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Open Confrontation of the People of Medina against Umayyid Government

Confiscation of the state property by the people of Medina and the fruitless and unfriendly negotiations of the representatives of Medinan tribes with Uthmān b. Abū Sufyān was the beginning of *Muhājirin* and *Ansār*'s open confrontation with the Umayyid rule. This action of the people of Medina actually opened up the deep and old wound inflicted on their bodies by the Umayyid rule long time ago.

The atmosphere was quite ready for a serious action against the Umayyid government.
'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala Ghasīl al-Malā'ka, who had witnessed at close quarters Yazīd's irresponsibility and incompetence in Syria and even had accepted his gifts with the intention of using them in toppling his own rule, called people of Medina to the final battle against Yazīd and the Umayyids.

'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala's social status[1] among the people of Medina made them to go along with him and even choose him as the governor of Medina, swear allegiance to him, and regarded Yazid as discharged from the Caliphate.[2]49

Ibn Zubayr, who was himself one of the protesters and had chosen Mecca as his base, sent a letter to the people of Medina encouraging them to stand up against Yazīd and Umayyid's administrators settled in Medina and expel them from Medina.[3]50
Ibn Zubayr himself ousted Yazīd's administrators from Hijāz.[4]51

Expulsion of the Governor of Medina

After swearing allegiance to 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala on the first day of Muharram 63 A.H. (682, C.E.), the people of Medina expelled Uthmān b. Muhammad b. Abū Sufyān, Yazīd's representative and the governor of Medina, from that city. Then, they imprisoned the Umayyids, their relatives, as well as those Quraysh īs who were the supporters of the Umayyid government, amounting to one thousand persons in Marwān b. Hakam's house without doing them any harm.[5]52

Some historians, in the meantime, have put it this way: Those imprisoned in Marwān's house were besieged, water was denied to them, and some of them were assaulted and battered including 'Uthmān b. Muhammad and Marwān b. Hakam and his son Abd al-Malik.[6] However, such remarks have not been reported in the first hand sources.

After the revolt of Medinans and besiege of Umayyids in Marwān's house, the governor of Medina sent his torn up shirt to Yazīd along with a letter saying: "Come to our rescue! The people of Medina have expelled our clan out of Medina!"[7]

Some have pointed out that of all the kindred of the Umayyids, only the children of Uthmān b. 'Affān were not expelled from Medina.[8]
Some have also pointed out that the governor of Medina escaped to Syria overnight.[9]56

Yazīd's Reaction against the People of Medina

The letter written by Marwān b. Hakam and the Umayyids was delivered to Yazīd by Habīb b. Kurra and upon reading the letter, Yazīd got agitated and asked Habīb: "Didn't the Umayyids and their relatives and slaves amount to a thousand people?" Habīb answered: "Yes; they were even over a thousand."

Yazīd asked: "So, why didn't they resist for a while?"
The courier replied: "All the inhabitants were united against them, so they were unable to resist against such a great number of people."[10]

At night time, while two guards were flanking him on his sides and he was holding a candle in his hand, Yazīd left the palace in a colorful outfit and with an angry face, walked to the mosque, climbed the pulpit, and cried out:
"O People of Syria! 'Uthmān b. Muhammad, the governor of Medina, has written to me that the People of Medina have expelled the Umayyids from the town. I swear to God that if there were no greenery or prosperity, it would be more tolerable for me than to hear this news."[11]58

With these words, in fact, Yazīd declared his firm decision to send his forces to attack Medina.
Yazīd wrote a letter to the people of Medina and ordered 'Uthmān b. Muhammad, the governor of Medina, to read it for them. He sent the letter through Nu'mān b. Bashīr Ansārī and told him:
"Most of the people of Medina are your relatives. Go to them and prevent them from opposition, for if they did not revolt on this matter, the people will not dare to oppose me."

