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DEMOCRATIZATION IN BAHRAIN

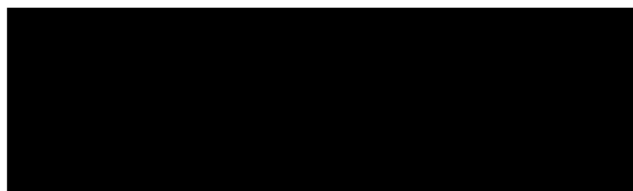
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY Hisham Ghaith

DEMOCRATIZATION IN BAHRAIN

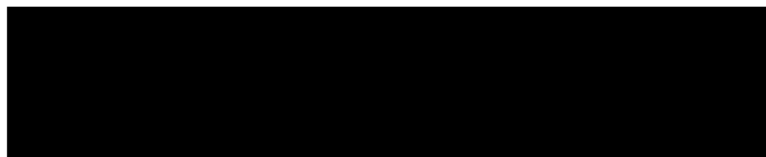
A thesis submitted to the Education and Social Sciences Division in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Arts in International Affairs.

JURY



Fawaz Traboulsi, Ph.D., Advisor

for



Paul Tabar, Ph.D.

To the person who made me be, my mother

Jury

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Abstract

The struggle for change and democracy in Bahrain is a historic one marred by injustices, pains and disappointments. The Bahraini people made many sacrifices and endured many sufferings in order to realize change and implement reforms. Many political movements were involved in the quest for democracy and suffered from persecution by the Al-Khalifa family that has been ruling Bahrain since 1783, and which was always adamant to crush any opposition. Severe and violent measures were adopted in handling opposition activists, and many violations of human rights took place. However, this long struggle resulted in the introduction of several changes on the way to reform and democracy. Nevertheless, this process remains incomplete as many shortcomings still mark the course of democratization.

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Introduction

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the question of democratization gained momentum in the Arab world, which came under pressure from the United States to implement reform to deal with fundamentalism. "After September 11 the United States, which had for long supported the Arab regimes, found itself a victim of some radical organizations which it had also supported, as a result it was forced to change its strategies and to push its allies in the Arab world to have some reforms"¹. In order to deal with this issue, I have chosen the topic of democratization in Bahrain, which is considered to be one of the most recent cases in the area where several reform steps have been realized and many more still to be achieved.

Chapter One presents a theoretical study on democracy covering its essential interpretation. It also discusses the related values such as human rights and the democratic practices as well as the problem of democracy in the Arab world.

Chapter Two is a historical study in three parts. First, the role of the Al-Khalifa royal family that has been ruling Bahrain since 1783 and is still holding power despite coming under increasing pressure from opposition movements calling for reforms and for people's participation in policy making. Second, the political system in Bahrain shedding light on its early beginnings, the various phases it underwent. Third, the

¹ Akari, A (2003) *Qira'a fi Mashrou' al Islah al Dimoqrati*. Beirut: Dar al Kounouz al Adabiyah. p.14

history and backgrounds of social and political movements, which had a major role in the reform process.

Chapter Three will be devoted to the study of the various problems in the political system of Bahrain along with their social and economic consequences. These problems have long existed especially with the unjust practices of both the British authorities and the Al-Khalifa royal family, however they became more apparent in the 1920s with the general awareness resulting from the spread of social clubs and schools. Severe restrictions were imposed on political movements that included the banning of political parties, the imprisonment of active opposition figures and limiting freedom of expression, whereby many newspapers were banned and some had to operate from exile. Several schools were shut down and a number of social and religious activities barred. There is also the issue of discrimination practiced especially against the Shiite community, which constitutes the majority in Bahrain, and which has long suffered from persecution by the Al-Khalifa family. It also discusses the discrimination practiced against women in addition to many violations of human rights. This chapter covers also the problems facing the media and freedom of speech.

Chapter Four covers the various political movements involved in the quest for democracy and reforms, their backgrounds, roles and contribution to the democratization process. Bahrain is considered to be one of the most politically active states in the Gulf. It witnessed the first form of community activity in the early twentieth century as social clubs and associations helped create public awareness and led to the formation of political movements. These movements were heavily influenced by political events taking place especially in the Arab world with the spread of Marxism and nationalism after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in addition to the Islamic affiliation felt by both the Sunni and Shiite communities of Bahrain. This chapter also covers the obstacles that hindered the work of these movements. In addition to persecution, political movements in Bahrain suffered from the sectarian challenge and from organizational problems.

Chapter Five sheds light on the accomplishments made on the path of democracy, and the reform measures taken by the government with the aim of calming the opposition

and answering some of the rising demands for change. Jailed opposition leaders, political and religious figures were released, others were allowed back in the country, political movements were granted more freedom of action, more newspapers were published and some progress was noticed in the field of human rights. Nevertheless, the process of reform and democratization in Bahrain remains incomplete with more amendments needed and several demands still being raised by the opposition and this issue will be also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter One: Theory of Democracy

1.1 Democracy: A Theoretical Study:

The word democracy has been given many meanings and interpretations, but it is basically about the rule of people with a completely equal distribution of political power, “one man, one vote”. In general terms, democracy is a form of government in which the people have the right to control their own destiny. In a democracy the people are the source of all authorities and have the right to make or at least affect the decisions that affect their lives. The essential definition can be derived from its Greek origin. Democracy from the Greek *demokratia*: *demos* “the people” and *kratia* “government” was not always held in such esteem and carried an unfavorable meaning until the nineteenth century. However, the practice of true democracy as in its essential definition has been extremely rare throughout history because it is very difficult to execute (the example of Athens’s General Assembly). The reason behind this is that it is simply not possible to gather all citizens on every issue and have them directly participate in decision-making. This practice might be applicable in a small town where people would convene to discuss and vote upon their issues, but it is definitely not practical or realizable on the scale of nations and states. Therefore, the

only workable form of democracy has been representative democracy where the people play a more general role.

This democracy is practiced through representatives elected by the people to rule on their behalf and to protect their general interests. These representatives are usually individual candidates or members of political parties, they are elected for a given period of time, and each one usually acts for a given district or group of people. Their legitimacy derives from the people to whom they are responsible and accountable, and is based on a majority of the votes cast. However, this does not mean that officials and legislators have to go back to the people on every issue to vote on it; rather, it is that the people would control the general direction of the government through electing their representatives while leaving the details to officials. Since it is hard to achieve absolute consensus, the practice of representative democracy is based on the rule of majority rule while preserving the rights of minorities. "A prerequisite for Arab political thought, democracy relies on the rule of majority while ensuring the rights of the minorities"².

The most important principle in a democracy is elections. In a democratic state no one has an inherent right to occupy a position of political power: He or she must be elected by fellow citizens. To prevent legitimacy from becoming identified with only certain individuals, democratic systems provide for elections. The practice of election is a given right to every eligible citizen and constitutes a tool of control and accountability in the hands of the people, where leaders and officials know that they won't be reelected if they fail to fulfill their responsibilities. It also provides for changing officials and alternation in power where, and due to changes in ideals and alliances, minorities become majorities and vice versa. In addition, a democracy states the principle of separation of power where the work of the three authorities (legislative, executive and judicial) is conducted in a way to ensure their independency while maintaining cooperation among their various bodies.

Democracies respect the concept of citizenship where the rights of various citizens and communities are protected by law regardless of race, religion or gender. They also emphasize the importance of human rights issues such as freedom of speech and

² Khater, A.F. (2004). *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. P. 416

belief, the right to peaceful opposition, equal opportunities, rights of participation and self-determination. "There is a strong relation between human rights and democracy which is, despite its various interpretations, a political system based on a group of values and legislations working in a way to organize the relation between the different institutions of this system while ensuring the independency of each of them, which is known as the concept of separation of authorities"³. In addition to the rights they have, people in a democracy also have responsibilities toward the state. There is also a moral responsibility at the level of state's officials where they are bound by democracy not to use their status to achieve personal benefits.

Democratic governments give importance to the people's opinions, they are interested in finding out whether the people are satisfied or disturbed, they also seek their feedback on several issues. For this, people are free to speak up and express their views where press and media in general form a platform for dialogue between the people and their leaders. Moreover, democratic governments conduct referendums and polls to allow people to express freely their concerns and aspirations. "The West has learned that to ensure democracy the peoples' demands should be responded to, thus western democracies give much importance to what the people want and to finding out what they think on the important issues"⁴.

In brief, democracy is a political system in which the people rule through any form of government they choose to establish. This is based on the rule of majority with preserving the minorities' rights, and is usually accompanied with a set of values and democratic practices. Since in a democracy officials rule on behalf of the people, the latter tend to accept more the policies of their governments; thus, many states try to promote their governments as democratic. "Democratization contributes to more ensuring a free world, every people want to be free, thus the practice of democracy has become more essential and appealing to most of the peoples who desire their governments to be democratic"⁵.

³ Akari, A. (2004). *Qadaya al Islah wal Dimouqratiyah wal Tanmiyah wal Huqouq*. Beirut: Dar al Kounouz al Adabiyah. p. 85

⁴ Sharanski, N. (2006). *Defence de la Democratie*. Paris: Bourin Editeur. p. 31

⁵ Ibid. p. 33

Like many Arab countries especially in the Gulf region, Bahrain suffers from the absence of basic liberties whereby any form of opposition is brutally dealt with by the government, which is only protecting its interests and those of the ruling class. "The Arab dictatorial regimes have succeeded not only in depriving people of bread and dignity, but also in depriving them of air!"⁶. This fact, along with the corruption that stemmed from it, led to a state of public frustration and to calls for reforms and the right to participate in decision-making through the application of democracy.

⁶ Khater, A.F. (2004). *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. p. 421

Chapter Two: Historical Study

2.1 The Al-Khalifa Royal Family:

Unable to coexist with other powerful tribes in the region, the Al-Khalifa tribe traveled around the Gulf area and settled in the islands of Bahrain, which seemed to be promising as its pearl reserves, at that time, satisfied their aspiration for fortune and wealth. “One of the most violent tribes, the Al-Khalifa, and after being unable to coexist with Al-Saoud in Najad and Al-Sobah in Kuwait, found in Bahrain a shelter where they practiced injustice against the other tribes and where they saw in the pearl fortune an answer to their quest for wealth and power”⁷.

From the first moment they settled in, the Al-Khalifa tribe aimed to dominate the islands of Bahrain and to control both its resources (pearl reserves and agriculture). In order to do so, they first adopted a violent approach in dealing with the local tribes. They were also adamant to crush any form of opposition from the very beginning. Second, they allied themselves with British colonialism to protect themselves against the other tribes, especially the Al-Saoud tribe of Najad in today’s Saudi Arabia. This historic alliance, between the Al-Khalifa family and the British authorities, was

⁷ Shemlan, A. and others. (1997). *Al Haraka Al Dastourria*. Bahrain: Dar Al Wehda Al Watania. P.

emphasized through several agreements. First, the General Peace Treaty in 1820, followed by the treaty of 1861 that put Bahrain under the British protection and finally, the Exclusive Agreements of 1880 and 1892. This alliance proved to be beneficial for both parties as the royal family helped protect Britain's interests in Bahrain and the British authorities guaranteed the survival of the Al-Khalifa reign.

In another self-preservation policy, the Al-Khalifa family played on inter-communal divisions to weaken any form of opposition. Taking advantage of sectarian friction between the Shiites and Sunnis, the royal family tried to present opposition activities as acts of vandalism and disobedience displayed by the Shiites with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the regime for the benefit of external powers. This policy aimed at stripping the opposition of its patriotic aspect and depriving it of popular support and eventually legitimacy. "According to the prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa ben Salman Al-Khalifa, the crisis in Bahrain is caused by the interference of Iran in the internal affairs of the country by pushing the Shiite communities to create disturbance and thus, all their acts will be considered as high treason and those responsible for them should be prosecuted"⁸.

In order to reinforce sectarianism, members of the royal family persecuted the Shiite majority and dominated the country's affairs on behalf of the Sunni minority by presenting themselves as God-chosen rulers. "Since 1971, the state supported the Sunni religious institutions and gave them many privileges in order to use them in defending the rule of the royal family"⁹. Moreover, the Al-Khalifa family played up the fear factor between the two communities by presenting the Sunnis as the ruling class face-a-face of the oppressed Shiites. This was partly true as the Al-Khalifa family was at the head of several Sunni tribes; nevertheless, not all Sunnis benefited from this situation. On the other hand, the royal family presented the Shiites as trying to overthrow the Sunni rule and establish a Shiite regime affiliated with Iran. However, all these practices failed to silence the opposition and created more frustration, protests and increasing calls for reforms.

⁸ Annahar. (01/02/1996). *Conflict Issues Between State and Opposition*. Beirut.

⁹ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p.127

The royal family went as far as igniting violent clashes between the two communities. "It was proven that the conflicts of September 1953, that took place between the Shiite and Sunni communities after the fight during Ashoura Parade (A Shiite religious occasion), were initiated and caused by the government as the police deputy chief then, who was a member of Al-Khalifa family, was at the head of security elements responsible for throwing glass bottles at the marching parade"¹⁰.

Although the discriminatory policy was directed against the Shiites, the injustices of Al-Khalifa family affected, in different degrees, all the people of Bahrain. The royal family practiced a greedy economic policy that caused Bahrain to become the poorest nation in the Gulf region with thousands of poor families and tens of thousands of unemployed citizens. It also monopolized key state positions. By alienating the public from political life and allowing widespread corruption, the royal family created an opportunity for different communities to join in calls for reforms and strengthened the opposition. In order to calm the opposition, the royal family adopted several maneuvering tactics such as the creation of its own social associations. Several members of the royal family formed the Reform Association (Jam'ayat Al-Isslah), which aimed at promoting social reform, as interpreted by the state, through religious guidance and charity work. "As opposed to closing several clubs and associations that were considered belonging to the opposition, the government established several ones to promote its policies"¹¹.

