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THE ZANGIBAR CONFERENCE IN MARCH 1968 AND ITS IMPACT ON
THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH YEMEN

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the role of the Zangibar Conference in March 1968 and its impact on the political situation in South Yemen. It is considered a historical turning point in South Yemen, by drawing the shape of the ruling political system in the country. The political level, and left no room for doubt about the identity of the victorious team with regard to the two wings of the National Front. The majority of the conference's choices, in particular, were in line with the tendencies of the in the list of the new general leadership that was elected by the National Front's leadership. Because of such moves, the Al yameny has invaded the national front through its grip on power in South Yemen. It closed the route to imperialist and reactionary governments like the United States of America and its partner, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

The Zangibar Conference in 1986 was one of the most important conferences organized by the National Front with the political groups involved in South Yemen, both left and Alyameny. Therefore, the Alysary gained control of the country and the Alyameny was barred from participating in political life. The reason behind this, however, was that the Alyameny, led by President Qahtan al-Shaabi, lacked faith in the intentions of the West, led by the United States of America, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Despite the fact that the Alysary of the National Front is their common enemy, prompting the Alyameny to refuse any dialogue or contact with the Saudi government. direct or indirect, that would lead to striking the Alysary, the purpose of this study was to demonstrate the role played by the Zangibar

Conference. In March 1968, and the extent of its impact on the political situation in South Yemen. The research consisted of an introduction, two axes, and a conclusion. The introduction discussed the significance of the subject, the reasons for selecting it, and the plan's division. The first axis examined the motives and precursors that led to the convening of the March 1968 Zangibar Conference in South Yemen, which led to the convening of the conference and the resulting decisions in favor of the Alyary, while the second axis investigated the intellectual conflicts between the Alyameny and the Alyary in the Fourth Conference of the National Front, those struggles that revealed the existence of two opposing currents within the ranks of the National Front. The conclusion was deposited together with the most important results and suggestions of the study.

The First Aspect: The Motives and Precursors That Preceded the Convening of The March 1968 Zangibar Conference in South Yemen.

The political situation in South Yemen was hardly stable in favor of the National Front after independence, as the country quickly witnessed divisions and political and intellectual conflicts within the wings of the National Front between the Alyameny led by President Qahtan al-Shaabi, who called for real reform measures that lead to reforming the political situation. In southern Yemen, especially working within the framework of state institutions. however, this wing saw that the revolution that took place in the south represented a basis for liberation from the restrictions imposed by British colonialism since its occupation of Aden in 1938. and that wing wanted to be in line with the facts of the political reality and the circumstances that surrounded him, through which he aspires to move towards new political transformations for the benefit of the toiling working class of Yemen. Improve their living conditions, As for the leftist revolutionary wing led by Abdel Fattah Ismail and Abdel Fattah Ismail, and Salem Rabie Ali, which called for the control of Workers and peasants are in control of the country. He was able to resolve the ideological position of the revolution in favor of (scientific socialism) and the consequent political and economic programs, especially the bias. In addition to the internal transformations, several external transformations took place in South Yemen. Greatly affected the course of relations with neighboring countries, especially with North Yemen and the countries of the region, especially with regard to the issue of Yemeni unity. It was affected by the political struggle of the members of the ruling National Front in the south, however, these accelerated developments occurred at a time of great tension for President Qahtan al-Shaabi, the leader of the Alyameny. In the National Front, and accordingly he became the Arab Nationalist Movement, which formed an organizational hub between the organizations and formations affiliated with the National Front, to play a role in revealing the ideological account of the revolution. Thus the political parties of the National Front entered into a frantic struggle over ideological issues derived from within the mother movement, and as a consequence the organization of the movement in North Yemen cut off its connection with the mother movement, to announce afterwards the formation of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, which adopted Marxism in 1968.

At the same time, Muhammad Ali Haitham, one of the leaders of the Arab Nationalist Movement, and one of the politicians who held high positions in South Yemen after its independence, says, "After our country gained independence, Nayef Hawatmeh came to us on a visit and the signs of differences in the movement had begun. And he was able to transfer it to Yemen, and encourage many leaders to adopt extremist Marxist theories, for example, he pushed these leaders to take measures of nationalization and violence, which they responded badly among the people. To recover our breath, propositions were launched that distinguish between comrades in arms of a type: this is reactionary, this is progressive and that is Marxist. Nayef Hawatmeh played a key role in perpetuating this trend, and he led the comrades to issue the first law for agrarian reform in the region, and to liquidate the administrative apparatus inherited from colonialism. And blowing up the military and security institutions, based on the concept of the Leninist state, which was enshrined in the Russian October Revolution of 1917, and which is based on destroying the tsarist structures and replacing them with the Leninist state.

