the Imam and Al-Harithy, sometime ago, and which led to the publication of the scandals by Al-Harithy in the booklet referred to earlier

on, lay in the mere fact that Al-Harithy refused to relinquish the vast sums which he had collected on the visits he had made to socialist, European, and Arab countries. The money had been spent by Al-Harithy on his private interests and enterprizes, which include large farms in Zanzibar. The booklet makes mention of this on page 20.

We have not unearthed secrets. All these facts, and more bitter ones too, are known to the British themselves. We do not mean to do injustice to personalities, for these do not mean anything to us if they represent only themselves. But those of whom we are speaking have been imposed on the Omani revolt and are engaged in exploiting it. The Arab struggle today cannot countenance or hold its peace over deviation such as that practiced by the leaders of the Omani revolt. It is for this reason that we have written this word in all sincerity.

We hold the firm belief that Arab youth in Oman is able to impose its will not only in the interior of Oman - where the revolt started - but in all parts of Oman too, on the coast of Oman, and in Dhofar.

We should pose longer to consider the experience of the Omani revolt, for this revolt is one of the tests of our struggle in this region of the Arab homeland.