In summary, we can say that the Al-Khalifa family, and since they first ruled Bahrain in 1783, has resorted to all means possible in order to tighten their grip over the country and protect its reign and interests. After more than twenty-two decades, this family has maintained the same policies, introducing few changes, with regards to governance and the people versus state relationship.

¹⁰ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p. 91

¹¹ Alfaleh, M. (2004). *Al Gharb Wal Mojtaba' Wal Dawla Wal Dimoqratiyah*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p. 92

2.2 History of Bahrain and its Political System:

The Islands of Bahrain are situated in “Salwi” gulf between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. “In addition to the main island from which Bahrain took its name, there is a group of islands totaling 256 square miles with a population of less than one million”¹². Bahrain was under the Portuguese rule between 1522 and 1602. After this period, Bahrain was subject to the indirect rule of the Persian Kingdom through its Arab rulers. Since 1820, under the General Peace Treaty, Bahrain was subject to the British influence. It then went under the British protection with the treaty of 1861 and the Exclusive Agreements of 1880 and 1892.

Before the emergence of political movements during the 1950s; and which were represented in three main streams, the Nationalist, the Marxist and the Islamic; Bahraini society witnessed, since the 1920s, several popular movements aiming at improving the situation of the lower class formed mainly of pearl divers, fishermen, sailors and peasants. These movements mushroomed as a result of the difficult living conditions of the working class, which was growing more and more frustrated and aware of its situation and rights. “The establishment of social clubs and associations in the 1920s and the emergence of journalism in addition to the spread of education created a political awareness and led to the political organization aspiration”¹³.

The first attempt for reform took place in 1923 and was initiated by a group of wealthy merchants and several tribal and religious Sunni figures under the name of the National Convention (Al Mo'tamar al Watani). However, this attempt did not succeed as it did not represent the demands of the various communities of Bahrain, and also as “it has failed to identify the royal family and the British colonialism as their common enemy”¹⁴

In 1938, the national bourgeois took charge of the reform movement calling for changing the governing system and for forming a legislative council. These demands were not answered and the leaders of the movement were arrested by the orders of the

¹² Dialogue Magazine. (February 1995). *Bahrain: The Struggle for a Constitutional System*. London

¹³ Shemlan, A. (1997). *Al Haraka Al Destourria*. Bahrain: Dar Al Wehda Al Wataniah. p. 182

¹⁴ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p. 7

British chancellor to the Bahrain government Mr. Charles Belgriff. The crackdown on this movement resulted in strikes by workers in favor for change. Here, it is important to mention that the early conflicts between the people and the state began with the working class long before the establishment of political movements since the workers were constantly calling for better conditions, in addition to other demands held by the opposition.

The 1950s were undoubtedly the most politically active years in the contemporary history of Bahrain. "Influenced by the spread of nationalism in the Arab world, the people of Bahrain were heavily involved in political meetings and groupings as workers were intensely calling for people's participation in the process of political decision making and for the liberty of labor union activity"¹⁵. In 1954, Bahrain witnessed its most democratic movement when its communities rallied behind the High Executive Committee (Al-Hay'a al-Tanfizia al-Olia), which had a major role in the political movement by heading calls for the creation of a legislative council, the permission to activate labor unions and the introduction of several reforms in state institutions and the judiciary.

After being recognized by the government as a political movement, the Committee changed its name to the National Union Committee (Hay'at al Ittihad al Watani) but was later banned by the government, which was unwilling to make serious concessions. "Between the years of 1956 and 1969, Bahrain was internally run through a managerial council formed of the directors of the various government departments which were run previously by the British chancellor Mr. Belgriff. This small move came as the only concession the government was willing to make"¹⁶.

Several political movements emerged from within the Committee such as the Bahraini National Liberation Front (Jabhat al Tahrir al Watani al Bahraniya), which represented the Marxist stream and the Arab Baath Socialist Party (Hizb al Ba'eth al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki) and the Arab Nationalists Movement (Harakat al Qawmeyeen al-Arab), which represented the nationalist stream. Since then, these movements have constituted the main political opposition to the governing system in Bahrain.

¹⁵ Shirawi, A. (2005). *Awraq Ommaliah*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p.21

¹⁶ Baharna, M.H. (2005). *Al Bahrain Bayn Destourain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p. 22

On the other hand, the Islamic movements, both Shiite and Sunni, had a relatively minor role in the reform process compared to that of the Marxist and nationalist movements. "The work of the Sunni Islamic movements was weak as a result of the spread of nationalism in the Arab world during the 1950s and the Shiite Islamic figures did not have any important role before the 1970s where several movements, like the Islamic Front for the liberation of Bahrain (Al Jabha al Islamia Litahrir al Bahrain) and the Bahrain Islamic Liberals Movement (Harakat Ahrar al Bahrain al Islamia), were established especially after the Islamic revolution in Iran"¹⁷.

2.3 History of Social and Political Movements:

In the early 1920's, the state of Bahrain witnessed the birth of a number of social clubs and communal associations. They took part in the development of Bahraini society by facilitating the process of integration of the country's different communities. Through integration, they weakened divisions rooted in sectarianism, tribalism, social clashes, political affiliations and racial conflict. "The communal associations should have an essential role in supporting the government steps towards reform and democracy"¹⁸.

In a country where any form of political activity or union work was forbidden, social clubs and associations gained popularity for creating a forum for political interaction through which communities secretly practiced political activity and expressed their opposition to state practices. Thus, if we want to study political activity in Bahrain, we should start by taking a closer look at social clubs and associations that were mushrooming in the country.

The first organized form of social work in Bahrain dates to the early twentieth century when a group of men established in Manama Iqbal Awal, a public library that was transformed later into a social club. Later, Bahrain witnessed, in 1910, the establishment of The Islamic Club (Al-Nadi Al-Islami). These clubs paved the way

¹⁷ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p. 8

¹⁸ <http://alwasatnews.com>

for the emergence of other associations during 1920s and 1930s. This social movement created some space of freedom allowing people to voice their concerns and aspirations. Following is a brief list of clubs and associations that were established.

<u>The club or Association</u>	<u>Date established</u>
-Al-Nadi Al-Adabi	1919
-Al-Montada Al-Islami	1928
-Nadi Al-Bahrain	1935
-Al-Nadi Al-Ahli	1937
-Nadi Al-Orouba	1939
-Al-Halaka Al-Bahrainia	1946
-Nadwat Al-Adab Wal Fan	1952
-Nadi Al-Bahrain Lel Sayedat	1953

As explained earlier, these social clubs constituted a political forum for the people of Bahrain to express their ideas and concerns. They also helped create political awareness that led to the formation of several political movements. "The civil society institutions, which emerged through the spread of education and social clubs, had a major role in creating the political awareness in Bahrain"¹⁹.

Since all political activities were prohibited, these movements worked in secrecy and as result were subject to persecution by the authorities. They also suffered, as we will see throughout this research, many injustices over several decades. Despite the difficulties and obstacles, political activity was gaining strength and opposition to the government was growing stronger with the increasing appearance of political movements. These movements were inspired by the events taking place in the region and the spread of several political thoughts that guided political work in the Arab

¹⁹ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p. 13

world such as the nationalist and the Marxist ideologies, and later on, the Islamic thoughts.

Following the discovery of oil reserves and the emergence of petroleum industry in 1932, the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPECO) attracted the majority of the working class despite bad working conditions. Eventually, these conditions created a state of frustration that led to public uprisings between 1938 and 1942. The British authorities deployed large forces to crack down and detain the protesters and strikers. However, these practices failed to put an end to the movement of the working class, which succeeded in 1938 in forming a list of the main demands aimed at improving their conditions and the general situation. The demands included the establishment of a legislative council, the liberty of labor union activity and the implementation of a law that would organize the affairs of the working class.

Since the 1920s, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the end of World War One, the Arab countries witnessed a remarkable wave of nationalist sentiment through which the people of the region were aspiring for independence and participation in self-governance. Some countries, at a later stage, also adopted the concepts of Marxism that reigned in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

It was only until the 1950's that these feelings and thoughts matured and resulted in the appearance of a number of nationalist and socialist parties, which controlled many regimes in the Arab world and managed to reach the state of Bahrain and influence the nature of its political movements. "Due to many factors such as the spread of Arab affiliation and the cultural movement in Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon, the nationalist stream appeared in the Arab Gulf area with the beginning of the twentieth century"²⁰.

The first officially recognized political movement in Bahrain was the High Executive Committee later known as the National Union Committee. This Committee is considered to be one of the most important political movements in Bahrain as it played a major role in the nation's political arena, especially during the 1950's and

²⁰ Khater, A.F. (2004). *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company p. 263

1960's. We will discuss, in depth, the background and role of this committee in the nationalist movements section.

Chapter Three: Problems and Challenges

3.1 Problems of Bahrain's Political System:

Bahrain and its political system have long suffered from the absence of any democratic practices in addition to the domination of the Al-Khalifa family. The royal family, with a few fortunate close tribes, have benefited greatly from the resources of Bahrain as well as from the power it has. "The Al-Khalifa tribe was able to tighten its control over the areas they occupied by confiscating agricultural territories and fishing sites. These resources were later shared with the tribal allies"²¹. This family also used its influence to take over all lubricant projects and increase its wealth. Moreover, and for more than two hundred years, the Al-Khalifa family dominated the state and kept the key positions within its members and allies. In order to better understand this domination, we present in the following table the government during the rule of prince Issa ben Salman A-Khalifa in 1999, and which points out the domination of Al-Khalifa family.

²¹ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p. 18

TABLE 1.A

NAME	POST	BACKGROUND	REMARK
Khalifa Al-Khalifa	Prime Minister	Al-Khalifa family	Brother of the prince
Hamad Al-Khalifa	Crown Prince	Al-Khalifa family	Son of the prince
Rashed Al-Khalifa	Head of National Guard	Al-Khalifa family	Son of the prince
Ali Al-Khalifa	Head of Diwan	Al-Khalifa family	Son of the prince
Khalifa ben Ahmad	Minister of Defense	Al-Khalifa family	Cousin of the prince
Mohamad ben Mobarak	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Al-Khalifa family	Cousin of the prince
Mohamad ben Khalifa	Minister of Internal Affairs	Al-Khalifa family	Cousin of the prince
Abdallah ben Khaled	Minister of Justice	Al-Khalifa family	Cousin of the prince
Khaled ben Abdallah	Minister of Housing	Al-Khalifa family	Son of Justice minister
Ali ben Khalifa	Minister of Transportation	Al-Khalifa family	Son of Prime minister
Issa ben Ali	Minister of Petroleum and Industry	Al-Khalifa family	Cousin of the prince
Abdel-Aziz Al-Fadel	Minister of Education	Sunni Tribal	Army Officer
Mohamad Al-Motawa'	Minister of Information	Sunni	Cousin of Finance and Electricity ministers
Ibrahim Abdelkarim	Minister of Finance	Sunni	Cousin of Information and Electricity ministers
Abdallah Jomaa	Minister of Electricity	Sunni	Cousin of Information and Finance ministers
Ali Al-Saleh	Minister of Trade	Shiite	
Faysal Al-Mosawi	Minister of Health	Shiite	Cousin of Agriculture minister
Abdel-Nabi Al-Sha'la	Minister of Labor	Shiite	
Majed Al-Jeshi	Minister of Agriculture	Shiite	Cousin of Health minister
Jawad Al-Arid	State Minister	Shiite	

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Bahrain witnessed a continuous struggle between the majority of the people on one side and the royal family and the British colonial authorities on the other. All the popular movements since 1910 aimed to reach the right for public participation in the political process through an elected parliament. Many political movements participated in the struggle and faced many obstacles, which started with the difficulties facing the social associations. Most of these associations were not given permission to work and eventually closed down as they formed, in the absence of any public political work, some kind of a political forum for the people to meet and express their concerns and their opposition to the practices of both the state and the British authorities. "With the banning of any political activity, the social clubs and associations became meet forums for the various opinions and their influence reached its most in the 1950s and 1960s"²²

Since the state was determined not to allow political opposition, all political activists were persecuted, and severe measures were adopted in the face of any form of opposition by both the government and the British authorities. These measures varied in intensity as some opposition figures were jailed, others were forced into exile and state intelligence members assassinated others. In addition, these activists were stripped of their civil rights, whereby the exiled were not given any facilities from the Bahraini embassies and their children were not given passports. "Abdel Rahman Mohamad Naeimi mentions that when he was banished to Syria, his son was not given a passport and when he won the law suit in the courts of Bahrain, the department of immigration and passports refused to give him the passport, by the orders of Mr. Henderson the British director general of general security"²³.

Nevertheless, the opposition remained active as it was encouraged by political events and the atmosphere in the area. A large number of young Bahrainis were studying in the universities of several Arab capitals like Beirut and Cairo and were influenced by the values of freedom they experienced there, and which they wanted to bring back home. "Many prominent opposition figures were originally young Bahraini men

²² Humaidan, A. (2004). *Hay'at Al Ittihad Al Watani Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.13

²³ Annahar (01/02/1996). *Conflict Issues Between State and Opposition*. Beirut

studying in universities outside the country and especially in the Arab world, the Soviet Union and the socialist countries”²⁴.

Since the 1950s the relationship between government and public was marred by conflicts that often took a violent nature. Strikes and protests were brutally crushed by the British troops and the security forces and many opposition figures were banished or imprisoned and tortured. In 1975, the intensity of those clashes increased, especially following the dissolution of Parliament along with the incidents and frustration that resulted from this step.