Because of the deterioration of the political situation in the country and the emergence of political and ideological conflicts within the wings of the National Front. The General Command of the National Front held a meeting in early 1968 in which it took a decision to purge the old state apparatus, especially the start of purge the military establishment. However, President Qahtan al-Shaabi and his companions opposed That decision, which prompted the General Command of the Front to resolve the differences between its wings (the Alyameny and the Alysary), and to resort to the base of the meeting to evaluate the experience of the leadership of the Authority.

The Second Aspect: The Intellectual Conflicts Between the Alyameny and The Alysary in The Fourth Conference of The National Front

The Fourth Conference of the National Front was held in the city of Zangibar in the Abyan Governorate in South Yemen for the period between the 2nd and 8th of March 1968. That conference revealed the existence of two conflicting currents within the ranks of the National Front, except for the Alyameny represented by President Qahtan al-Shaabi and the Alysary represented by Abdul Al-Fattah Ismail. The conference included approximately 167 delegates, 25 of them from the governorate of Aden and 13 from the fifth governorate of Hadhramaut, which are the two governorates controlled by the Alysary. And the Fedayeen are 7 delegates, and the Yemeni student community abroad is two delegates, and although the proportions of representation in the conference were not appropriate to support the program put forward by the group (Abdullah Al-Khamri and his companions). The surprise was that the mentioned program obtained the support of the majority of the conference's members, especially since The main issues presented by President Qahtan al-Shaabi and his companions revolved around the issue of purifying the old state apparatus, as well as preserving the military institution of the army and public security as well. I demand the dissolution of the (People's Liberation Army and the People's Guard) under the slogan (We do not want a Red Guard), in addition to rejecting the radical solutions to the

property issue, and defending the interests of the landlords and the petty bourgeoisie. And with it the General Command team a slogan in which it announced (all powers to the President of the Republic, including the absolute powers), The demands made by President Qahtan's popular team did not find any opposition to the demands made by opponents of President Qahtan al-Shaabi. Which included: The nationalization of all property of foreign companies The big and local bourgeoisie, the closure of free ports, the imposition of customs duties, the reduction in the salaries of state employees, the replacement of the individual authority of the President of the Republic with a collective leadership. In addition to the transition of the National Front to the sites of scientific socialism, and the development of its relations with the socialist countries for the purpose of benefiting from their experiences, for a constructive restructuring The National Front and the practice of democracy in its internal systems.

Nayef Hawatmeh describes the atmosphere of the conference and says, "The composition of the conference came in an undemocratic way in representing all the southern governorates, in light of a subjective intellectual climate, and the absence of the basic revolutionary elements from the meetings of the General Command of the National Front. Due to the different ideological composition of the General Command, and the conditions that preceded the convening The conference, as the leadership of the Front was unable to find common solutions to the dilemmas of national democratic liberation during the ninety-day period since it seized power until the moment. The conference was held, and in the conference, Abdel Fattah Ismail and his companions presented a set of documents that included programs to solve the problems that emerged after independence, and dealt with those The documents are three issues. The first is a critique of the experience of the National Front since it took power. However, it is possible that the criticism is correct even if it comes after a period of time, but the accumulation of previous differences is what led matters to take the nature of tension between the concerned parties. As for the issue The second was represented by the ideological class horizon in order to solve the problems of national liberation for the two classes of workers and poor peasants who are led by a socialist vanguard, and to reject the role of the petty bourgeoisie. As for the third issue, its importance was related to the future, in order to define the tasks of the democratic revolution to resolve the contradictions experienced by the National Front, and thus included three issues, namely the liquidation of the counter-revolution, determining the form of the new state. Consolidating the authority of the popular masses in order to coordinate Its relationship with the political organization and the new state. Therefore, the young national forces were able after a long struggle within the conference to extract progressive decisions in favor of the class forces. Especially enabling them to move socially in favor of social classes that suffer from very bad living conditions, and after six days of arguments between the leaders The members of the conference were punctuated by strong ideological discussions that involved a convergence of views between the two parties. Made every effort they had to defend each of them for their position, and as a result they were able to reach decisions that were supported by the vast majority of the members of the conference, close to the demands of the Alysary if not. They were completely identical to them, but

the decisions of the conference no room for doubt in determining the identity of the victorious team, and they are as follows: -

