

Khalifa Uthman bin Affan - Campaign of Vilification Against Uthman

Allies for the Ibn Saba's movement

Ibn Saba won some allies from among the Muslims who had some grievance against Uthman right or wrong. 'Amr b Al 'Aas had been deposed by Uthman from the governorship of Egypt. He had a personal grievance against Uthman, and in some way or the other he played into the hands of the Ibn Sabaites.

Muhammad b Abl Hudhaifa was a young man whose father had been martyred in one of the campaigns under Abu Bakr. After the death of his father Muhammad came to live with Uthman who treated him as a son. Muhammad grew into a wayward young man. When Uthman became the Caliph, Muhammad aspired to be made the Governor of some province. When Muhammad requested Uthman to be made the Governor of some province, Uthman said that if he had considered him fit to be made the Governor he would have done that, and that as he was still very young he should wait for some time till he acquired some maturity. That annoyed Muhammad, and he wanted that he should be allowed to go elsewhere. Had at Uthman permitted him to go wherever he liked. Muhammad proceeded to Egypt.

Muhammad b Abu Bakr was the son of Abu Bakr. His mother was Asma, whom Abu Bakr, married after the death of her husband Jaffar b Abu Talib. After the death of Abu Bakr, Asma married Ali. Muhammad b Abu Bakr thus grew up under the guardianship of Ali. When Uthman became the Caliph, Ali felt unhappy at being passed over. Muhammad b Abu Bakr therefore came to adopt at an early age an attitude which was critical of Uthman. Later Muhammad b Abu Bakr was a party to a case. Uthman gave his verdict against Muhammad b Abu Bakr. That annoyed Muhammad b Abu Bakr. He left Madina for Egypt.

In Egypt Muhammad b Abi Hudhaifa and Muhammad b Abu Bakr came under the influence of Ibn Saba, and came to indulge in propaganda against Abdullah b Saad the Governor of Egypt as well as Uthman. They ingratiated themselves with the army, and tried to seduce the soldiers from the cause of Uthman. When the Muslims won the naval battle known as the "Battle of the Masts" and felt proud of the victory, the two Muhammads tried to belittle this achievement by declaring that such victories were of no avail when the caliphate itself was indulging in anti-Islamic practices.

When Abdullah b Sa'ad came to know of this propaganda he reported the matter to Uthman and wanted his permission to take action against Muhammad b Abi Hudhaifa and Muhammad b Abu Bakr. Uthman withheld the permission saying that Muhammad b Abi Hudhaifa was his son, and that because of his regard for Abu Bakr he could not contemplate any action against his son.

In Egypt 'Amr b Al 'Aas had a party, and as 'Amr b Al 'Aas was unhappy at his deposition, his party joined those who were critical of Abdullah b Sa'ad and Uthman. Thus Egypt became a hot bed of sedition against the administration of Uthman.

The movement of Ibn Saba won allies in Madina and elsewhere, Ibn Sabaites declared that they were working for the caliphate of Ali. That won for them the sympathies of the followers of Ali. Ali himself did not espouse their cause, but the Ibn Sabaites had every reason to believe that as they were working for the cause of Ali, his sympathies could not be denied to them. Most of the companions in Madina chose to be neutral, Such companions as Abu Dhar Ghifari were critical of the luxurious style of living of those in power. The Ibn Sabaites exploited this position, and tried to give out that they were with Abu Dhar Ghifari. They gave currency to some false reports about the harassment of Abu Dhar Ghifari at the hands of Uthman and his Government.

In Kufa, the people had demanded the deposition of Saeed b 'Aas and the appointment of Abu Musa Ash'ari. In the interests of peace Uthman yielded to the demand. In a letter addressed to the people of

Kufa, Uthman hoped that as he had acceded to their demand there would be no more trouble from their side. On assuming office as Governor Abu Musa Ashari warned the people to desist from their subversive activities. He said that he would not lead them in prayer until they had assured him of their loyalty to Uthman. The people assured him of their loyalty to Uthman and gave a solemn undertaking that they would maintain peace and would not indulge in any agitation.

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