After Bahrain's independence in 1971, the workers' organizations affiliated with the Marxist stream and working in the shadow, organized the famous uprising of March 1972 calling for freedoms and reforms. “The uprising of March 1972 forced the authorities to announce the elections for a council to draft a constitution”²⁵. In December 1973 prince Issa ben Salman approved the constitution prepared by the council and Bahrain held the first ever parliamentary elections in which candidates from various political movements participated and the first parliament was elected. With the new constitution and the parliamentary elections, tension eased and so did the activity of various opposition movements, and the political atmosphere became more relaxed because this step was considered to be the first on the way to democracy.

However, in less than two years prince Issa ben Salman Al Khalifa dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution. By doing so, he placed the process of decision-making and political activities back in the hands of the royal family thus depriving the public from participation. “In 1974, Bahrain witnessed some political prosperity which was soon attacked by the royal family by presenting the State Security Bill that was rejected by the main three blocks in the parliament (Marxist, Islamic and National) and as result prince Issa ben Hamad Al-Khalifa ordered in August 26 1975 the dissolution of the parliament and the suspension of the constitution especially the parts related to public freedoms and elections”²⁶.

²⁴ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.56

²⁵ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.8

²⁶ Annahar (01/02/1996). *Conflict Issues Between State and Opposition*. Beirut

In addition, a state of emergency was declared, the State Security Law was implemented and political movements were forced to go underground. During this period, state security agents took extreme and oppressive measures against opposition leaders and militants. "These measures included the limitation of the passport validity for students by one year only and forbidding some of them to travel, they also included preventive detention of all opposition activists for a period exceeding three years without trial, in addition to widespread use of torture"²⁷.

The security forces conducted several raids and wide arrest campaigns against opposition activists and citizens, detaining members of Parliament, lawyers, doctors, engineers, poets and writers. The detainees were physically and psychologically tormented and the majority of them remained in prison without trial till the beginning of the 1980s. In 1976, the government made more arrests and most of the detainees were brought to martial court and handed lengthy prison terms. "All the detainees were sentenced, before the martial court, between 7 and 25 years, and many of them died of torture"²⁸.

For years the government continued its campaign of arrests, oppression and banishments. The violent clashes lasted for almost a decade before cooling down in the 1980's only to explode at the start of the 1990's and continued until the beginning of 2000. "After a relatively calm period, conflicts between the opposition and the state heavily picked up since 1992 with many violent acts accompanying strikes and protests such as explosions, assaults on properties and shooting at protesters"²⁹.

The unrest brought together a group of political movements, representing various streams, which formed the Constitutional Movement (Al-Haraka Al-Dostoria) in 1992, and met around several reform demands. The demands focused on the revival of the 1973 Constitution, the abolishment of the State Security Law and the release of all the detainees in addition to the return of all banished citizens. As usual, the state rejected the demands and detained many figures and activists from a number of political movements. The government's response led to peaceful protests that were

²⁷ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.93

²⁸ Human Rights Watch. (1997). *Routine Abuse, Routine Denial: Civil Rights and the political Crisis in Bahrain*. New York: Human Rights Watch p.65

²⁹ Alfaleh, M. (2004). *Al Gharb Wal Mojtama' Wal Dawla Wal Dimoqratiyah*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.22

violently handled by anti-riots forces that used tear gas bombs and live ammunition, killing two and wounding tens.

The turbulent situation continued until 1999, when Prince Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa succeeded his father and pledged the implementation of reforms that would allow more liberties and would give the public a role in the country's policy making process through a legislative council. Prince Hamad's promises helped appease public anger. In November 2000, he ordered the formation of the National Supreme Committee (Allajna al Watania al Olia) to prepare for the National Action Charter (Mithak al Amal al Watani). After being approved by the prince, the accord was put to a national referendum in 2001 and was passed by 98.4 percent of the votes. The Bahraini public backed the Charter because it was based on the provisions of the 1973 Constitution, which they had longed to be re-activated.

However, and despite the progress made, conflicts between opposition and state returned to the scene in February 2002 when prince Hamad endorsed the new constitution known as the "Modified Constitution", which fell short of the people's aspiration. In consequence, the Constitutional Movement was revived and another forum was formed under the name of The Constitutional Convention or (Al-Mo'tamar Al-Destouri).

3.2 Practices of Discrimination and violation of Human Rights:

The unjust practices of the British colonial authorities and the state were not restricted to political activists but also targeted ordinary citizens, intellectuals, workers, men of religion, women and children. These practices, and despite relatively calm phases, continued to escalate throughout the years and varied in intensity depriving people of basic democratic freedoms such as the liberty of union activity or the right of political participation. Social groupings and associations were always subject to harassment and sometimes banned, political activists were persecuted, workers faced dire living conditions and discrimination was practiced against women and especially against the Shiite community.

Since settling in Bahrain, the Al-Khalifa family has adopted a discriminating policy against the Shiite community. The Shiites were persecuted, deprived of their basic rights, their lands were confiscated and they were forced into slave labor. "The Shiite community in Bahrain suffered from slavery and heavy taxation where a special tax was paid for every Shiite adult"³⁰. This fact has led to the division of the Bahraini society into an oppressed Shiite majority and a Sunni minority with Al-Khalifa tribe, at the head of this minority, dominating the whole society.

Most of the Shiite dominated regions, especially in the countryside, were underdeveloped and deprived of public services. This was one of the main reasons behind the Shiite opposition, which aimed at improving their situation. Bad social, economic and political conditions were the driving force behind many Shiite uprisings, of which the most important took place in February 1922. "The most severe persecution of the Shiites by the government was mostly apparent in the countryside where many stories were told about robberies, rapes, slavery and other brutal practices"³¹.

The government's persecution of the Shiites was severe to the extent that they were treated as second or even third class citizens and they were also denied all civil and human rights. They were denied participation in the judiciary or managerial posts. Discrimination was also practiced in the state institutions such as the army, the state department and even the universities where acceptance was given on a sectarian basis. "The Shiites were subject to massacres and were treated as slaves where their testimonies were not accepted in the courts of law"³².

In addition, the Al-Khalifa family has always tried to present opposition movements as acts of aggression conducted by the Shiites against the state and aimed at overthrowing the rule. The royal family has also accused the Shiites of carrying out these attempts for the benefit and backing of foreign powers. For this, the royal family has escalated oppressive measures against any Shiite opposition. With every clash with the opposition movements, the Bahraini government directed its harassment against the Shiite community and imprisoned many figures as well as ordinary

³⁰ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.87

³¹ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.18

³² Rumaihi, M. (1975). *Bahrain: a Study on Social and Political Changes Since the First World War*. Kuwait: University of Kuwait p.235

citizens. "In 1992, thousands of Shiites were arrested including women and children, many were tortured, and twenty others were assassinated"³³.

The violent and greedy policy adopted by the royal family and the resulting corruption along with the brutal practices have led to severe violation of human rights and Bahrain was always identified by human rights organizations as one of the most violating countries. The government practices have affected almost the whole society where men, women and even children suffered from persecution. Prisons were filled with thousands and many were tortured, hundreds were exiled, social associations and schools were closed, clergies were arrested and religious occasions were prohibited. Lawyers were not given access to their clients' files who were interrogated in secret and detained for years without trial, excessive force was used to handle protests with tear gas bombs and live ammunition. "The protests of 1992 were brutally dealt with where women and children as young as 9 and 10 years old were arrested"³⁴.

Discrimination was also practiced against women as they were deprived from all civil and political rights. For many years women have been struggling to achieve their basic rights. Bahraini women have always played an important role in the opposition process especially since the 1960s, when they started writing in local press calling for equality and for the right of political participation, and where participated in the strikes and protests of 1965. "The Bahraini woman has helped in pushing the society forward with her role in resisting colonialism and in fighting against the backwards who deprived her from her rights"³⁵. It is important to mention here that the first women association in the Arab gulf region was The Bahrain Girl Renaissance Association or (Jam'eyat Nahdat Fatat Al-Bahrain) which was established in 1955. Despite their active struggle, women failed to realize their demands and when the constitution was declared in 1973, they were deprived of the right of political participation, something that extended their struggle until the new constitution of 2002.

³³ Fakhro, M. (1990). *The Women at Work in the Gulf: A Case Study of Bahrain*. London: Kegan Paul International p.142

³⁴ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.110

³⁵ Naeimi, A.R. (2002). *Al Bahrain: Mawdou'at Al Islah Al Siyasi*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.214

3.3 Problems Facing Media and Freedom of Speech:

In every totalitarian regime, media is controlled and orientated by the state leaving no room for freedom of speech. Newspapers, radio and television stations are continuously monitored, phone calls are tapped and press is used as a tool to promote and support the state's policies. This was the situation in Bahrain where, in the absence of public and democratic freedoms, citizens were not allowed to express their opposition and those who dare to speak up were persecuted. Despite various challenges and obstacles, the press in Bahrain has played a major role in creating awareness on several important issues such as democratic rights and corruption, for this it was subject to harassment and persecution. Eventually journalists and editors practiced self-censorship to avoid severe consequences. "The policy of the government was to monitor radio and television stations and especially the press by pressuring them to abide by the path defined by the state"³⁶.

In addition, the state has always tried to use media as a promotional tool to advertise its policies. It wanted to be present on every front page with its main symbols (the royal family) in a way to emphasize its role and defend its views. For this, the newspapers that accepted censorship and supported the government policies were given aids from the ministry of information and those that criticized it were persecuted and closed down. "Rulers were financially supporting certain press to defend their political views"³⁷. A free press is always essential to any democracy as it creates dialogue between the citizens and the government; however, this was never the case in Bahrain where the government, unwilling to have any outspoken opposition, has cracked down the press. "As a result of the state security law, people were not allowed to even discuss politics and many journalists were forbidden from writing and put in prison, also many intellectuals were persecuted because of their thoughts"³⁸.

³⁶ Naeimi, A.R. (2004). *Malafat Sakhina*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.42

³⁷ Shayegi, H. (1989). *Al Sahafa Fil Bahrain Wal Kuwait*. Manama: Matbou'at Panorama Al Khaleej p. 73

³⁸ Al Kifah Al Arabi. (19/02/1996). *The Culture of Bahrain invaded By the Military*. Beirut

To conclude we say that no society can advance without freedom of speech because people need to be free to speak up and express their concerns, and their voices need to be heard at the leadership level in order to answer their just causes and serve them better. In addition, constructive criticism results in improvement and eventually progress and usually it is the main responsibility of the press in any free democratic country. However, this was not the case in Bahrain where press was persecuted and often used by the state as a promotional tool. "We cannot present a model for reform in the Arab situation if we do not have freedom of speech and freedom of having independent censorship-free journalism"³⁹.

The following table presents some of the information we have on the early press of Bahrain. It also points out the persecution this press suffered by stopping them.

³⁹ Naeimi, A.R. (2002). *Mawdou'at Al Islah Al Siyasi*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p. 165

TABLE 3.A				
Some of the early press of Bahrain				
NAME	ISSUING DATE	STOPPING DATE	NATURE	REMARKS
Jaridat Al-Bahrain	March 1938	June 1944	Political Weekly	Stopped due to world paper crisis
Sawt Al- Bahrain	August 1950	August 1954	Literate Monthly	Stopped by orders of the government
Al-Kafila	November 1952	November 1954	Political Bi-weekly	Stopped by orders of the government
Al-Watan	June 1955	1956	Political Weekly	Stopped by orders of the government
Al-Mizan	1955	November 1956	Political Weekly	Stopped after the banning of press by the state in 1956
Al-Adwa'e	August 1965	Still being issued	Political Weekly	Was issued after the press law of 1965
Sada Al- Osbo'e	July 1969	Still being issued	Political Weekly	Handles political and social issues

Chapter Four: Social and Political Movements

Bahrain witnessed with the beginning of the twentieth century the emergence of many social clubs and associations that helped raise awareness on the people right for better living conditions and their right to participate in the political process. This awareness was manifested in the formation of many political movements that became deeply involved in the quest for democracy.

4.1 Political Movements:

For many decades, political movements constituted the driving force behind calls for change, thus offering great contributions to the quest for democracy as well as to the political life of Bahrain. The beginnings of these movements can be traced back to the early twentieth century, however it was not until the 1950s that Bahrain witnessed the emergence of political movements.

The Shiite and Sunni communities of Bahrain, through their various figures and associations, came together for the first time in 1938 in the Reformist Movement, which was the first to bring the two communities together, and this was due to several reasons. First of all, the spread of education has created awareness of rights and responsibilities. Second, the booming of oil industry helped bring the two

communities together as workers from both sides had suffered from the same difficult conditions. Third, the openness to the outside world has also helped especially with the many Bahraini young men seeking education in Arab and European universities. Another factor was the emergence of reformist movements in Kuwait and Dubai, which influenced the people of Bahrain and gave them momentum. Nevertheless, this Movement was stifled with the arrest of its leaders by the British forces and the government.

Following is a detailed study of the various political movements, their backgrounds, roles and contributions.

a) The Nationalist Movements

With the end of the 19th century, Arab newspapers found their way into Bahrain and helped create awareness and eventually transmit the nationalist feeling that was spreading in the Arab world following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Arab nationalism was most powerful between the 1920s and 1950s due to several main reasons. First, the general aspiration after World War One and the Great Arab Revolution led by Al-Shareef Hussein, aimed at forming one Arab state and at reviving Arab glories and values. Second, the French and English colonialism, their unjust practices against the peoples of the Arab region and the exploitation of the area's resources, especially oil. Third, the events in Palestine during the 1940's when the Arab Gulf witnessed the formation of several committees to support the Palestinian people against the Zionist project. Finally, the 1952 revolution in Egypt led by Gamal Abdel-Nasser served to strongly enhance the nationalist aspirations throughout the Arab world.