- 1- The necessity of building a vanguard organization related to the scientific socialist (Marxist) line in preparation for transforming the National Front into a vanguard socialist party.
- 2- Expedite the formation of local councils and the establishment of a supreme legislative authority in the name of the Supreme People's Assembly.
- 3- Achieving unity between the two parts, by opening the door to dialogue with the national and revolutionary forces in North Yemen.
- 4- Issuance of the agrarian reform law commensurate with the interests of the masses and the toiling working classes.
- 5- Transforming the economy from services to industry, with the aim of liberating it from foreign capital and exploitation and adopting a socialist economic policy.
- 6- Working to eradicate illiteracy in the countryside.
- 7- Establishing a popular militia, supporting the People's Guard or the National Guard from the sons of farmers and the working class, reorganizing it and handing it over as soon as possible.
- 8- Purging the administrative and military state apparatus and institutions of suspicious elements, and the necessity of interaction and openness with all experiences of socialist systems, especially standing against imperialism and colonialism attempts.
- 9- Establishing a popular militia of the working classes, peasants and students, and generalizing weapons training camps for all members of the National Front.
- 10- Support and support for the international revolutionary movements and the revolutionary movements in the Arab world, foremost of which is support for the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist entity, as well as support for the Dhofar Liberation Front in Oman and the focus of that support on the elements that adopted the communist approach in it.

After that, most of the decisions of the Zangibar Conference were identical to the political orientations of the leftists, and the arrangement of the decisions of the conference was similar to the arrangement of the President of the Republic in the list of the new general leadership that was elected by the National Front. consisted of 41 members, but President Qahtan Al-Shaabi ranked No. 16 with equal votes Which he obtained, which shows us the invasion of the left side as a real invasion of the National Front. Became the Alyameny under the control of the left, headed by Abdel-Fattah Ismail, Salem Rabie Ali, Abdullah Al-Khamri , Ali Salem Al-Beidh , and Ali Antar Ali Nasser Muhammad and others .

It is clear from the above that the Fourth Conference of the National Front, which was held in the city of Zangibar, represented a link between two historical stages before and after the independence of South Yemen. But it was considered a turning point in the history of the National Front after the matter settled in favor of the Alysary at the expense of the Alyameny, both wings The two are within the corridors of the National Front, but at the same time. It constituted a historical entrance to the next and important stage, not only in the

life of the political organization of the Front, but also in the life of the Yemeni masses and South Yemen in general.

On the nineteenth of March 1968, the members of the conference did not abandon the issue of illiteracy eradication and how to treat it, nor about sending volunteers to participate in the battle fronts. With the liberation movement in the Third World, but they mobilized their supporters by taking to the streets in the city of Aden, and at the same time. The front leadership called Nationalism in Aden to a mass festival in support of the decisions of the conference, but this matter did not appeal to the popular President Qahtan and his companions. So he sent military forces to the venue of the festival and arrested a large number of its organizers, and on the next day mosque preachers launched a campaign against communism and atheism.

After the Zangibar Conference, the conflict between the two wings (right and left) of the National Front intensified, and thus the senior commanders in the military establishment who were loyal to the Army of the South Yemeni Union. Whom Saudi Arabia and Britain had pinned hopes of seizing power, felt that their position as a military force in the army was in danger. ; The reason for this is that the Alysary began to try to implement its program, which is to spread Marxism in South Yemen, and thus was able to impose itself on the political scene. As a result, the military leadership in the army began preparing a military plan to carry out a military coup against the Alysary of the National Front in agreement with The United States of America through its ambassador in South Yemen. it was in constant contact with the leaders of that movement , and what made the matter more clear was the interventions of the American military attache Commandro (Diele Perry), who incited the military leaders in the army against the leftists and demanded them to make the government of South Yemen An ally of the United States of America. On March 20, 1968, the American military attache was seen in the military operations room of the Sixth Brigade, personally supervising the arrests that included the arrest of 300 leaders of the National Front in civil and military institutions. After which the American military attache was accused of masterminding the coup By giving orders to the army forces to carry out a military coup against the Alysary, these forces headed towards a radio building and declared their control over it. Military forces were deployed and cordoned off the streets of the city of Aden, and these forces carried out extensive arrest campaigns against a large number of leaders of the left, and the radio broadcasted a statement calling on the population to support the movement to confront the danger of communism, and in response the Alysary. Instructed its supporters to take to the streets and hold mass demonstrations in the city of Aden, and thus the leftists were able to release a number of detainees, including the leader of the Alysary, Abdel Fattah Ismail.

