



حبر أبيض
WHITE INK



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“Thawrat al-Ghilman” (Revolution of Boys): First Arab Reaction Against Persian Occupation Authorities

Iranian occupation would not have passed without creating a reaction among the Ahvazi Arabs, who refused to submit to the de-facto policy and resisted the systematic Persianization attempts. They tried to win for their nationalism, their leader, Sheikh Khazal, and their Arab affiliation, despite the state of Arab weakness associated with a complex regional context, given that the Arab rock (Saudi Arabia) was still undergoing internal turmoil that would lead to the establishment of the third Saudi state in 1932.

In this context, Ahvaz recorded heroic epics in the face of Iranian arrogance. People of the region declared one revolution after another, which are uprisings that will not stop until the hour of writing these lines; as Ahvazi Arabs still believe that emancipation from the colonial yoke passes through historical accumulation and exertion of effort, money and blood. They appear to say: “No give up... No loss”.

Perhaps the first "revolutions", with reservations about the description, of Ahvaz Arabs, was the one known as “Thawrat Al-Ghilman” (Revolution of the Boys), which erupted on 22 July 1925, led by the soldiers of Sheikh Khazal and his private guards, under the dual leadership of Shalash and Sultan, in response to the arrest of Sheikh Khazal Al-Kaabi and the occupation of their Arab emirate.

Despite the absence of good coordination and preparation, yet the Iranian army was taken by surprise that some of them fled towards Kuwait, leaving Muhammarah in the hands of the rebels for several days. However, after that surprise passed, Iranian army returned to pound the revolutionaries with artillery, killing most of those who participated in the revolution, imprisoning and executing several of them without trial, in addition to fining Sheikh Khazal a huge amount under the pretext of inciting the revolution, even though he was detained by them.

The writings that dealt with the subject of popular revolutions in a scientific way unanimously agree that spontaneous emotional reactions often do not succeed and are doomed to failure. Therefore, we find that theorists of revolutions tackle with revolution's subjective and objective, revolutionary tool and about the stages and preludes to overthrow the colonial power.

In this regard, we can originate the revolutionary conditions to find out the reasons behind for the failure of Thawrat Al-Ghilman, thus benefitting from that failure, which had far more disadvantages than it had gains, in view of the negative repercussions caused by that "movement", which remain closer to uprising than to a revolution in social and political dimensions.

Perhaps the first prerequisites for the revolution, which the boys who moved from a state of crying over their Sheikh to a state of raising arms against the Persians, were not aware of, is the need for a conscious material base capable of moving according to the directives of a revolutionary leadership. That leadership that did not exist during the era of the boys, and there was no framework for the mass base that could embrace the revolutionary project.

As for the objective part, it is related to the need for divisions at the level of the political authority; because it shall then be incapable of containing the social situation, which is the condition that was available in 1925, given that the Persians had not extended their absolute control over Ahvaz region and were not qualified to confront a popular revolution in which all the components of Ahvazi people participated.

The third condition remains linked to the revolutionary vanguard that is capable of framing and directing the revolutionaries, putting forth a strategy of confrontation against the Iranian occupier. Here we intersect with what Ali Nima al-Helou put forward in his book, Ahvaz: Its Revolutions and Organizations, when he said that " Ahvazi family was dissatisfied with that revolution" for various considerations, including:

- **Khazali family's coordination with the tribes related thereto and with which they agreed on the necessity of overthrowing Persian slavery was thwarted by Thawrat Al-Ghilman.**
- **Arab elements fleeing to Iraq and Kuwait once abusing Ahvaz Arabs started.**
- **Absence of organization and coordination before the outbreak of these incidents.**

These and other reasons render a spontaneous uprising of dozens incapable of confronting an organized army capable of regrouping in the face of decentralized movements without a revolutionary leadership. Perhaps the current Ahvazi uprisings that occur from time to time commit the same mistakes that were made nearly a century ago of Arab steadfastness against Persian supremacy. This is given the fact that all (or most of) Ahvazi uprisings came as a reaction to a Persian incident, crime or targeting of the Arab component. In essence, it was not a massive revolution preceded by preparation, coordination and strategic direction based on a specific political goal and smart tactical daring.

Reconsidering Ahvazi revolutions cannot be considered an intellectual luxury or mental enjoyment, but rather an occasion to spot the tactical and strategic mistakes and to try to build thereon despite the different contexts and environments. This requires adopting a flexible strategy that maintains the same supreme political goal while changing the tactics of mobilization, organization and action.

In addition to the foregoing, what has been called Thawrat Al-Ghilman assures us of the need to go beyond the logic of momentary, temporary reaction, and pass to the stage of construction and action, relying on an accurate and intelligent reading of the various tools and means available to the Iranian regime, thus carrying out the strategic drawing to be followed.

At this point, it is possible to stress the necessity of avoiding the enemy's strengths and targeting its weaknesses, with a focus on unifying Ahvazi front, in addition to rallying around a unified political leadership. There is also the logic of networking in the face of the Persian forces, without neglecting the process of objective coordination with the other ethnic groups, which have the same ethnic ambition and political dream of establishing entities independent of Iran, or, at least, succeeding in achieving autonomy that takes into account the specifics of each region separately, which affairs must be run by the indigenous people under Persian sovereignty, even for a while.