Like in other Arab countries, nationalism was growing in Bahrain as people were getting more frustrated with British colonialism and were hoping for independence, control over their country's resources and Arab unity. "British Imperialism and its hegemony over oil resources have inflamed the national feelings of the Bahraini people since the beginning of the 1950s"⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Humaidan, A. (2004). *Hay'at Al Ittihad Al Watani Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.14

In 1949, the Voice of Bahrain (Sawt Al-Bahrain) newspaper was established and later in 1952 another newspaper, Al-Kafila, saw the light. These two newspapers contributed much in enhancing the nationalism among the Bahraini people through covering social, economic and political issues. The publications dealt with the questions of Arab nationalism, colonialism, the Palestinian cause and the 1952 revolution of Egypt.

Due to all these factors, Bahrain witnessed, in the mid of the twentieth century, the emergence of several political movements of a nationalist nature. However, these movements were considered a continuation of several nationalist factions and parties from outside Bahrain. The first of these movements was the Gulf Arabs Union Association (Jam'yat Ittihad Arab Al-Khaleej), which was established in 1939 by a group of Bahraini opposition figures based in Basra with the help of the Iraqi government. In 1956, Bahrain witnessed the formation of the Bureau for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf and the South of the Arab Peninsula (Maktab Tahrir Al-Khaleej Al-Arabi Wa Janoub Al-Jazeera), which was viewed as a nationalist front uniting all the movements based on Arab nationalism. This Bureau listed the following as its main goals. First, the integration of the Arab south and the Arab Emirates into one nation. Second, the liberation of the Arab people in the Arab south and the Arab Emirates from colonialism. Third, the struggle to ensure honest representation of the people. Fourth, the establishment of civil society institutions by forming associations and unions. Fifth, the development of social and health projects in deprived areas between Abu Dhabi and Zafar. Then, providing scholarships in the universities of some Arab countries such as Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq and Syria for students from the coast of Oman and the Arab south. Finally, the creation of military training camps across the Arab world in order to fight colonialism.

The Bureau's main activity was to issue statements calling for resistance against British colonialism in the Arab gulf area and in the Arab peninsula, it also called for the unity of the Arab world in one Arab state and supported President Nasser of Egypt and his vision for the region.

Another nationalist movement was the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party (ABSP) that was established in Syria in 1947. While studying in the universities of Beirut, Damascus and Cairo, a number of young Bahrainis were introduced to the teachings of this party, which called for the liberation of Arab countries from colonialism; as a result, they transported these values and teachings back home. "After graduating from the American University of Beirut and returning back to Bahrain in 1958, Ali Fakhro and Jawad Al-Jishi established the first circles of the party, soon after, its thoughts spread between students and workers"⁴¹. The major contribution of this party to Bahrain's political life was the participation of its members in the uprising of 1965. After the party was divided in 1966 between the regional leadership in Syria and the nationalist leadership in Iraq, its impact in Bahrain lessened as its relationship with its supporters weakened due to divisions within party ranks.

In 1959, the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM) was established in Bahrain and made its way into society mainly through the students who were studying in the Arab capitals, where nationalism was widespread such as Cairo, Damascus and Beirut. This movement considered the battle of the Arab nation against British colonialism its main goal. However, it also considered Iranian immigration to Bahrain as a danger to Arab identity and supported President Nasser and his nationalist ideas. The ANM gained popularity among students and the working class and succeeded in forming the National Union for the Students of Bahrain (Al-Ittihad Al-Watani Li Talabat Al-Bahrain) and the National Union for the Workers of Bahrain (Al-Ittihad Al-Watani Li Ommal Al-Bahrain). It also issued a monthly periodical, the People's Voice (Sawt Al-Sha'eb), which was published in secret and conveyed the group's thoughts and stands.

Despite the harassments and obstacles, the movement succeeded in 1965, along with other nationalist groupings such as the Nationalist Youth (Al-Shabiba Al-Qawmeya) and the People Stronger (Al-Sha'eb Aqwa), in forming the Nationalist Forces Front (Jabhat Al-Qiwa Al-Qawmeya). This Front played a major role in the uprising of March 1965 that came after BAPECO terminated the service of 1,500 workers. With the aim of reforming the general situation, the Front presented several demands. First, it called for the establishment of a legislative council where all communities are

⁴¹ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.24

represented. Second, it demanded the launching of negotiations with the British authorities with the purpose of attaining independence and dismantling military bases from Bahrain. It also called for permitting the liberty of labor union activity, and for the release of the detainees and the return the exiled.

However, and as usual, the government refused to address these demands and crushed the uprising through taking violent measures against protesters.

Nevertheless, the most important nationalist movement in Bahrain, if not the most important political movement, remains to be the National Union Committee (NUC). The significance of this committee derives from two main facts. First, it was the first political movement to conduct its work in public, since it was the first to gain official recognition. Second, it is the first national, non-sectarian political movement in the contemporary history of Bahrain. "The National Union Committee used all its potential to push people into rejecting sectarianism and to spread a new spirit of national unity"⁴². After the incidents of September 1953 between the Shiite and Sunni communities, a group of Bahrain's prominent figures and elders, from both communities, met and issued a joint condemnation of the clashes and declared in 1954 the establishment of the Supreme Executive Committee. This Committee included members from both communities and adopted the following goals. First, obtaining legitimacy through state's recognition. Second, the establishment of a legislative council through free elections. Third, the endorsement of a general law for the country, both civil and criminal. Fourth, reforming the judiciary. Fifth. the liberty of labor union activity. Finally, the establishment of a supreme court to handle conflicts between the executive and legislative authorities.

However, the state was not prepared to answer these demands so the Committee called for general strikes, which forced the government to conduct negotiations with the Committee that ended by its recognition after changing its name to the National Union Committee. "On the 18th of March 1956, the government of Bahrain recognized the National Union Committee, known before as the Supreme Executive Committee, as the first political movement"⁴³. NUC included many active members

⁴² Humaidan, A. (2004). *Hay'at Al Ittihad Al Watani Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.42

⁴³ Baharna, H.M. (2005). *Al Bahrain Bayna Dastourayn*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.22

from the young generation of the Arab nationalists and constituted a meeting point for the various nationalists, especially the Arab and the national reformist orientations. One of the Committee's main interests was improving the living conditions of the working class, which has long supported. So NUC adopted the cause of the working class with all its democratic and national aspects and identified the following aims. First, to ensure social stability by improving the situation of the working class. The second goal was to establish an active apparatus to handle conflicts between workers and employers, and to ensure improving work conditions. Third, to set a minimum wage. Then to ensure the employment of Bahraini citizens in the state's different institutions. Finally, to put an end to the flow of foreign workers into Bahrain and organize their presence.

After many obstacles and delays from the side of the British colonial authorities and the government, NUC was able to make another achievement in 1956, represented by the establishment of the first labor union in the history of Bahrain, that came under the name of the Bahraini Labor Federation (Ittihad Al-Amal Al-Bahrani), and which attracted 14,000 members in its first months. However, this union remained almost paralyzed due to bureaucracy and lack of experience, and due to the fact that the NUC was not able to help in this area as it also lacked the expertise. Appendix A and Appendix B present two documents of this federation.

Since the state did not tolerate the presence of a popular political movement that would voice opposition to government practices, it soon became apparent that the recognition of NUC was just another maneuver when the government insisted on banishing the committee's secretary general Mr. Abdel Rahman Baker. In addition, the state saw the perfect opportunity to disband NUC after the breakout of public protests across the country against the attack on Egypt in 1956 by the French, British and Israeli armies. So, and after acts of sabotage committed by anonymous groups, the government declared a state of emergency and arrested several of the Committee's leaders. On November 6 of the same year, NUC was dissolved and its activities were banned and many of its activists had to flee the country to avoid detention and torture.

In addition the nationalist movements succeeded in attracting the working class, which managed to organize the uprising of March 1965 demanding several reforms.

One of the major mistakes committed by the nationalist movements was their opposition to the Marxist ideology and ideas, which prevented the opposition in Bahrain to unite under one banner. Moreover, in 1967, Egypt and Syria went into war against Israel that lasted for less than a week and resulted in the loss of Arab territories, such as Sinai in Egypt, the Golan Heights in Syria, Rafah deserts in Jordan, in addition to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in Palestine. Following this defeat, the Arab nation suffered from a collective state of depression and frustration, which led many people to lose faith in Arab nationalism. As a result, many of the nationalist movements disappeared with the end of the 1960s, after the majority of the nationalists, such as ASBP and ANM, converted to Marxism. "After the loss of June 1967, The Arab Socialist Baath Party and the Arab Nationalists Movement declared their commitment to Marxism"⁴⁴.

b) The Marxist Movements:

After the government of Bahrain dissolved the NUC in 1956, many secret political movements, representing the Marxist stream, emerged from within its figures and popular base. Since then, these movements had an important role in the political life of Bahrain by becoming heavily involved in the opposition movement and contributing to the various events taking place from the 1950s till the recent ones after the 1992 constitutional uprising. "Since the 1950s, the Marxist movements in Bahrain were considered to be among the major ones in the process of political opposition"⁴⁵.

The Bahraini National Liberation Front (Jabhat Al-Tahrir Al-Watani Al-Bahraniya) was established in February 1955 as a manifestation of the objective need for an independent organizing tool of the working class. This Front was considered to be one of the Marxist Leninist movements supporting the Soviet Union and declared from the very beginning its commitment to the international and Arab communist movement and to the policies of the Soviet Union.

⁴⁴ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.42

⁴⁵ Akari, A. (2003) *Qira'a Fil Mashrou' Al Dimoqrati*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.49

In addition, the establishment of the BNLF was clearly supported by the Iranians and the Iraqi communists. The Front enjoyed close ties with the Iraqi Communist Party, which participated in its establishment. The involvement of this party was due to the fact that two of its leaders took refuge in Bahrain after being persecuted by the regime of Noori Al-Saeed in Iraq, and because many Bahraini students studying in Iraq were influenced by the thoughts of this party. Moreover, many figures of the Toda Iranian party, who were staying in Bahrain, influenced and supported the establishment of this Front. "The Bahraini National Liberation Front spread within the working class with the help of Iranian strugglers who imported revolutionary and socialist thoughts into Bahrain"⁴⁶.

In its early beginnings, the BNLF was mainly active within the social clubs. Later on, it spread among the working class where it started promoting the new Marxist concepts. The Front had an important role in leading strikes that took place during the 1950s, such as those of the municipality workers in 1958 and the British Airways, whose employees were calling for the improvement of work conditions and for the increase of salaries. In December 1962, the BNLF announced its reform program under the name of the Program for Freedom, National Independence, Democracy and Peace. This program included the following goals. First, defending the social, economic and political interests of the working class by organizing its affairs through union work, and by introducing laws to protect workers and provide them with social security. Second, establishing an independent democratic state. Third, the cancellation of the 1861 British Protection Pact and the formation of a national democratic government. Fourth, establishing democratic institutions that guarantee freedoms for the people. Finally, ensuring gender equality to protect the social, economic and political rights of women.

The BNLF contributed to the famous uprising of March 1965 and to all the workers' strikes between 1968 and 1970, it also participated, after the independence of Bahrain in 1971, with other political movements in forming a committee aimed at allowing the labor union activity. This Front presented its demands with the signatures of 25,000 workers and employees to the ministry of social affairs at the beginning of 1972. The

⁴⁶ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.42

calls were rejected and the workers led a huge strike in March of the same year, which was soon transformed into a major uprising pressing for reforms, human rights including the right for labor union activity. Many opposition figures were arrested and others were forced into exile, but eventually the government had to present concessions in order to contain the situation. It announced the establishment of a council to draft a constitution for the country.

However, BNLF was firmly critical of this council as it considered it a government tool and thus, the constitution will be a product of the government, so it boycotted the elections of this council in 1972, but it participated later in the elections of the parliament known as the National Council (Al-Majless AL-Watani) that took place in 1973.

From within the ANM, emerged in 1968 The Popular Revolutionary Movement of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PRMOAG). This Movement came as a result of the adoption of the Arab Nationalists Movement in the Arab Gulf area of Marxism, after the events of 1967 PRMOAG followed an extreme political path, and rejected the idea of peaceful coexistence between socialism and liberalism as it considered it to be totally opposed to the spirit of socialism and Marxist Leninism. This movement was active among the working class where it gave much importance to mobilizing workers and organizing them within its ranks, and granting them leading posts in the organization. PRMOAG organized and led many strikes and played a major role in the establishment of the workers union named The Founding Committee for the Workers, Employees and Self-Employed Union of Bahrain (Al-Lajana Al-Ta'ssisiya Li Ittihad Al-Omal wal Mowazafeen wa Ass'hab Al-Mehen Al-Horra).

With the strikes of March 1972 and the incidents that followed, which we discussed earlier, many of the Movement's figures were arrested but it managed to remain active and presented the following demands to the government. First, to release all the detainees among workers. Second, to increase salaries. Third, to provide jobs for the unemployed.

However the government rejected these demands and made more arrests among workers, which led the Committee to turn into secret work.

The Popular Front in Bahrain (Al-Jabha Al-Sha'ebia fi Al-Bahrain) was established in 1969. Its political program identified it as a revolutionary organization committed to socialism, expressing the interests of the working class and working to achieve national democratic goals. It also identified as its main goals the struggle against all kinds of foreign presence and interference, and the fight for democratic freedoms. "Hussein Moussa, one the Front leaders describes it as an organization committed to Marxist Leninism as a practical guide and not just a plain theory"⁴⁷. The Front announced the following as its main objectives. First, to cancel all the public and secret agreements between Bahrain, Britain and the U.S. the second objective was to dismantle military bases in Bahrain. Third, to resist all the suspect projects of the American imperialism like the "Gulf Security Project".

It also presented the following demands. First, to establish an elected parliament. Second, to cancel all tribal privileges given by the royal family. Third, to end the state of emergency and cancel the State Security Law. Fourth, to release all detainees and political prisoners and to allow the return of all the exiled. Finally, to respect public freedoms and allow the formation of political parties and social associations.

