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The Truth about the Communists in Dhofar

Text of a talk given on Radio Oman on 19.2.1973 by Salim Aqil Salim, formerly the Political Director of the Communist Front, who recently joined the legal Government of the Sultanate.

" Listeners, I greet you from Radio Muscat tonight and am pleased to tell you some of the true facts about the movement called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf, of the twisted application of its ideas and the wrongful practices of which it is guilty in the Dhofari countryside. I have in front of me written pages which contain facts about the truth of the so-called Popular Front, its internal inter-relationships, and how its policies are applied in a "negative way". I shall give the Omani listener in the Sultanate a clear picture of many activities of the Front, the extent of its domination, the influence of its teaching over the ordinary citizen in the Dhofar countryside, and of the gross mistruths perpetrated by its leadership among the ordinary simple people in the ranks of the Front itself. I shall deal with these points under several headings so that you may know the real facts of the distortion in the application of the Front's ideas to suit its Communistic ends and goals in this ancient Islamic and Arab society, with its rich traditions and culture. I hope to show how they pretend one thing and really do the opposite.

First among the subjects I shall deal with what goes on at the Lenin School. Secondly, I shall talk about the reality of what happens in the Front's military camp. Thirdly, the relationship between the Front and the people of the Dhofar countryside, and, fourthly, the role of women in the Front's activities. Fifthly, I shall give you an idea of what the People's Militia is, and, sixthly, the aim of setting up the Kadir Communist school.

Firstly, then, the Lenin School. The decision to set up this school came as a result of the Front's leadership to concentrate on attracting the children of the area and to educate them in a way that could be relied upon, for the long term future, to further the indoctrination of Communist ideas. It would be an easy matter to sow the seeds of indoctrination in these young minds and wean the children away from their Arab and Islamic customs and traditions. This was done by giving the people of Dhofar the slogan that the Front was opening schools to teach their children. The people of Dhofar began sending their children voluntarily, little knowing that they were to be indoctrinated with Communist ideology and become an instrument of evil in our society. About a year after the school was started the parents found that when their children visited them they had changed from their Arab, Islamic ways, and mocked them and their traditions and values and the things they had held dear and sacred since their own upbringing - like prayer, and fasting. They called everything of this sort "reactionary and backward." The children said they had been emancipated from all this. Emancipated from what? - from their Arab and Islamic customs and traditions. They mocked everything, calling it "Metaphysical" - (as they describe someone who believes in God and His power). Communist jargon describes such people or ideas as "reactionary" or "metaphysical". The people of Dhofar began to regret very much what had become of their children, and muttered prayers to God under their breath, but were unable to take their children out of the school for fear of incurring punishment.

They were extremely hesitant about sending their other children to school and warned other people likewise. Reports of their complaints, however, reached the Front's officials, and they were then subjected to threats and stern warnings and even, sometimes, were summarily executed.

As for the curriculum of the school, the aim was, as I have said, political, ideological and Communist. Concentrating on indoctrinating the pupils to serve their long term ends of substituting Communist apostate ideas and Marxist principles for Arab and Islamic traditions, most of the lessons they teach are in the form of Political lectures, readings from the works of Mao Tse Tung, Marx and Engels, with works like the Communist Manifesto, or the decisions of various world Communist conferences. This is supplemented with prescribed reading matter, and actual training with firearms.

After two or three years, the brightest pupils are sent off to the Communist world for further study of these ideas. They go to China, Russia and North Korea. The less clever among them are naturally sent for training at the Front's camp to be pushed into the areas of fighting. This is just a brief description of what happens to these children and of the indoctrination of base and dangerous ideas which can only have the most disastrous effects on our society and our dear land of Dhofar.

Secondly, let us turn to the reasons and aims behind setting up the Front's Training Camp. The Camp was opened in 1969 in Mirarah, near Hauf in the Mahra territory, after the second conference of the Front for the Liberation of Dhofar and the decision to adopt Marxist Leninist principles. There was a need for spreading these ideas among the people of Dhofar in general and those in the Front in particular.

Males and females are both taken on the courses organized at the camp, which usually last four to five months. One of the principles of the Communist movement is equal treatment for men and women. The aim is to take simple, ignorant people who know nothing of civilisation, culture or politics, or the world outside, and indoctrinate them with apostate ideas contrary to all they have ever learned. On arrival at the camp, each batch of recruits, both men and women, are given the following articles: a book of Mao Tse Tung's thoughts, a copy of the Communist Party Manifesto, a Chinese rifle and gun-belt and a number of articles of clothing.

The women have to give up their modest dress for shorts and short-sleeved shirts and are made to cut off their hair and look exactly like men. This is of great embarrassment to them and make them feel quite naked.

The first talk on the course is given by the Political Guidance Officer in the Camp on the subject of embarrassment between the sexes and the necessity of completely ridding oneself of it, so that women and men become exactly equal in dress, training, guard duty and dormitory accommodation and mix with each other completely. The course includes political, military and physical training. One can see that the aim of this is to take simple people who know nothing of ideologies or politics and implant in their minds Communist ideas (whose effects on our character and society are immeasurable) so that they repeat them, parrot-fashion.

