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# OMANI NEWS

April-May 1966

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## POLICE IN ADEN SUPPRESSED EVIDENCE ON MURDER OF TRADE UNION LEADER

The inquest on Mr. Ali Husain Al Qadi, the President of the Aden Trades Union Congress who was assassinated by shooting in Aden, was adjourned indefinitely on 29 March to allow an important witness to come and give evidence. The Coroner, Mr. Ashraf Khan, strongly criticised the British occupation police in Aden for their handling of investigations. "Progress of my inquiry has been hampered and obstructed by incomplete investigations in this case by police, who might have probably had good reason for this," he declared.

The Coroner stated that there was no doubt that Al Qadi died as a result of being shot with a pistol which belonged to Shaikh Qasim Abdul Rahman Al Muflahi, ruler of the Muflahi State of the South Arabian Federation. In this connection, he said, "I regret to say that it has been abundantly clear throughout the proceedings that, in respect of ownership and possession of the weapon and also in respect of its ultimate use in killing of the deceased, police investigations leave much to be desired". The Coroner's statements were reported in the Times of 30 March.

### WORKERS ASK FOR SOLIDARITY

In connection with this assassination, the International Committee for Solidarity with the Workers of Aden and the South issued this declaration:

"The Aden T.U.C. Executive Committee appeals to the Arab Workers' Federation and all Workers' Federations in the world to take all possible measures to save the national and trade union movement from criminal terrorism, and to help enable our people to pass through this grave stage in their history and in their struggle against imperialism. All honest progressive forces in the world are bound to oppose with all their strength the possibility of an outbreak of persecution."

### OMANI SUPPORT

On the same occasion, the Omani representative Himyar Sulaiman pledged full solidarity for the people of Aden, declaring that "the Omani people are watching the battle of Aden and the South with admiration and pride and wish it a crushing victory over imperialism and its collaborators and puppets."

The assassination of Al Qadi was a retaliation by imperialism and its agents for the progressive step of the workers, peasants and tribesmen of Aden in unifying the Organisation for Liberation of the Occupied South and the National Liberation Front in a single Liberation Front for Occupied South Yemen. This strengthened the revolutionary cause and was a severe blow not only to imperialism but also to those who sought to

### CLASS STRUGGLE

serve imperialism by trying to split the workers from the tribesmen and peasants. The imperialists and their collaborators are particularly afraid of the strongly working class motivation of the struggle in Aden.

This is a threat not only to the British occupation but also to fifth column elements in the Arab World, who on a pretext of "class reconciliation" seek to preserve domination over the workers. These elements play a role in the Adeni and Omani struggles on radio stations, but try to sabotage them. They have, for instance, facilitated the transport of British troops to Aden through the territorial waters of an Arab State. All progressive forces must be on their guard against trusting such false friends.

### Mercenaries Revolt in Occupation Army

A mutiny broke out among the mercenary troops of the British Army of occupation in Oman, according to a report contained in the Daily Telegraph, with a dateline of Kuwait. The mutiny appears to have been a serious one, since the mercenaries imprisoned their officers, and British regular forces had to be called in to suppress them.

The mutineers seized control of the British camp at Beit Al Falaj, where they held out for two hours against attacks by British regular forces. They were overpowered when reinforcements were called in from a nearby camp. As the Daily Telegraph news item ended on a sinister note, "their fate was not stated".

The troops involved were members of the Sultan's Armed Forces, mainly composed of Indians. These forces are organised on a Foreign Legion basis, with mainly British officers, and many of the men are criminals who fled from justice. As in the French Foreign Legion, they turn

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 COLUMN 1)

## editorial

### RESPECTABLE MURDERERS

Political assassination is nothing new, and it should cause no surprise that it is often used by imperialism against freedom fighters. Yet there are two recent assassinations that are surprisingly sinister in that they were carried out by governmental agencies of imperialist powers, which have been far too successful in suppressing the full facts from public knowledge. These two cases concern Ali Husain Al Qadi, the Adeni Trade Unionist, and Mehdi Ben Barka, the Moroccan Opposition leader. Although death has not been completely established in the latter's case, it now seems virtually certain that the kidnapping can have been for only one purpose.