The Front participated in the strikes of March 1972, and had a good presence in the students' movement, where it contributed to the formation of The National Union for the Students of Bahrain (Al-Ittihad Al-Watani Li Talabat Al-Bahrain). It also had a major role in the youth movement where it formed The Bahraini Youth Organization (Monazamat Al-Shabab Al-Bahrani). Moreover, the Front had an important contribution to the women's movement where it formed The Bahraini Woman Organization (Monazamat Al-Mar'a Al-Bahraniya).

In 1968, a group of militants of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party in Bahrain, who were more of the Left stream, met and formed The Liberation Front for the East Arab Peninsula (Jabhat Tahrir Shark Al-Jazeera Al-Arabia). This Front was strongly critical of the other political movements in Bahrain and considered that they have failed in the struggle against the regime and in rallying the public. In its political program it called for the unity of the various leftist and socialist movements in the east of the Arab peninsula. It also called for the formation of a popular military organization connected

⁴⁷ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.51

to the political one in order to end colonialism. In addition, the Front called for the implementation of a popular democratic system.

The Front was active through its organizing work in Bahrain, but it was ended later in 1970 when the government arrested most of its leaders and members.

The Marxist movements in Bahrain have played a major role in the pre-independence period. They resisted British colonialism and considered it the number one enemy of the people of Bahrain and called for the independence of their country. Despite their interest in the causes of the working class, the Marxist movements were able to spread their thoughts and ideologies not only among the people of this class, but also among the various classes of the Bahraini society and especially among the educated and intellectuals, where the impact of these thoughts lies obvious in the works of literature and poetry. After independence, the Marxist movements organized the famous uprising of March 1972 that forced the government to announce the elections for a constituent council to draft a constitution. They were always interested in a democratic political system and in democratic institutions that guarantee the freedoms of the people of Bahrain. They were also interested in ensuring equality for women to protect their political, social and economic rights.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Marxists in Bahrain abandoned extremism and adopted a new moderate policy based on forming a peaceful opposition and aimed at achieving reform and democracy. "It is important to reach a reformist political opposition with a constitutional orientation, and working peacefully in the public away from violence"⁴⁸. In 2001, with the positive atmosphere after the reform promises made by prince Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa and after the few improvements that took place, the Marxist movements participated in voting for The National Action Charter (Mithak Al-Amal Al-Watani) which got 98.4 percent of the votes. They also rallied for forming one front, which would include all socialist, communist, Nasserite (named after president Nasser of Egypt) and Ba'thi movements under the banner of The National Democratic Grouping (Al-Tajamo'e Al-Watani Al-Dimoqrati). This Front was not realized as each stream insisted on forming its own grouping. However, they succeeded later on in forming several associations, some of which were

⁴⁸ Sayyed Ahmad, J. and other lawyers. (2002). *Al Ra'ii Fil Mas'ala Al Distoria*. Beirut: Dar Al Wehda Al Wataniah. p.32

recognized by the government such as The National Democratic Action Association (Jame'yat Al-Amal Al-Watani Al-Dimoqrati), which was the first political association to gain recognition. Then The National Democratic Grouping Association (Jame'yat Al-Tajamo'e Al-Watani Al-Dimoqrati) was formed, and after it was the Democratic Progressive Forum Association (Jam'eyat Al-Manbar Al-Dimoqrati Al-Taquadomi), which was also recognized by the government and presented the following reform program.

First, to support reform attempts and ensure democracy. Second, to defend the constitution and the national work pact. Third, to ensure national independence and to protect the unity of Bahrain and its national sovereignty. Fourth, to ensure the state of law and institutions and the democratic life. Fifth, to allow intellectual and political diversity under the constitutional legitimacy. It also demanded the separation of power. Six, to ensure equality and social justice between all Bahraini citizens with no sectarian, tribal or racial discrimination. Finally, it demanded to support the legitimate rights of women and ensure their equality with men.

The Marxist movements were intensely active in the political life of Bahrain and in the process of reform. They often declared that their struggle was to ensure democracy through a national democratic government and through democratic institutions. However, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, these movements lost some of their popularity to the new Shiite Islamic movements that started emerging in Bahrain.

c) The Islamic Movements:

- The Shiite Islamic Movements:

The Shiite community in Bahrain is formed of three parts, the Baharina who are the original habitants of Bahrain, the Shiites fleeing from the Wahabi movement (a Sunni radical movement) in the Arab peninsula, and the Shiites of Iranian origin who settled in Bahrain in the seventeenth century during the Iranian invasion. Most of the researchers on Bahrain agree on the fact that its Shiite community was subject to

severe persecution from the Al-Khalifa family. "The arrests targeted mainly members of the Shiite community, which had a major role in the movement of opposition, and which had been always subject to persecution by the government"⁴⁹. This persecution united the Shiite around several demands aimed at improving their situation and at lifting the injustice practiced against them. As a result, they underwent a long struggle with the state that was marked with many events, phases and contributions. It is important to mention here that the Shiite political movements in Bahrain started with few religious associations established by some clergies for the purpose of forming a forum for the community to express its concerns and ideas.

The first remarkable movement of the Shiite community in Bahrain was the uprising of February 1922 that compelled the British authorities to remove the governor Issa ben Ali and to propose some reforms. The Sunni tribes that were related to Issa ben Ali refused his removal and rejected the reforms, which were to take away some of their privileges. The 1960s witnessed the formation of several Shiite movements in Bahrain, however the number of these movements increased and they became more active after the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1967, which gave them momentum.

In 1968, The Islamic Da'wa Party (Hizb Al-Da'wa Al-Islamia) was established by a group of young men who studied in the universities of Iraq and a group of clerical students who studied in Najaf. This party participated in the elections for the constituent assembly in 1972 and in the parliamentary elections in 1973. In 1983, the organized activity of this party was terminated when the government arrested most of its activists.

In 1969, The Islamic Orientation Association (Jam'eyat Al-Irshad Al-Islami) was established and it formed the core of the organized Shiite movement in Bahrain as it attracted many of the Shiite youth. The main activities of this association were the organizing of religious ceremonies and conducting religious study circles.

⁴⁹ Alfaleh, M. (2004). *Al Gharb Wal Mojtama' Wal Dawla Wal Dimoqratiyah*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.22

A group of clergies and intellectuals of the Shiite community in Bahrain established The Hussein Social Fund (Al-Sondouq Al-Husseini Al-Ijtima'ei) in 1972, considered as a continuation of the Islamic Orientation Association. This Fund started its activity with social and religious activities but shifted soon to political work with the aim of creating awareness of political rights and responsibilities. It included four committees. First, the religious ceremonies committee aimed at reviving religious events in order to create awareness and to promote the Islamic revolutionary thoughts. Second, the trips' committee aiming at recruiting new members for organized work through the journeys made to various areas in the country. Third, the media committee. The fourth committee was the financial committee to gather donations and support charities.

However, when conflicts between the Shiite community and the state aroused, the Bahraini security forces closed down the Fund and confiscated all its possessions and arrested many of its members.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Shiite community in Bahrain was divided into two tendencies, a conservative one that seeks the improvement of the community's situation and a more radical one aimed at overthrowing the system and replacing it with an Iranian style regime. In 1979, the latter established The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (Al-Jabha Al-Islamia Li Tahrir Al-Bahrain, which declared several goals. First To topple the rule of Al-Khalifa family. Second to establish an Islamic rule. Third to ensure Bahrain's independence. Fourth to dismantle the American military bases. Finally to release the political prisoners.

The Front received the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the very beginning. It called for the unity of various Islamic forces in the Gulf making sure not to call it the Arab Gulf. Its major activity was the organizing of anti-government strikes. In 1981, the government uncovered an armed attempt to overthrow the regime, and arrested many of the Front's activists. After this, the Front had to operate from outside the country, mainly from Beirut and Teheran.

In 1982, The Bahrain Islamic Liberals Movement (Harakat Ahrar Al-Bahrain Al-Islamia) was established by a group of Shiite young men studying in Britain. They defined it as "An institution to serve the Bahraini society through expressing its cause

in public and before the international community, and holding social and political alliances in Bahrain”⁵⁰. This Movement was more moderate and did not call for the removal of the Al-Khalifa family rule, something that gave it strong influence and popularity within the Shiite community. However, it made several demands. The first one was to apply democracy through reviving the constitution and the parliament. Second, to set free the political prisoners and allow back the banished. Third was the demand to allow public democratic freedoms.

In addition, the Movement was especially active in leading the 1995 protests, but it also suffered from persecution as many of its activists were arrested and others assassinated.

In 2001, with the positive atmosphere resulting from prince Hamad’s initiative, the Movement leaders returned to Bahrain and left to its supporters the freedom to vote for the National Action Charter. However, the Movement opposed the amendments introduced by prince Hamad to the constitution.

In June 1996, authorities in Bahrain undiscovered a secret grouping under the name of Hizbollah-Bahrain and arrested many Shiites on suspicion of being behind the armed acts of violence that took place during the constitutional revolution between 1992 and 1994.

The Islamic National Accord Association (Jam’eyat Al-Wifaq Al-Watani Al-Islami) was established in 2001 and it served as a Shiite coalition of the following forces: the Bahrain Islamic Liberals Movement, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, Hizbollah-Bahrain and a group of liberals. The association identified the following goals. First, to realize the unity of the Islamic work. Then, to coordinate between the Islamic and the national work. Third, to contribute to the development programs. Fourth, to reinforce the role of women. And finally to support Arabic and Islamic causes.

The association opposed the constitution amendments declared by prince Hamad in 2002 and considered that any amendment should be done through the constitutional process and that legislation should fall within the authority of the elected council.

⁵⁰ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama’at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.105

Bahrain also knew other Shiite political movements that had relatively minor roles and as follow is a brief look at some of these movements.

The Islamic Enlightenment Association (Jam'eyat Al-Taw'eya A-Islamia) which was established in 1972 by a group of clergies and intellectuals, and which conducted mainly religious activities.

The Religious Block (Al-Ketla Al-Dinia), which was established in 1972 and which spread in the Shiite countryside areas. This block participated in the elections of 1973 and made a big victory with nine seats in the parliament.

The Islamic Unity Movement (Harakat Al-Wehda Al-Islamia) that was established in 1980 by sheikh Abdel Azeem Al-Mohtadi.

The Islamic Martyrs Association (Harakat Al-Shohada'e Al-Islamia), which was also established in 1980 by sheikh Jamaledine Al-Osfour who is a clergy.

The policy of discrimination practiced by Al-Khalifa against the Shiite community pushed it into a long struggle with the state. "The Shiites in Bahrain were always united around several demands aimed at reforming their unjust situation"⁵¹. This community was able to meet with the Sunni community around many reform demands, despite their conflicts, something that hindered the state's plan to divide the Bahraini society. After the Islamic revolution in Iran, many Shiite organizations emerged in Bahrain as they benefited from the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Along with the Sunni community, these movements had a major role in the opposition and in the struggle for achieving reform and democracy.

- The Sunni Islamic Movements:

These movements appeared first in the 1920s in the form of social clubs and associations, and that was to face the Christian missionary associations. Soon, with the intense political interaction in the Bahraini society, these clubs and associations turned into political work and some of them were transformed into political movements.

⁵¹ Lawson, F.H. (1989). *Bahrain: The Modernization of an Autocracy*. Colombia: Westview Press p. 65

The first Islamic association in Bahrain was The Islamic Club (Al-Nadi Al-Islami), which was established in 1910 by a group of Sunni educated merchants. "The Club had a major role in standing against the American missionaries"⁵². The Club succeeded in short time to attract the Bahraini public, since many of those who used to go to the American missionary library shifted to this Club.

The Islamic Forum (Al-Montada Al-Islami) was established in 1928 by a group of Bahraini young men who were influenced by the Islamic reformist ideology of the Young Men Muslim Association (Jam'ayat Al-Shoban Al-Moslemeen) in Egypt. The British chancellor to the Bahraini government Charles Belgriff approved the establishment of this Association provided it does not assume any political activity. The Association organized religious events and held study circles. Due to the political and economic circumstances, the club was closed down in 1936.

In 1941, The Reform Association (Jam'ayat Al-Islah) was established by a group of men studying in Egypt of Sunni tribal origins and by members of Al-Khalifa family. The Association's current president is sheikh Issa ben Mohamad Al-Khalifa who was the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs during the 1970s. Its main activities are religious orientation and charity work and it does not deal directly with politics. However, it represented an essential center of the Sunni stream meeting with The Muslim Brotherhood (Jama'at Al-Ikhwan Al-Moslemeen). It was also perceived as a mouthpiece of the state's policies. The association supported prince Hamad in his reform project and called the citizens to vote for the National Action Charter. In its program, the Association called for several demands. First, to ensure the Islamic identity of Bahrain. Second, to consider Islam as the main source of legislation. Third, to maintain coexistence between the Sunni and Shiite communities. It also called for organizing the political diversity. Finally, it demanded to ensure equality before the law and to reject any discrimination based on religion, gender or race.

With the beginning of the 1950s, The Muslim Brotherhood (Jama'at Al-Ikhwan Al-Moslemeen) appeared in Bahrain through a group of men who studied in the universities of Cairo and Al-Azhar. This group did not have any role in the struggle

⁵² Bassam, K. (1986). *Tilka Al Ayam*. Manama: Matbou'at Panorama Al Khaleej p.13

against British colonialism and its main concern was to oppose the socialist movements. It also opposed the democratic direction till the 1970s as well as the Shiite stream in the 1980s and during the constitutional uprising between 1992 and 1994. For this, it was considered allied with the state against the opposition. "We see that the state was providing facilities for the religious leadership of the Muslim brothers"⁵³.