Talks are given on various subjects, outlining the Front's attitude - on Arab Nationalism, on the Arab States and the Arab League, and on women. There are many such talks, but I should like to deal with them under these three headings to show you the extent of distortion of facts to suit Communist propaganda and implantation of falsehoods in the minds of the trainees.

It is emphasised to the trainees that the Front has no connection with Arab Nationalism so long as this movement does not accept Communist, Marxist ideas, with the rule of the Proletariat, as under the Warsaw Pact. The Arab States are collectively described as reactionary, as are their various movements, and as acting against the interests of the Arab people. The Marxist/Aden government is excepted and described as the ideal regime which has achieved everything.

The Arab League is described as having being created by Imperialism and not serving the Arab cause at all. These are simple examples of the extent of the distortion of facts and indoctrination of simple minds in a mechanical way, so that right and wrong are not known. It is with such "facts" that these people emerge from the Front's Camp. These are of course gross misrepresentations of the truth about the Arab people and their values, but they achieve the aim of substituting Communist values and poisonous thoughts in the minds of these simple people who call themselves the "pillars" of the Front.

Thirdly, we shall look at the nature of the relationship between the Front and the people of the Dhofar countryside, and we shall try to give the Omani and the Arab citizen an idea of the true position. To do this, I shall deal with it three parts.

At first the number of armed men who began campaigning in the Dhofar countryside was very small, and the local people refused absolutely to be of any help to them or to join them. On the contrary, whenever they saw these bands of men they reported them to the Government forces, with details of their description and the sort of arms they carried. The bands therefore were unable to operate by day, but had to do everything by night. This initial stage lasted about a year. The rebels then began to expand their military activities and to recruit large numbers of the youth of Dhofar into their ranks. They began to threaten the people with death if they were reported. They were helped in their endeavours by the current situation in the Sultanate which did much to drive more and more people into joining them. People began to sympathise with them, especially since they had not yet announced their adoption of Communist ideas or their plan to liberate the Arab Gulf, from Dhofar in the South to Kuwait in the North. Nor, at that stage, had the Front begun to slaughter the people as they did later.

In the third stage, after the second conference of the Front for the liberation of Dhofar, which resulted in the adoption of Communist, Marxist principles, the Dhofari people came across things they had not experienced in the Front before - like the mocking of the Islamic religion and the Arab customs they had inherited from their forefathers, alongside the executions and the estrangement of children from their parents and the forcible marriage of daughters without parental permission. The Dhofar people felt repelled by this and they began to withdraw their support from the Front with its new apostate ideas. Whilst the local people felt less and less in sympathy with the Front, they began to realise that the Sultanate Government was trying to help them. They abandoned large areas of the countryside, out of hatred and fear for the oppression and tyranny of the Communist gangs. They now long for the day when they will be free from these gangs who have only terrorised them, stolen their animals and made them live in an atmosphere of repression and apprehension.

Fourthly, let us consider the role of women in the Front's activities. At first the women were eager to do their share of helping the Front, by doing reconnaissance work, providing food and caring for the wounded. It was only after the Front's second conference that the women became an official and integral part of the movement. They began to undergo military training and fight alongside the men, in the Communist way.

Communist ideas also prevailed in such matters as marriage. The fixed dowry rate was reduced to R.S.12/500, and women behaved with unwonted freedom, under the influence of Communist slogans and ideas. They went off, against the will of their families, if necessary, to join up in military training and do whatever they liked without the knowledge of their relatives. Families were thus broken up, and the young people's first loyalty lay with the Front and not with their kith and kin. Some of these women were then put in charge of watching the movement of people and of accommodation, and innocent people have quite often been maltreated or killed because of the false reports made by these women, who have lost all sense of their old, traditional values.

Fifthly, we shall look at the activities of the so-called Militia. This organisation, which is made up of both men and women, is in two sections, one armed and the other not. The armed section takes part in military operations, and also leads the food and ammunition convoys from the rear-guard positions in the Mahra territory near Hauf. The unarmed section supervises the herding of the cattle that belongs to those fighting in the Army of Liberation. It also is charged with indoctrinating the people with Communist ideology. There are two geographical divisions in the Eastern Area - H region and W region, whilst there are also two divisions in the Central Area - the western section (known as the Red Line), and the eastern section. Similarly two sections exist in the Western area. Each such section has a leadership of between five and seven people who are responsible for those under them and for spreading Communist propaganda among the people in their area. The idea is for Communism to dominate the whole of Dhofar and to take the people away from tribalism and recruit them into military service. The effects of this are disastrous and only increase the victimisation of these simple people in the name of Communism and its selfish ends.

Sixthly, what is the aim of setting up the Communist "^{Cadre}~~Kader~~" school? This was established at the beginning of 1972 on the orders of the leadership of the Popular Front for the liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf, to produce batches of people devoted to Communism. Prospective pupils have to be able to read and write. They study many books on Communist Philosophy and techniques of administration and leadership. The first wave consisted of thirty people, who were from the leadership or organisation of the Front, but the school's activities were ceased by the bombing of Communist positions by the Sultan's Air Force in the Hauf area. Studies at the school include reading the lives of Communist leaders in detail in order to understand fully the Communist ideology and to spread it among our Muslim society.

We shall continue with this description of the Front's activities at a future date.