The rather cautious criticisms by Al Qadi's coroner imply a much deeper guilt of the British-run Aden police in the assassination than has hitherto been revealed. This would not be the first time. In 1963 Ahmad Maflul, a South Arabian Socialist, was murdered and the official story was that he committed suicide. The British authorities, however, showed the purity of their consciences by refusing an inquiry. Al Qadi was more blatantly killed, with a pistol, but the police made up for this by attempting to conceal evidence. In future the British Government may learn that, when its agents carry out such an operation, it is a grave mistake to appoint an honest coroner to investigate.

The kidnapping and probable murder of Ben Barka bears all the marks of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, whose genius in this type of operation is unrivalled. The finesse and organisation involved were far beyond the scope of General Oufkir. He was undoubtedly used by the C.I.A., but he was not great enough to exercise command over large sections of the French police forces. This, however, was simple for the C.I.A., with their large network recruited mainly from ex-Vichy people, as has been revealed in Cook's authoritative work on the subject. But evidence which really incriminates the C.I.A. has been carefully suppressed. How many people are aware, for instance, of the three previous attempts on Ben Barka's life carried out with the complicity of a C.I.A. agent who has infiltrated the Afro-Asian Solidarity Secretariat? It is the suppression of such facts that is really ominous, for it shows us that there are agencies operating with the resources of a very large power behind them, which can remove anybody without any difficulty or any awkward questions.

### HOPE FOR SYRIA

Everyone devoted to freedom and democracy undoubtedly welcomes the liberation of Syria from the two reactionaries Amin Al Hafiz and Salah Al Bitar. These two men more than any others were responsible for the right-wing trends and repression which until recently characterised the Government in Syria. Using the popular slogans of "Freedom, Unity and Socialism" they rode to power on the shoulders of the working class and then used that power to serve their own class interests to the detriment of the principles they preached. Syria is well rid of them, and the removal of such opportunists is in itself a step in the correct direction.

The question now to be solved is whether stability can be established. Syria has for long been the most unstable Arab country, with a truly staggering succession of coups d'etat. As in this coup, the army has traditionally been the maker of governments, and the past regimes have tended to be right-wing. But this coup is rather different from the others in that the officers who took the initiative in it appear to be convinced Socialists fighting for an ideal rather than for the job of President. And they have not shown the inclination to grab power for themselves, but have handed the two most important positions of Head of State and Prime Minister to civilians.

But liberation will not be easy to build; it will require enormous work in the education of a mass base and transferring power from the leadership to the masses, on whose determination the revolution depends for survival. The vicious attacks on the new Government by the Western imperialist press show how many difficulties it may have to face.

### Day of Solidarity with People of South Yemen

The Arab Students Union in Great Britain and Ireland is holding a Day of Solidarity with the people of occupied South Yemen (Aden and the Protectorates). On Saturday 30 April a public meeting is to be held at 6.30 pm in the Arab Students Union headquarters at 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London W.1.

The meeting will be addressed by speakers from the Arab World and Britain who have a wide knowledge of South Arabian problems.

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### PALESTINE DAY

Public meeting, Sunday 15 May, 10 am to 1 pm, 2 pm to 5 pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, W.C.1. Speakers: Tom Little, Erskine Childers, T. Basheer F. Sayegh, H. Mushtaq, F. Glubb.

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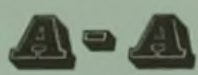
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## Unrest in Occupation Army

to mercenary soldiering as a way to start a new life. The Sultan's Armed Forces also contain some former men of the Foreign Legion, the Katanga army, and other dubious characters.

### Racialist Officers

This is not the first time the British occupation has had a mutiny on its hands in Oman. Some ten years ago, there was a similar mutiny which, on the orders of Colonel Chauncey (now the Sultan's Adviser) was suppressed with British troops brought in from Bahrain. The cause of that mutiny was the racialist attitude of British officers to the Indian mercenaries. The cause of the recent mutiny is not yet established but may well have been the same, as the two uprisings seem to have been similar in character.

The occupation authorities have also had trouble with desertions from the Sultan's Armed Forces and also from the Trucial Oman Scouts, a mercenary force based on the North Oman Coast. The Oman Liberation Army as a revolutionary army, seeks to win over these troops and correct their wrong attitudes which result from imperialist indoctrination. This has often been successful in showing these troops that they are fighting for an unjust cause, and in persuading them to come over to the Liberation Army.