In 1979, influenced by the Muslim brothers, another association was established under the name of The Islamic Education Association (Jam'eyat Al-Tarbia Al-Islamia). It had many members from the common people where it showed interest in their financial and religious needs. The association's main activities were religious orientation and charity work. It represented the Sunni stream independent from the state and called for the adoption of more transparent practices, it also participated in the Constitutional Revolution between 1992 and 1994.

Al-Jama'ea Al-Salafia in Bahrain is considered to be a wing of the Salafist Group (Jama'a Salafeyya) that appeared in the early 1970s in some of the Gulf countries, and which was influenced by the Wahhabi-salafist current. This group took a radical stand against the Shiites and considered them apostates. Although it was not a major political force in Bahrain, still this group was able to achieve a big victory in the elections of 2002 because of the boycott of many political groups.

Despite its early existence in Bahrain, the Sunni political movements had a relatively minor role in the political process due to several reasons. First, due to the fact that the Muslim Brothers allied with the state. Second, the spread of nationalism in the 1950s. Third, these movements were occupied in opposing the Marxist movements and did not participate in resisting British colonialism. However, with the Islamic awakening these movements started showing interests in fighting rampant corruption in the state institutions. A moderate tendency, represented in the Islamic Education Association, emerged within their ranks and participated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1992-1994.

⁵³ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.126

d) The Constitutional Movement:

After the end of Gulf War Two in 1991, the political scene in Bahrain witnessed many clashes between opposition and state that involved all major opposition movements. These interactions started with holding meetings in mosques and presenting petitions to the authorities calling for reforms, and for reviving the parliament and the constitution of 1973. Appendixes C and D show us some of these petitions. The actual movement of the opposition started in 1992, when 300 personalities representing the different political and religious directions, presented a petition to prince Issa ben Hamad Al-Khalifa asking him to hold general elections for a parliament, but the prince refused this demand and appointed a consultative council (Majless Shawra) with no legislative authority and where its members did not represent any political movement. This step caused tension between the state and the opposition and led to the formation of The Constitutional Movement (Al-Haraka Al-Dostoria), where a group of political movement, representing the various streams, formed one front meeting around the following demands. First, the revival of the 1973 constitution. Second, the revival of the parliament through holding general elections. Third, the release of all political prisoners and the return of all the exiled. Fourth, to give women their civil and political rights. Then, the equality between the citizens of Bahrain, the Shiites and the Sunnis. Finally, to make reforms at the economic level in order to bridge the gap between the various classes of the Bahraini society.

To support these demands, the movement gathered the signatures of 25,000 citizens. As a result, the government arrested sheikh Ali Salman, a Shiite clergy who played an important role in gathering the signatures, with two of the prominent Shiite leaders and banished them. All this led to severe confrontations between the opposition and the authorities where many protests came out in the streets especially in the Shiite areas. These protests were severely dealt with by the state's security forces. "After the arrest of sheikh Ali Salman, many protests came out of the Shiite villages and the

authorities violently confronted these protests where around 5,000 citizens were arrested including women and children, and twenty others were assassinated”⁵⁴.

Despite the severe measures taken against the opposition movement, things kept on escalating and eventually the government was compelled to go into negotiations with the detained leaders of the Constitutional Movement that led to an understanding on first releasing the detainees and then discussing the following issues. The revival of the 1973 constitution. Second, the release of all political prisoners. Also the return of all the political exiled.

However, and after releasing a small number of the Constitutional Movement leaders, the government denied any understanding with them and started the trial of several detainees. It also tried to present the movement as a Shiite one, something that led to the formation of one petition signed by a group of prominent figures of the two communities. When prince Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa presented in 2001 his reform initiative, the Constitutional Movement approved it and declared its support to the political leadership in realizing the reform process aimed at reviving the constitution and the parliament. It also called on Bahraini citizens to participate in voting for the National Action Charter.

4.2 Problems Facing Political Movements:

Throughout the past decades, and despite all difficulties and obstacles, opposition movements remained active in Bahrain. However, these movements had to work in secret as any form of political activity was banned, and had to suffer persecution from both the state and the British colonial authorities. In addition to this persecution, the political movements suffered from several problems that also affected their work and its efficiency. The problems facing political movements will be discussed in two parts, the sectarian factor, and the organizational difficulties resulting from the nature and the backgrounds of these movements.

⁵⁴ Fakhro, M. (20/09/1995). *The Uprising of the People of Bahrain*. Al-Qodss Al-Arabi newspaper. London.

a) Sectarian Challenge:

The state and the British colonial authorities tried always to play on the sectarian issue in order to weaken and divide the opposition and eventually to deprive it from the people's legitimacy. They presented the royal family as the defender of the Sunni community and ruling in its name, and the British authorities as the defender of the Shiite community. "The British chancellor Belgriff had a wicked plan with the royal family where he presented himself as the defender of the Shiite community and its rights, and where prince Salman Ben Hamad Al-Khalifa was perceived as the defender of the Sunni community"⁵⁵.

The royal family has always tried to present the opposition movements in Bahrain as attempts of the Shiite community to overthrow the Sunni rule. This policy of division and discrimination lies obvious in the way the state handled major opposition movements. In 1938, the British authorities and the royal family arrested the Sunni figures of the reformist movement in order to isolate the Shiites from the Sunnis. After the success of NUC in the mid 1950s, the government identified it as a Shiite movement in order to weaken its position and popularity. It also accused the Constitutional Movement of 1992 of being a Shiite one with a plan to overthrow the Sunni rule and to establish an Islamic-style regime supported by Iran.

Despite the spread of awareness at the social, economic and political levels, the sectarian factor remained a relatively strong reason behind the divisions between the two communities weakening by this every opposition movement. This factor of sectarianism was always emphasized by the British authorities and by the royal family in order to prevent the two communities from meeting against them. The Shiite community constitutes the majority of the Bahraini society, and they are situated mainly in the deprived areas, thus they formed the majority of the less fortunate working class, and were more involved in the process of opposition. "The difficult social, economic and political conditions of the Shiites were behind their opposition movements aimed at achieving their rights"⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Modayress, F. (2004). *Al Harakat Wal Jama'at Al Siyasia Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.91

⁵⁶ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.27

On the other hand, many Sunni tribes benefited from their close relation with the royal family to achieve personal gains, and many of the wealthy merchants belonged to the Sunni community. These facts caused the division of the political movements into Shiite and Sunni, which gave them a sectarian aspect and deprived them from total public support and weakened by this their efficiency. It is important here to mention that most successful opposition movements, like NUC and the Constitutional Movement, brought together members from both communities.

“The appointment in the various government departments was done in a way to emphasize the sectarian issue by giving the important posts to the Sunni communities”⁵⁷. Moreover, the government always emphasized on the Shiite community with its persecution.

b) Organizational Problems:

In addition to the sectarian problem, the political movements in Bahrain, and due mainly to the nature of their underground work, suffered from lack of organization as it was often hard for the leadership to keep close follow up with its base. As a result, several movements could not survive for too long especially with the state’s persecution, others witnessed the emergence of breakaway factions that became hard to control, and were not directly committed to the main leadership. Many movements could not organize their ranks nor could they control all their supporters, something that affected their efficiency. “The secretary general of the NUC Mr. Al-Baker admits that the Committee grew fast to reach the size of a political party without having any organizing plans, which led to weakening it”⁵⁸. This lack of organization made it easy to the state security and intelligence forces to penetrate the political movements ranks and identify their leaders and eventually arrest them or sometimes terminate them. It also facilitated the mission of penetrating the movements to create riots during the protests in order to justify the use of violence against them. “Tyrants believe that their

⁵⁷ Humaidan, A. (2004). *Hay'at Al Ittihad Al Watani Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.25

⁵⁸ *ibid.* p. 72

crimes can be more successful if they can present them as reactions to acts of violence”⁵⁹.

Another challenge facing the political movements was the difference of ideologies, which, and despite meeting around several reform demands, put them sometimes in opposing directions instead of uniting them, something that led naturally to weakening the opposition. Here, we can mention the case of the nationalist movements that took an opposing stand of the Marxist movements instead of cooperating with them on the common demands. In addition, they gave more importance to the nationalist causes such as the Palestinian cause and the Arab unity project, whereas the Marxist movements emphasized more on the internal issues. Eventually, this difference in ideologies, led sometimes to preventing the various movements from meeting together, weakening by this their stands and struggle. Other times it led to having certain movements losing presence to other movements, or movements shifting from one ideology to another, like the case of some nationalist movements that committed to Marxism in the late 1960s.

The various political movements in Bahrain also suffered from the difference in visions between them and between leaders within the same movement. Despite sharing on several demands, political movements could not always meet on the priority of these demands or on the way to achieve them. This problem also existed within the same movement where often leaders would disagree on the priorities and on how to realize them. As a result, we saw many movements witnessing division and emergence of groups and small organizations from within, which led naturally to weakening them. “Many Shiite members of the national union committee protested on its progressive shift to the nationalist issue at the expense of the internal issues such as reform and modernization”⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Khalaf, A. (2004). *Bina' Al Dawla Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.118

⁶⁰ Humaidan, A. (2004). *Hay'at Al Ittihad Al Watani Fil Bahrain*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.73

Chapter Five: Achievements and steps lacking

The long struggle of the Bahraini people has led eventually to a major achievement that saw the implementation of many reform steps. The release of political prisoners, the return of the exiled, freedom of political activity and union activity and most importantly a new constitution was issued and a new parliament was elected. However, as the saying goes “not all that glitters is gold”, everything was not the way people hoped it would be, many issues were not up to their expectations and many demands and objectives were yet to be realized. This chapter focuses on the steps realized on the way to democracy and the achievements made, and also the measures still lacking the process of reform and democratization.

5.1 Achievements and Accomplishments:

First, we have to mention that the progress realized came as a result of three main reasons. The first one is the new leadership represented by prince Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa, and his somehow new vision on the internal issues and their relation with the international scene where he saw it necessary to make some concessions. Second, is the domestic pressure resulting from the public movements and the opposition activity

for several decades, especially the period starting in 1975 with the suspension of the constitution and till the year 2000. The third reason is the external factor related to globalization and international human rights organizations with their relation to the West, and their relation to the state-society interactions in Bahrain and the opposition. Western countries, which have been adopting democracy for long, are always enthusiastic to encourage the developing countries to embrace democratic values. "The French congress delegation praises the king's reformist initiative and expresses its support to his efforts"⁶¹.

Since the country was long suffering from the absence of any democratic rights and freedoms, and since the long struggle was marred by many sufferings and disappointments, the steps realized were given much importance by the people as they were considered to be the leading steps to democracy. The first signs of hope for change came in 1999 when prince Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa succeeded his father and made several reform promises. However, the actual reform process began in 2001 when the prince made a number of important steps. First, he repealed the State Security Law. Second, he granted an amnesty to all detainees and political prisoners and exiled activists, and most importantly he ordered the preparation of the National Action Charter upon which the new constitution would be prepared. In addition, the elders of the royal family made visits to several traditional leaders and prominent clergies, where they made promises to improve the country's infrastructures and they also promised the public to lessen censorship on press.

All these steps have led to a general relief in the country where people started celebrating the historical change they were witnessing and which came after a long struggle journey marred by pain, agony, frustration and suffering. "Bahrain witnessed real festivals with the release of thousands of detainees and political prisoners and the return of many exiled, where celebrations were marked with many convoys of joy and meetings between the prince and the public, which indicated the spirit of the historical reconciliation and the start of a new phase based on political dialogue"⁶².

⁶¹ <http://www.alwasatnews.com>

⁶² Naeimi, A.R. (2004). *Al Azma Al Destourria*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p.21

In February 2001 the charter was presented to direct public voting and it was approved with a percentage of 98.4 with a high voters' turnout. After one year, the new constitution was approved by the prince who presented it to the people on the 14th of February 2002. According to this constitution, Bahrain became a constitutional kingdom with a democratic regime based on the principle of separation of powers (the executive, the legislative and the judicial). In the same year, the prince called for general elections where the new parliament was elected on the 24th of October. Along with the parliament, the new constitution stated the establishment of an appointed council The Consultative Council (Majless Al-Shawra) which is equal in the number of its members with the parliament and which included representatives of women, the Jewish and the Christian communities, something that was a progressive step in an Arab Gulf country.

After the reform steps realized and the change in the state's policy, the social and political scenes in Bahrain witnessed several improvements. First, and for the first time in their history, Bahraini women were given the right of political participation as they were allowed to run and vote for the municipality and parliamentary elections. Second, political movements were permitted to practice public work and the year 2002 witnessed the establishment of many movements and organizations. Third, communal associations were given the freedom of work with the creation of new groups and the re-emergence of many others (Woman, Youth, Cultural, Religious, Economic and Social). Moreover, liberty was given to labor union activity with unions and syndicates formed in the private sector as well as in the public sector where some were formed in the ministries.

In addition, Bahrain witnessed a relatively important progress in the area of human rights where improvement was noticed at all levels. Peaceful groupings and protests were allowed, and freedom of speech was, relatively, permitted which was directly reflected on the media. Media in general and press in particular experienced more freedom and more newspapers and periodicals were established (Social, Economical, Political, Religious and Cultural). "A relative freedom was noticed at the level of

media where articles criticizing the government were published and many points of view opposing the government stands became more frequent”⁶³.

With the progress realized in the field of human rights, and with the freedom of social and communal work, Bahrain witnessed many agreements between several communal associations and regional and international organizations on one side, and between the government of Bahrain and the regional and international organizations on the other side. In 2000 The Bahraini Association for Human Rights or (Al-Jam’eyat Al-Bahrainia Li Houqouq Al-Insan) was established by a group of enthusiasts who ventured in a situation that was still not totally secure and took the initiative to form this association. The first agreement related to human rights realized between Bahrain and international organizations was in 1991 and dealt with children’s rights. Then in 1996 the agreement around terminating all kinds of racial discrimination was realized. After this, in 1997 Bahrain signed an agreement around rejecting abuse and torture. The agreement around terminating all kinds of discrimination against woman was signed in 2002.