Nu'mān went to his relatives in Medina and ordered them to obey and warned them against revolt and sedition, but they didn't listen to him.[12] Not only that, in reply, they said to Nu'mān:

"O Nu'mān! Yazīd is not a Muslim, because he drinks wine day and night; he does not offer obligatory prayers, he practices debauchery, and he deems as permissible shedding the blood of the descendents

of the Prophet (s); and you know that no other Caliph has not done what Yazīd has been doing. He does not deserve to be the leader of Muslim community."[13]60

As soon as 'Uthmān b. Muhammad timidly read Yazīd's letter to the people of Medina, 'Abd Allāh b. Mutī' and some other people began to curse and use abusive language. When they found out that Yazīd had dispatched an army to suppress them, they made a firm decision to stand up and fight against it.[14]61

After the people of Medina decisively resolved to fight against the army of Syria, the Umayyids were ousted out of town, either on their own demand or as deemed advisable by Medinan fighters, and settled in a place called Dhī Khushub[15] located at a day's journey from Medina.[16]
Marwān b. Hakam was among the expelled. However, he was happy for not having stayed in Medina because he knew that if they had stayed in Medina, they would have been more at a loss than otherwise. Thus, Marwān told his son 'Abd al-Malik:

"... O My son! It seems that the people of Medina have permitted us to leave without consulting each other or without enough deliberation, or they have expelled us from Medina."
'Abd al-Malik asked his father why he said so?

Marwān answered: "The very fact that the people did not kill or take us captive is enough to be happy, for if they took us captive, they would keep us as hostages and would kill us in case of invasion of Syrian army! Now we are worried that they would realize their mistake and change their minds to chase after us!"[17]64

1. Hanzala b. Abī 'āmir, a famous companion of the Prophet (s), was a youth who got married to Jamīla, 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy's daughter, consummated with her and 'Abd Allāh's embryo was conceived but he did not get the chance to perform the major ablution (ghusl) in the morning as he had to proceed to the battle of Uhud on the orders of Prophet (s) and was martyred. The Prophet (s) told the people that the angels had performed the ghusl on him (Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 46; Dinawari, al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl, p. 310).
2. Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 47; Qazwīnī, Muhammad Husain, Riyād al-Ahzān, p. 176.
3. Dinawari, al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl, p. 264; Maqdisī, Al-Bad' wa al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 1, p. 15.
4. Ibn A'tham Kūfi, Al-Futūh, vol. 3, p. 179; Mas'ūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 69.
5. Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 47 and 166; Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 208; Ya'qūbī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 2, p. 250; Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, vol. 4, p. 111; Fakhrī, Ta'rīkh, p. 115; Ibn Khaldūn, Tā'rīkh, vol. 2, p. 37.
6. Ya'qūbī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 2, p. 250; Bayhaqī, Al-Mahāsin wa al-Masāwī, vol. 1, p. 46.
7. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 2, p. 9; Bayhaqī, Al-Mahāsin wa al-Masāwī, vol. 1, p. 46; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd al-Farīd, vol. 5, p. 137; Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, Al-Aghānī, vol. 1, p. 25; Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 111; Samhūdī, Wafā' al-Wafā', vol. 1, p. 127.
8. Azraqī, Akhbār Makkat al-Musharrafa, vol. 1, p. 139.
9. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 208.
10. Tabarī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 371.
11. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 2, p. 9; Bayhaqī, Al-Mahāsin wa al-Masāwī, vol. 1, p. 46.
12. Nuwayrī, Nahāyat al-Irab, vol. 6, p. 217.
13. Bal'amī, Ta'rīkh Nāma-yi Tabarī, vol. 2, p. 719.
14. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 208.

15. Y□q□t Hamaw□, Mu‘jam al-Buld□n, vol. 2, p. 372.
16. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im□ma wa al-Siy□sa, vol. 1, p. 208; Ibn Ath□r, Al-K□mil f□ al-Ta’r□kh, vol. 4, p. 111.
17. Ab□ al-Faraj al-Isfah□n□, Al-Agh□n□, vol. 1, p. 24.

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