On the other hand, the leaders of the military coup confirmed that the military units loyal to the right-wing National Front would announce their response against the left after it was announced. However, President Qahtan al-Shaabi, the leader of the Alyameny, expressed his reservations about the military movement at first; Despite his initial sympathy for it. Because it targeted his Alyameny opponents, especially after the Alyameny supporters took to the

streets of the city of Aden in large numbers and led armed groups from villages and countryside towards the city of Aden to eliminate the military coup. The army was no longer the master of the situation; Because at the same time he lost confidence in the leaders of the coup; Because he realized that the other blow to the military establishment would be directed this time to the Alyameny. It leads, if the leaders of the coup were able to exclude the Alyameny led by Abdel Fattah Ismail; As a result, President Qahtan al-Shaabi sought to calm the internal political situation in Aden. He instructed the army forces that began the coup to withdraw to their positions and release detainees from the Alyameny. He warned that no liquidation or trials would take place in its ranks. As a result, the army forces responded to the orders of President Qahtan Al-Shaabi and ordered the dismissal of one hundred and fifty senior officers and employees who were proven to be involved in the military coup, but none of them was held accountable as he promised to cleanse the military and administrative institution, and issued. The Agrarian Reform Law, which has long been confirmed by the Alyameny, and relinquished the The position of prime minister, but he gave it to his brother-in-law, Faisal Abdul Latif al-Shaabi , and after the release of the detainees. Al-Shaabi ordered the expulsion of the American military attache from the country after it was proven that he was involved in planning the military coup and that was on the twenty-sixth of March 1968, and thus directed the Alyameny. The National Front accused the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of being behind the failed military coup, and the strange thing is that the American and Saudi governments did not issue any statement to justify the accusations leveled at them. However, the involvement of the United States of America, the strategic ally of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the communist and revolutionary regimes in the region launched a military coup through their ambassador in Aden, especially the Saudi government's reservations about. The regime in South Yemen and its hostility to it, by the Kingdom's receiving of the princes and sultans who sought refuge in it for fear of the oppression of the National Front, who owed allegiance. The British presence in southern Yemen at the time, especially the Kingdom's support for the tribal rebellions in the areas of South Yemen adjacent to its borders.

Some Arab press reports refer to the participation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in planning the failed military coup that took place on the 20th of March 1968. Saudi Arabia's goal was to remove the danger of the leftist elements from the regime in North Yemen loyal to it , however, what confirms this is that the position of Saudi Arabia was supportive of the coup, but indirectly; Because Saudi Arabia wanted to make political changes in South Yemen. Whether through a coup or any external move, but its role in the coup was limited to supporting the supporters of the southern opposition and preparing them to push them across its common border with South Yemen towards the city of Aden if the coup succeeded. After the failure of the military coup and the breaking of the prestige of the Alyameny, President Qahtan al-Shaabi took advantage of the stability of the situation in his favour, in order to strengthen his influence in the government. As a reaction to the decisions of the Zangibar Conference, which the leftists insisted on implementing.

As a result of those political events that took place in South Yemen, the Soviet Union presented on May 8, 1968 its first ambassador in Aden, Vladimir Startsev. Who met President Qahtan al-Shaabi for the first time and spoke with him saying: (The Soviet Union appreciates the struggle of the Yemeni people against Colonialism? So, the Soviet Union tried to pay attention to southern Yemen. Because of Aden's strategic location, which is important to them, taking advantage of the conflict between the two Marxist wings (left and right) within the national front. Especially the financial difficulties experienced by the government of South Yemen due to the different political orientations between the parties, which It led to political conflicts between the concerned parties. which negatively affected the internal situation in the country, causing a severe economic crisis, which prompted President Qahtan al-Shaabi to go to Cairo on a quick visit on May 12 of the same year to obtain economic aid for his country. The reason for that visit is because Britain refused to hand over 60 million pounds to the government of Aden, which it had promised to hand over to the southern government during the declaration of independence, but it was satisfied with granting a ruling And the city of Aden is only three million pounds sterling to be delivered over a period of three years.