All these steps have improved the situation in Bahrain on one side, and on the other side, helped improve the stand of Bahrain on the international scene where many world organizations dealing with human rights have praised the efforts of the government and the progress achieved. “The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working in cooperation with the authorities in Bahrain to make the Gulf kingdom’s new-born democratic process a success story in the region”⁶⁴

5.2 Steps Lacking in the Reform Process:

Despite the progress achieved, the process of democratization in Bahrain remains incomplete with many shortcomings and several issues that need to be resolved in addition to the stand of the government which seems to be adopting a conservative policy and reluctant to make actual and full concessions.

⁶³ Naeimi, A.R. (2004). Malafat Sakhina. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah. p.43

⁶⁴ <http://www.gulfnews.com>

The first problematic matter was the new constitution itself, which was suddenly declared on the 14th of February 2002, and which caused many debates and revived the activity of political opposition that was not expecting the amendments made. The major problem with this constitution was the fact that it was not truly based on the National Action Charter, which was endorsed by the majority of the Bahraini society and political movements. When this charter was presented to the public it stated that Bahrain is to become a constitutional kingdom of a democratic regime, and it was based on the principle of separation of authorities. It suggested having a legislative council directly elected by the people along with an appointed consultative council formed of experts for the purpose of giving consultation to the parliament and with no legislative authority. In other words, this charter put the legislation process in the hands of the people through their representatives, the way it should be in any democracy.

The new constitution differed from the charter and in many parts was disappointing. First of all, it assigned legislation to two separate councils, one elected by the people and one appointed by the king, both equal in size and in voting power, and it gave the decisive word to the King who is the head of the executive authority. This practice was the most controversial one because it was to deprive the people of their right of effective participation by taking away the parliament's independent power to legislate and to control. It also contradicted the principle of separation of powers and it constituted a violation of the National Action Charter. This Charter stated that the elected parliament would directly oversee legislation while the appointed consultative council would act as an advisory body to the assembly and would not have legislative powers. "The Charter is clear around the role of the Consultative Council where it used the phrase: to take their opinion"⁶⁵.

In addition, the people were expecting the new constitution to symbolize the revival of the one of 1973, which was relatively a better constitution in several points. First, according to the constitution of 1973 legislation is assigned to the National Council, which is elected through public direct and confidential voting; whereas 2002 Constitution split legislative power equally between, the elected National Council and

⁶⁵ Baharna, M.H. (2005). *Al Bahrain Bayna Dastourayn*. Beirut: Dar AL Konouz A l Adabiah p. 44

the Consultative Council appointed by the king who also has the decisive word. Second, judicial authorities are appointed according to law in 1973 constitution, and by the king in the constitution of 2002

As a result, most political movements opposed this constitution and decided to boycott the elections. These movements were mainly the Shiite ones among which we mention the Islamic National Accord Association (INAA) and the Islamic action Association (IAA), and some Leftist movements such as the National Democratic Action Association (NDAA), in addition to the Nationalist Democratic Rally which is a Pan-Arab nationalist group. They also appealed to the king to correct the situation and cancel the amendments made by him and from outside the regulations of the constitution, because any change or amendment should be conducted by the legislative authority and according to the clearly stated mechanism. "The new constitution has taken away the constitutional rights given to the people in the constitution of 1973"⁶⁶.

Another problem with the new constitution was the part related to judiciary. The king is the head of the supreme judicial council, and he appoints the constitutional court, which can decide upon the law drafts sent by him before going to the parliament, something that is also contradictory to the principle of separation of authorities that came in the National Action Charter. Furthermore, the same method of appointing the judges remained practiced as they were still chosen on sectarian and tribal basis, where as the National Work Charter stated that the appointment of judges is to be done on competency basis with qualifying competitions to choose the best.

In addition to these problems, the question of democratic freedoms remains a problematic issue, despite the progress achieved. We can say that a good amount of freedom was given but it was not total, as censorship still remains to be practiced even though in a lesser sense. "This blatant suppression of freedom of speech and association flies in the face of the government's proclaimed commitment to democratic change. The right to petition peacefully is fundamental, declares Sarah

⁶⁶ Sayyed Ahmad, J. and other lawyers. (2002). *Al Ra'ii Fil Mas'ala Al Dastourria*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.105

Leah Whitson, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch Middle East and North Africa”⁶⁷

Political work is still restricted to the political associations and forums with no parties allowed, and sometimes, political movements are harassed and denied free activity. “In its yearly report of 2003, Human Rights Watch criticized the Bahraini government for many non-democratic practices against political movements when the participating guests were not allowed in Bahrain”⁶⁸. Here lies the problem with the fact that the government does not really want to acknowledge political activity and political organizations, thus it keeps, harassing them and avoiding issuing the related law to organize their work in a more free and democratic political atmosphere, and to allow the formation of political parties. Besides, until now political movements cannot run for elections nor can they organize their campaigns. “The Government of Bahrain should release immediately 20 individuals arrested fro gathering signatures on a political petition. The authorities should also end the criminal investigation against them”.⁶⁹

The government had failed to improve living conditions. Public services were becoming increasingly inefficient especially in the housing and health sectors, unemployment was on the rise and corruption became widespread in government institutions. In addition, several members of the royal family used their influence to monopolize and run lubricant public projects. The government's shortcomings created frustration among the Bahraini people, who are considered to be relatively well educated and thus more critical and keen to participate in running the affairs of their country.

The reform project came important and historical as it helped end a long dated struggle and opened an opportunity window to move on with the reform process leading Bahrain to democracy, but it also opened the door to new conflicts and confrontations. “Rubin Lustig reports that human rights campaigners in Bahrain argue that there is still far too little democracy”⁷⁰. The steps realized were incomplete; they

⁶⁷ <http://www.hrw.org>

⁶⁸ Al Qodss Al Arabi. (01/05/1996). *To Ensure Political Participation for the People of Bahrain*. London

⁶⁹ <http://www.hrw.org>

⁷⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

fell short of the people's expectations. There is much to be done yet; the issues are many, ranging from freedom of speech and censorship to actual liberty of political activity, from corruption to unemployment and religious discrimination. The social, economic and political situations are still suffering from many shortcomings, despite the progress made, but the situation was so bad and severe before the start of the reform process, that it would take more to correct it and put things on the right track. However, to the opposition, in spite of the importance of these files, the priority remains to reforming the constitutional issue which is the major obstacle to true democratization. "We can say the new constitution was a victory for the state after a historical phase where it reconciled which the political movements and the social forces for one year, a golden year that will always be in our hearts"⁷¹.

All these problems and factors led to more public protests and formed the solid ground for more opposition and more demands for reform.

⁷¹ Naeimi, A.R. (2004). *Al Azma Al Dastouria*. Beirut: Dar AL Konouz Adabiah p. 115

Conclusion

For several decades now, the peoples of the Arab countries have been undergoing a continuous struggle to achieve reform and democracy. However, this struggle was always complicated and marred by many sufferings as the Arab rulers and regimes, which are mostly totalitarian, were not willing to make concessions or to let the people actually rule. After the incidents of September 11, 2001, these peoples saw in the change of the U.S. policy, mainly towards the Arab region, the perfect chance to make a change and to realize certain progress in their long dated struggle. In an interview with Alwasat newspaper in London, Zalmay K. Zada the U.S. ambassador to Iraq "emphasizes the importance of supporting democracy and its role in ensuring stability and security in the Middle East"⁷².

Bahrain is the perfect example of the struggle of the Arab peoples against the unjust and non-democratic regimes and for the better life, for the right of political participation and self-rule, and for democratic rights and freedoms. The fight in Bahrain is historic and has been going on for more than a century, with big hopes and many disappointments. However, the challenges made the people more determined to achieve democracy and decide for themselves. They gave a lot with no hesitation, despite the prices they had to pay, still they did not give in; with every obstacle they

⁷² <http://www.alwasatnews.com>

were getting stronger and after every disappointment the opposition was growing more stubborn.

After Gulf War Two, the political movements in Bahrain started acting more intensely and they increased their demands for the reforms and for democracy as they saw the situation appropriate with the area present on the international scene especially the West with its related issues of democracy and human rights. But, the situation was not really helpful, despite the fact that human rights organizations were getting more interested in following up what is going on especially after the incidents following the constitutional movement in 1992. Nevertheless, the opposition kept its activity and went on with its fight, which kept on escalating till 1999 when prince Hamad succeeded his father and declared his reformist initiative.

With the initiative of prince Hamad and the reform steps realized, tensions calmed down and hopes were revived, for a better system with democratic rights that guarantee civil rights and public freedoms. For more than a year things were so promising, people were really happy for the progress achieved and yet to be achieved, and they were happy for their accomplishment. But soon, the joy was taken away and the dream seemed even more unreachable with the issuance of the new constitution that came shocking, which is the least to be said of it. This constitution was so different from the one of 1973, which was favored by the people, despite some problematic issues like the civil and political rights of women. It was also totally different from the National Work Charter, which was meant to be the ground base this constitution should depend on, and which also was endorsed by the majority of the Bahraini people with a remarkable percentage of 98.4.

The problems posed with the new constitution along with the related issues such as human rights, democratic freedoms and actual political participation of the people, all these problems makes us question the process of democracy in Bahrain and the seriousness of the reform steps. Can we say that this is a democracy now? This remains to be a debatable question with the government trying to present its country as a constitutional kingdom with a democratic regime, whereas its practices and policies and even the way the country is being conducted with the three authorities not separate; they all indicate the existence of a serious problem with the democratic nature of this regime. No doubt that a good progress was achieved, no doubt that

several reform steps were realized and many freedoms were given, but the issue is that reform and freedom are only tools of democracy, they lead us there but they are not it. True democracy, according to its simple interpretation, is when the people rule themselves through elected representatives, it is when legislation is in their hands and when they can, also through their representatives, practice control over the executive authority. In Bahrain, this is not the case where legislation is equally shared between the elected council and the appointed one with the decisive word for the king, which is a confiscation of the role of the people and of their right of participation.

Democracy is not only a political governance model; it is a complete system including the state, society and the family. It involves culture, values, behavior, and institutions, democracy should not only be practiced as a mere governing system, rather it should be embraced as a life style and that is the only way to really achieve it and to benefit from its values. Until real democratic values and practices are adopted and applied, we cannot say that Bahrain has realized its democratization and we will see more movements active in their opposition and calling for more reforms and for more courageous steps by the government to reach actual democracy. "It seems that the government will not change its policy before the next elections in 2006, in return the opposition will not submit or give in, and the struggle will move on"⁷³.

To conclude I have chosen a quotation for one of Bahrain's most active opposition figures Abdel Rahman AL-Naeimi. "We will not go back to central democracy, to secret work and to duality in political dialogue, the whole world is adopting transparency, in politics as in economy, democracy is not an elitist work, it is a way to live in the society which we want to adopt, we realize the risks, we know that close minded policies will challenge us and that we have not yet crossed the bottle neck"⁷⁴.

⁷³ Akari, A. (2004). *Qadaya Al Islah Wal Dimoqratiyah Wal Tanmiah Wal Huqouq*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.24

⁷⁴ Naeimi, A.R. (2002). *Jam'eyat Al Amal Al Watani Al Dimoqrati*. Beirut: Dar Al Konouz Al Adabiah p.26

Important Dates of Bahrain's History:

- 1522: Bahrain is subjected to Portuguese rule.
- 1602: End of Portuguese rule.
- 1602: Bahrain is subjected to Persian rule.
- 1783: End of Persian rule.
- 1783: Al-Khalifa rule Bahrain.
- 1820: Bahrain is subjected to the British influence with the Peace General Treaty.
- 1861: Bahrain goes under British protection according to the Pact of 31st of May.
- 1880: Exclusive Agreement with the British authorities.
- 1892: Exclusive Agreement with the British authorities.
- 1938: The first national reformist movement.
- 1956: The National Union Committee was recognized as the first political movement in Bahrain's contemporary history on the 18th of March.
- 1956: The banning of the National Union Committee on the 6th of November.
- 1971: Bahrain becomes independent on the 14th of August.
- 1972: Establishment of a special council to prepare the constitution.
- 1973: The constitution is approved by prince Issa Ben Hamad Al-Khalifa on the 6th of December.
- 1975: The constitution was suspended and the Parliament was dissolved on the 26th of August.
- 1992: A group of political movements form the constitutional movement aiming at reviving the constitution of 1973.

- 1999: Prince Hamad Ben Issa Al-Khalifa announces his reformist initiative after succeeding his father on the 6th of March.
- 2000: The formation of the National Supreme Committee to prepare the new constitution on the 22nd of November.
- 2001: Prince Hamad declares general pardon on the 7th of February.
- 2001: The National Work Charter, which was supposed the ground base for the new constitution was endorsed on the 14th of February with a percentage of 98.4.
- 2001: Social and political movements and organizations were given the freedom of activity on the first of September.
- 2002: The new constitution was issued on the 14th of February.
- 2002: The parliament was elected on the 24th of October.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Document 1 of the Bahraini Labor Federation

اتحاد العمل البحراني
(للمال والموظفين واصحاب المهن الحرة)
الثامنة - البحرين
Bahrain Labour Federation
MANAMA - BAHRAIN

الرقم
التاريخ: ١٥ فبراير ٥٨

حضرات اعضاء الهيئة التنفيذية لاتحاد العمل البحراني المحترمين .

جاء -

بسم الله

بناءً على الرغبة التي ابدتها عدد من اعضاء اللجنة التنفيذية لمجلس ادارة اتحاد العمل البحراني في تقرير مستقبل الاتحاد ، فقد وضعت صورة اقتراح بهذا الشأن بعد التشاور مع عدد من هؤلاء الاعضاء .