### Deserters Shot in the Neck

The best evidence of this lies in the British authorities' attitude. Deserters from the Trucial Oman Scouts, when recaptured, have been executed on the orders of their officers, by being shot in the back of the neck. The Committee for the Rights of Oman has been given the name of one British Army Major who liked to carry out these executions personally. There was one occasion early in the armed struggle when an entire company of the Trucial Oman Scouts came over to the Liberation Army after shooting their C.O.

Desertions from the Sultan's Armed Forces have also occurred, but less often than from the Trucial Oman Scouts. Since most of them do not have Arabic as their mother tongue, the Liberation Movement can not communicate with them so easily. In addition, the authorities keep a tighter control on them. In many parts of Oman, particularly in the South, there are heavy restrictions on the import of radios, for fear that people might hear broadcasts by Liberation Movement spokesmen.

The occupation authorities have always tried to hold down Oman with the minimum of cost to the British Regular Army. In engagements with the Liberation Army, the mercenaries are sent in first as cannon fodder, and British soldiers are only used when it is inevitable. This not only saves the lives of valuable British soldiers, but also results in the minimum publicity in this country for the Government's militarism in Oman, thus reducing the chance of a protest movement here.

### Troops to be Increased

However, the days of this policy may be numbered. Already the Trucial Oman Scouts are considered "unreliable" for military action in the interior and are being increasingly used for purely police duties on the coast. Now the occupation authorities cannot even count on the Indian mercenaries; only the European elements in the Sultan's Armed Forces are 100 percent certain to follow imperialist orders, and they are mainly officers. If their men mutiny, they are helpless. Also, the Liberation Army concentrates all possible effort against the occupation army itself, rather than its mercenary appendages.

At the U.N. debate on Oman in December 1965 it was revealed that the British Government was stockpiling very large quantities of weapons in the base on Masira Island off the south coast of Oman. This indicates that the occupation authorities are planning for the possibility that large numbers of British troops may have to be committed for operations against the Omanis. At present there are only about 8,000 there at any given time, although there are plans to double the 1,000-strong garrison at Sharjah on the North Coast in the immediate future.

## Armed Resistance Launched in Bahrain

The people of Bahrain have taken their resistance to British imperialism a step forward. It was stated last month that military action had begun with bomb explosions injuring two superintendents of the Bahrain police force.

This comes as a logical result of events over the past year, beginning with the Trade Union uprising last March and culminating in the British Government's decision in the defence review to use Bahrain as one of the bases to replace Aden.

### Police Cruelty

The police have understandably been the first targets of popular vengeance, due to the brutality with which the Trade Unionists were suppressed last year. Strikers were shot down with numerous casualties, and arrested strike leaders were often badly tortured. One man, Abdullah Al Muawada, was tortured with electric shocks, such as were used by the French police in Algeria. Anyone who does not realise the true nature of British imperialism can reflect that Bahrain is a British possession, and its police force is commanded by British officers.

### Workers Fight Oppression

The Trade Union action a year ago had its immediate cause in the bad treatment and exploitation of the workers by the American oil company. But it developed into a struggle against the whole system of oil monopolies and aristocratic privilege maintained by imperialism, which is the prime cause of all oppression of the working class in the area. This is a familiar pattern throughout the occupied territories of South and East Arabia.

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## BRITISH PRESS ADMITS INTENSIFICATION OF OMANI LIBERATION STRUGGLE

After repeated attempts by the British Government to deny that an armed conflict exists in Oman, the Press in this country has now begun to admit the facts. Reports of the fighting in Dhufar, the southern province of Oman, are now beginning to leak out. British Army units are admitted to be under attack by Liberation Army commandos, and one newspaper has even gone so far as to hint that South-Eastern Arabia may prove to be Britain's Vietnam.

The Observer, in its issue of 27 March, noted the existence of the Dhufar Liberation Front (to which Omani News drew attention in September last year), and said "it has been laying mines and sniping at the handful of British officers who stiffen the Sultan's tribal army". The Observer describes the puppet Sultan of Muscat as "a cautious autocrat moulded by schooldays in India under the British Raj", who "lives in conditions not very different from those which the British found when they first made contact with the area in the eighteenth century".