In the midst of the economic and political deteriorating internal conditions, President Qahtan al-Shaabi ordered the removal of the Alyameny leaders in the National Front from political participation in the government. led by Abdel Fattah Ismail, which prompted the second man in the Alysary, Salem Rabie Ali, to lead an armed popular uprising in the Jaar region in South Yemen. in response to these measures, on May 14, 1968, and on the next day, Al-Shaabi sent a delegation to the city to inform the rebels to return to their areas and to avoid the country. However, this uprising by the leftists failed after its leaders fled to the mountainous areas bordering Yemen. Al-Shamali for fear of the government's oppression of them, and thus the popular President Qahtan blamed Britain for the deteriorating situation due to its refusal to pay the money it had promised, and threatened that his country was going through a financial crisis and might have to expropriate British companies.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was able to form a military force from the southern opposition who trained on its territory in training camps allocated to them, and used them to fight the ruling regime in South Yemen. In mid-1968, and at the head of that military force were the sultans from the dissolved Union of the South, the League of Sons of the South and a number of leaders The Liberation Front called it (the Salvation Army or the Liberation of Hadhramaut). And after the formation of that army, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia began to seek through it the implementation of a plan aimed at cutting the city of Hadhramaut from southern Yemen and annexing it to it; This is due to the presence of oil potentials in it that were not discovered according to the reports of specialized experts at the time, which encouraged the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to support the tribes of Radfan and Shabwa and some of the internal security forces loyal to them with money and weapons. to rebel against the government of the south, in an attempt to create a state of chaos for the regime in the country, In addition to the Saudi media. Campaigns against the National Front regime, and at the same time, the northern government was

able to form a military force from the southern opposition, who had resorted to it for fear of the National Front's oppression. Their mission is to overthrow the ruling regime in Aden, and it is worth mentioning that there were pro-Saudi figures who announced their accession. To the leaders of the National Front on the thirtieth of May 1968, including Defense Minister Ali Salem al-Beidh .

It is clear from the foregoing that we did not see between the leadership of the Alyameny led by President Qahtan al-Shaabi and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia any rapprochement or coordination for both parties, although the Alyameny in the National Front is their common enemy. so we understand from this that the Alyameny lost confidence in the intentions of the West and the United States of America, as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, although the expectations of the Saudi government were due to the Alyameny's support for the military coup as soon as it was announced. However, the Alyameny refused to conduct any dialogue or contact with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, directly or indirectly, that would lead to striking the Alyameny in the front. Nationalism, and thus the Saudi government changed its strategy in dealing with the regime in the south, especially after the failure of the military coup, and thus shifted. Its strategic goals from overthrowing the regime in Aden to its fragmentation to enable the southern opposition loyal to it to establish their own independent entity in Hadramout away from the Aden regime. This ends the hopes of the two parts of Yemen to achieve unity between them, and it is worth noting that the focus of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Hadramaut and its attempt to annex it to Why is it because there is oil in it, according to expert reports that confirmed this.

In June 1968, the National Front government faced a serious threat represented by the Saudi-backed southern opposition forces launching an attack on the People's Republic of South Yemen. In addition to the rebellion of tribes loyal to the Liberation Front in the city of Radfan, which led to the penetration of the country's borders on the fifth The tenth of July 1968, which reflected negatively in the deterioration of the economic situation in the country, and at the same time the Omani army. Backed by Britain posed a threat to South Yemen on the eastern borders, and despite these successive threats, the National Front government managed to stand firm in the face of these threats. And it was able to return the city of Upper Egypt on August 2, 1968, which was occupied by the southern opposition army backed by Saudi Arabia, but the attacks of the Liberation Army or the Salvation Army of Hadramaut. Renewed between the months of October and the second of 1968, and because of these events, the government of Aden felt the dangers of the situation. The collapsed political situation in light of the division of the ruling National Front against itself, as well as the deterioration of the economic situation in the country. Which prompted the Soviet Union to grant the government of South Yemen in September In 1968, financial aid amounting to five million pounds sterling saved the country's government from bankruptcy, after which the right and Alyameny parties to the conflict. It decided to end the dispute between them and unify their ranks to face those external challenges, and thus most of the leaders of the left and those with them returned to Aden at the end of 1968, and their next goal became The unannounced is the overthrow of President Qahtan al-Shaabi .

CONCLUSION

By reviewing the subject of the study, we found that the Fourth Conference of the National Front, which was held in the city of Zangibar, represented a link between two historical stages before and after the independence of South Yemen. But it was considered a turning point in the history of the National Front after the matter settled in favor of the Alysary at the expense of The Alyameny. Both wings affiliated with the corridors of the National Front, but at the same time it constituted a historical entrance to the next and important stage, not only in the life of the political organization of the front, but in the life of the Yemeni masses and South Yemen in general.

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