الرجاء من حضرات الاعضاء الكرام ابداء رأيهم بالموافقة او عدمها على مشروع القرار كما هو مبين ادناه ، وفي حالة نيله موافقة الاغلبية فستخذ الاجراءات اللازمة لتنفيذه .

١ - مالية الاتحاد : يقول يقوم كل من السيد احمد الحايبر والسيد حسن المدني والسيد محمد رحمه التاجر والسيد محمد الساهي بمراجعة الحسابات بعدد دفع كافة ما بذمة الاتحاد من مصاريف او رواتب متخلقة واعداد كتف بالرميد المتبقي معاد قاً عليه من قبل اللجنة المذكورة .

ب -

يودع الرصيد المتبقي في البنك البريطاني في الشرق الأوسط باسم اتحاد العمل البحراني ، ضمن حساب متحدد يستحق فائدة سنوية .

ج - سحب المبلغ المذكور او جزء منه لا يتم الا بتوقيع جميع الاعضاء .

د - تحفظ الوصولات والاوراق المتعلقة بالمبلغ المودع في البنك لدى

السيد احمد الحايبر .

٢ - ادارة المكتب والاثاث

١ - يقوم كل من السيد قاسم الشبراوي والسيد ثاني البحررنة بتسليم الاثاث

المستعار من مجلة صوت البحرين للسيد ابراهيم حسن كمال .

ب - حفظ البطاقات والاثاث المتبقي والسلالات الخاوية بالمكتب لدى السيد محمد

قاسم الشبراوي .

٣ - انصار المسئولين

١ - سبق للسيد محمد قاسم الشبراوي ان اتصل بالسراة الادارة لحكومة

البحرين المسترسم والمجلس على عمل الهيئة التنفيذية لاتحاد العمل البحراني لتقرير مستقبل

الاتحاد المفكسور . وكان جواب المسترسم ان وقد بد راسة الموضع واحايته على ذلك .

ب - تم جاء الجواب على لسان السيد يوسف الشبراوي ان اتصل تليفونيا بالسيد

البحر

وثيقة كتاب اتحاد العمل البحراني

اتحاد العمل البحراني
(للعامل والموظفين واصحاب المهن الحرة)
الثامنة - البحرين
Bahrain Labour Federation
MANAMA - BAHRAIN

- ٢ -

تبقى البحارنة وابلغنه ان صاحب العتمة يرى ان يبنى الوضع على ما هو عليه .
ج - سيقيم السيد محمد قاسم الشيراوي بالاتصال تانقلاية بالمستمرست
ولا يهلا فة صورة هذا القرار .

٤ - التصرف في المبلغ المودع اواى - ز منه او ما يذم من الاتحاد لا يتم الا بعدت جلسة
يدعى اليها جميع اعضاء المجلس الادارى السابق ان امكن او الهيئة التنفيذية الموصلة
على هذا القرار لاتخاذ قرار بهذا الخصوص .

٥ - نص هذا القرار يودع من ثلاث نسخ * واحدة لدى السيد احمد الحابر والثانية
لدى السيد محمد قاسم الشيراوي والثالثة لدى السيد حسن المدني .

اسم العضو	مباينة على القرار توزيع العضو	نمبر موافق على القرار توزيع العضو و
١. محمد قاسم الشيراوي
٢. تقي البحارنة
٣. حسن المدني
٤. محمد السامي
٥. احمد الحابر
٦. محمد رحمة الناجر
٧. هادي الحادي
٨. حسن - واد المدني

انا مرفعة مع كل الامارات ان اتخذت بره قبل الهندسة . اذا انى اعتمد
عنه انقيم بالاعمال ايجابي . حيثه انه اعطاني الخاصة بالبناء كثيرة
وليس لديه منسقا من الوقت
محمد بن عبد الله

وثيقة كتاب إتحاد العمل البحراني

ملحق (٧) المذكرة النخبوية التي رفعت الى الامير

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

حضرة صاحب السمو الشيخ عيسى بن سلمان آل خليفة أمير دولة البحرين وفقه الله لما يحبه ويرضاه

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

وبعد، لقد صدقتم يا صاحب السمو وأصدرتم في لحظة تاريخية دستور دولة البحرين بتاريخ ١٢/١١/١٣٩٢هـ الموافق ١٩٧٢/١٢/٦م. بعد أن ناقشه وأقره المجلس التأسيسي الذي دعوتكم إلى تكوينه بالمرسوم بقانون رقم ١٩٧٢/١٢ بتاريخ ١٩٧٢/٥/٩هـ الموافق ١٩٧٢/١٢/٦م. في الوقت الذي تستعيدون فيه ماضي البحرين في رحاب العروبة والاسلام، وتتطلعون بإيمان وعزم إلى مستقبل قائم على الشورى والعدل، حافل بالمشاركة في مسؤوليات الحكم والإدارة، كافل للحرية والمساواة، وموطد للإخاء والتضامن الإجتماعي، كما جاء في مقدمة الدستور، فرسخ هذا الدستور أسس المشاركة الشعبية في الحقوق والواجبات العامة على نهج قويم من أحكام وأصول الشورى المستمدة من ديننا الإسلامي الحنيف، ومن مبادئ العدل والحرية والمساواة التي كانت دوماً مبادئ راسخة في الحضارة الإسلامية والإنسانية.

وما كان ذلك الأمر إلا تغييراً رائداً سعى إليه سموكم لإرساء نظام حديث يحكم دولة البحرين، وإنجازاً حضارياً سيذكره التاريخ لسموكم.

وإذا كان حل المجلس الوطني يوم ٢٦ /٨/ ١٩٧٥م بالمرسوم الأميري رقم ١٩٧٥/٤ بموجب الصلاحية التي تمنحها المادة ٦٥ لسموكم فإن المادة نفسها تؤكد على إعادة الانتخابات للمجلس الجديد في ميعاد لا يتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ الحل والا استرد المجلس المنحل كامل صلاحياته الدستورية، علماً بأن المادة ١٠٨ من الدستور قد قررت عدم جواز تعطيل أي حكم من أحكامه إلا أثناء قيام الأحكام العرفية في الحدود التي يبينها القانون، ولم يكن حل المجلس في حالة قيام هذه الأحكام.

وبناء على ما ذكر وبناء على المتغيرات المحلية والإقليمية والدولية خلال السنوات الماضية وما نتجته إليه الإرادة الدولية لخلق نظام عالمي جديد، فإن الأمر يستدعي — إن لم يتم الأخذ بالمادة رقم ٦٥ من الدستور — الدعوة إلى انتخاب مجلس وطني جديد يعتمد على الانتخاب الحر المباشر حسب ما يقرره الدستور من أجل ممارسة الدولة نظامها الديمقراطي، الذي نصت عليه

المادة (١) فقرة (د) القاضية بأن: " الحكم في البحرين ديمقراطي، السيادة فيه للشعب مصدر السلطات جميعاً، وتكون ممارسة السيادة على الوجه المبين في الدستور". ومن أجل إرساء الثقة والإحترام المتبادل بين الدولة والمواطنين، وحرصاً على تضافر جهود جميع أفراد هذا الشعب حكماً ومحكومين في تقدم وازدهار هذا البلد، ومن أجل إطلاق طاقات كل مواطن للمشاركة في عملية البناء والتنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية طبقاً لنص المادة (١) فقرة (هـ) من الدستور والتي تنص على أن: "للمواطنين حق المشاركة في الشؤون العامة والتمتع بالحقوق السياسية، بدءاً بحق الانتخاب، وذلك وفقاً لهذا الدستور وللشروط والأوضاع التي يبينها القانون".

إننا الموقعين أدناه نرفع الى سموكم هذا الخطاب انطلاقاً من مسئوليتنا كمسلمين ومواطنين، ومن حقوقنا المشروعة كمحكومين واستناداً إلى نص المادة (٢٩) من الدستور التي تقضي بأن: " لكل فرد أن يخاطب السلطات العامة كتابة وبتوقيعه". وباعتبار سموكم رأس الدولة وطبقاً لنص المادة (٢٣) فقرة (أ) من الدستور مطالبين سموكم بإصدار الأمر لإجراء الانتخابات للمجلس الوطني عملاً بما ورد من تنظيم له في الفصل الثاني من الباب الرابع من الدستور.

إن المجلس الوطني كمجلس تشريعي لا يتعارض مع ما ذكر مؤخراً عن عزم الحكومة لإنشاء مجلس استشاري لتوسيع دائرة استشاراتها فيما تريد القيام به. ولا يحل المجلس الاستشاري محل المجلس الوطني كسلطة تشريعية دستورية.

نتمنى ان تجد هذه الرغبة الشعبية استجابة من سموكم، لما فيه خير الجميع.

وتقبلوا فائق شكرنا وتقديرنا

الموقعون

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قدمت الى الامير بتاريخ ١٥ نوفمبر ١٩٩٢

ملحق (٨) العريضة الشعبية لعام ١٩٩٤

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

حضرة الفاضل/ صاحب السمو الشيخ عيسى بن سلمان آل خليفة أمير دولة البحرين حفظه
الله ورعاه

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

وبعد

لقد كانت خطوتكم التاريخية الموفقة في ارساء دعائم دولة البحرين الحديثة بعد الاستقلال بمصادقتكم على الدستور في ٦ ديسمبر ١٩٧٣ وإجراء الانتخابات التشريعية علامة بارزة في تاريخ دولة البحرين الحديث وتاريخ المنطقة تؤكد ايمانكم بأهمية المشاركة الشعبية على اساس من الشورى والعدل، لمواجهة متطلبات مستقبل التطور الحضاري لدولتنا الحديثة وتوطيد مؤسساتها بعزم وثقة لا حدود لهما بأبنائها وبأهليتهم لتحمل مسؤولياتهم في تنمية البلاد وتوطيد الأمن والاستقرار فيها على أساس من الإخاء والتضامن والتكافل الاجتماعي.

وإذا كان وطننا قد عانى الكثير بعد حل المجلس الوطني منذ يوم ١٩٧٥/٨/٢٦ وحتى يومنا هذا وتراكمت من جراء ذلك العديد من الرواسب نتيجة تعطيل المسيرة الديمقراطية الرائدة التي اقتحمتوها بافتتاحكم أول فصل تشريعي للمجلس الوطني المنتخب، وكان شعبكم حريصاً على توفير فرص التفكير المتروي لسموكم الكريم من التجربة التي مرت بها دولة البحرين ونتائجها بعد افتتاح المجلس الوطني وبعد حله بموجب المرسوم الأميري رقم ١٩٧٥/٤، فإن أملنا كان كبيراً في فتح باب الحوار مع سموكم الكريم حول مستقبل هذا الوطن، عندما تقدمت نخبة من أبناء وطنكم بالعريضة التي قدمت لسموكم في ١٩٩٢/١١/١٥ والتي لخصت مطالبها في عودة المجلس الوطني وفقاً للدستور.

وكما تعلمون سموكم، فإن مجلس الشورى الذي ارتأيتكم بإرادة أميرية لا يسد الفراغ الدستوري الموجود بسبب تعطيل أهم مؤسسة تشريعية عن العمل.

والحقيقة التي تظهر أمامنا كمواطنين ومسلمين هي أننا سنكون مقصرين في تحملنا المسؤولية مالم نصارحكم ونصارح فيكم القيادة الحكيمة المؤمنة بما نلمسه من أوضاع غير سوية يمر بها بلدنا في ظروف من المتغيرات الدولية والاقليمية في ظل تعطيل المؤسسة الدستورية، والتي لو انتهت عطيلها لكانت خير معين على إيقاف التراكمات السلبية التي تكاد تسد مجرى حياتنا

كمواطنين نعيش معاناة متعددة الأوجه في محدودية فرص العمل وتضخم البطالة وغلاء المعيشة وتضرر القطاع التجاري ومشاكل الجنسية والتجنس ومنع العديد من ابنائنا من العودة إلى وطنهم، يرافق كل ذلك القوانين التي صدرت منذ غياب السلطة التشريعية التي تحد من حرية المواطنين وتتناقض مع الدستور، وما رافقها من انعدام حرية التعبير وخضوع الصحافة للسلطة التنفيذية خضوعاً مباشراً إلى جانب الإعلام الموجه من قبلها. وهذه الأمور مجتمعة يا صاحب السمو الكريم هي التي تستحثنا كمواطنين إلى المطالبة بعودة المجلس الوطني للعمل مع النظر في إشراك المرأة في العملية الديمقراطية، وذلك بإجراء انتخابات حرة إن ارتأيتم عدم دعوة المجلس الوطني إلى الانعقاد وطبقاً للمادة ٦٥ من الدستور التي نصها:

(للامير أن يحل المجلس الوطني بمرسوم يبين فيه أسباب الحل، ولا يجوز حل المجلس لذات الأسباب مرة أخرى. وإذا حل المجلس وجب إجراء الانتخابات للمجلس الجديد في ميعاد لا يتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ الحل.

فإن لم تجر الانتخابات خلال تلك الفترة يسترد المجلس المنحل كامل سلطته الدستورية ويجتمع فوراً كأن الحل لم يكن. ويستمر في أعماله إلى أن ينتجب المجلس الجديد).

وإننا على أمل وثقة في رؤيتكم لعدالة مطالب هذه العريضة التي قصدنا منها الحث على استكمال هيكل دولتنا الفتية. وتقديم العون لقيادتكم الحكيمة على أساس العدل والشورى والإيمان بما أرساه ديننا الإسلامي الحنيف من دعائم متينة اعتمدتها حكمتكم السامية في دستور وطننا الغالي.

أدامكم الله وأدام لكم موفور الصحة والعزيمة. ووفقنا الله وإياكم لما فيه خير وعزة وطننا.

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