Continuing its analysis, the Observer stated, "the map of these British-protected Statelets could become as sadly familiar to British readers in the next year or two as the Mekong Valley is to the Americans."

### R.A.F. Base Under Fire

On 3 April the Sunday Telegraph reported that the Dhufar Liberation Front "have begun ambushes and shootings and the R.A.F. camp near the coast at Sallala has come under sniper fire". The Telegraph attempts to dismiss this as merely a "wave of pro-Egyptian terrorist attacks". It states that "large quantities of Egyptian arms have been smuggled into the country in the past few weeks on camel trains through Saudi Arabia. The fact that Saudi authorities are allowing arms to cross their territory for guerrillas operating in Muscat and Oman is causing surprise and concern" to the British authorities.

It is a common technique of imperialist propaganda to try to dismiss liberation movements as being merely agitators inspired from outside. This type of propaganda was used in attempts to discredit the liberation movements of Algeria, Aden, Cyprus and many other nations. Yet it is an established fact that no guerrilla organisation can operate or survive without solid support from the population. That some Arab countries help the Omani Liberation Movement to bring in the weapons it needs to carry on the

### Sabotage Increases

struggle is not discreditable. This is, after all, only a minimum duty, and any Arab Governments that fulfil this duty deserve praise. But no amount of arms can bring about a liberation struggle without the men to fire them, or the popular support to sustain the struggle.

For about seven years, the Omani liberation effort has not gone beyond the level of small scale guerrilla engagements, acts of sabotage and light casualties. This represents only a first phase of revolutionary struggle. The second phase comes when there are heavier engagements of up to battalion strength. There are indications that events are now leading up to this second phase. In the middle of last year 2,000 specially trained commandos of the Liberation Army had gone into action against installations of the British and American oil firms exploiting Oman's oil. Considerable success has been achieved by these commandos in sabotaging the oil companies' operations.

The fact that such reports as the above are now being published in the British Press is also an indication that the Government is beginning to prepare public opinion to accept the commitment of heavier British forces in Oman, with heavier casualties. Hitherto the authorities have made every effort to hide the existence of any conflict in Oman.

### Soldiers Killed in Fighting

A unit of the Omani Liberation Army launched an attack on the British garrison in the coastal town of Suhar, Baghdad Radio announced last month. Two British soldiers were killed and three wounded. One Omani freedom fighter was killed in the attack. The Liberation Army unit returned to base after capturing a quantity of arms and ammunition.

Clashes were also reported on 7 April in the town of Izki, where the Liberation Army succeeded in blowing up a British military vehicle with a mine, killing two. The authorities retaliated by arresting civilians.

## OMANI REVOLUTIONARIES HOLD CONFERENCE ON THE BORDER

The following communique has been issued on behalf of the Revolution of the Omani people:

"Between 21 and 27 February 1966, at a place nearest to the Omani border, a number of Omani leaders and leaders of the movement, under the chairmanship of Imam Ghalib Ibn Ali, the Imam of Oman, held a conference. Some of the leaders of the interior joined them.

### New Military Commands

"They reached the following decisions: (a) New military commands have been set up. They will be responsible for their posts inside Oman and for co-ordinating their activities in accordance with the conditions and nature of the war. (b) On the Arab level, the members of the conference confirm their support for the Arab League Charter, for strengthening fraternal links and further rapprochement among sister states. They confirm their intention to continue to execute the Arab League's resolutions concerning the League's plans to help the Omani struggle. (c) On the international level it has been decided to enable the Omani people to execute the U.N. resolution of 19 December 1965, which was adopted at the 20th. session and which demands the liquidation of imperialist bases in Oman and the Omani people's right to self-determination."

### Needs for Liberation

This is a completely realistic assessment of the needs facing the Omani revolution on the military and diplomatic levels. The resolution at the U.N. represented a diplomatic success by recognising the justice of the Omani cause. Much of this is due to the energy with which the League of Arab States campaigned for years to bring the Oman question to the U.N.'s attention.

However, a liberation struggle is never won by diplomacy alone. The British Government has proved time and again, with regard to Oman and Aden, that it has no regard for U.N. resolutions or the international rule of law. The Omani people have only one course: to defend their legal rights by military means.

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