

National Liberation Front – Bahrain

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The **National Liberation Front—Bahrain** (جبهة التحرير الوطني البحرين) is a clandestine Marxist-Leninist party in Bahrain. It was founded on 15 February 1955, the first left party in the Arab states of the Gulf region. Among the founder-members were Hassan Nezam (1922–1958), the principal founder, who was killed in Tehran in 1958 by SAVAK (this extraordinary activist was also a leading regional figure in the Tudeh Party of Iran, Khuzestan province, under the name Hassan Dorood); Erik Mansoorian, who died in Abadan after returning to Iran in 1964; Hassan M. Saleh (1926–2000), who, from the early 1960s, was in a state of a chronic mental dysfunction as a result of severe torture; Ali Madan (1932–1995); Ahmed al-Thawadi, “Saif Bin Ali” (1937–2006); and Ali Dwaigher (born 1930).

In the 1960s and 70s the NLF, headed by Saif Bin Ali, assisted by Yousif Ajaji (born 1939) and Abdulla Rashid Binali (born 1935), played a leading part in two major events: the March Intifada (uprising) of 1965, in which nationalist forces rose up against British colonialism, and the labour movement of the early 1970s. The first event led eventually to the independence of Bahrain from British in 1971; the second event accelerated the move towards a significant improvement in the political atmosphere and the emergence of the first parliament in the history of the island and the first constitution (the constitution of 1973).

By the first half of the 1970s the NLF was the major political force in the country, and following the 1974 parliamentary election it succeeded in having eight members in the first Bahrain National Assembly (parliament) or 40 per cent of elected MPs (twenty elected and twenty appointed). In 1976, however, the parliament was dissolved and the constitution was suspended. The NLF was harshly repressed by the regime, and many activists and leaders went into exile. The most severe assault came in the mid-80s, specifically in 1986, with the decision of the authorities to crush the NLF. Almost the whole clandestine organisation collapsed, some members died under torture, and a large number were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment after false and illegal confessions.

In spite of the unprecedented political circumstances that faced the surviving activists of the NLF, a handful of fighters remained, though in different method of activity. One can see their fingerprints on the events of the 1990s called the “constitutional movement.”

In the early 2000s, after a reasonable change in the regime’s policy, exiled leaders were allowed to return to Bahrain and to work politically. Before the election of 2002 some elements affiliated to the NLF, in co-operation with other independent activists (leftists and liberals), launched a legal political body under a new rule governing the establishment of political associations. In this way the Progressive Democratic Tribune Association was founded as a leftist progressive political organisation, but not as an alternative to the NLF. Since then it may appear that the PDTA has replaced the NLF, a groundless claim for which there is no documentary evidence. Moreover, the NLF never issued any statement that it has ceased to exist. The reality is that the NLF continues to exist and to struggle, though illegal and not openly active, because of the sensitive transformation period that Bahrain is passing through.

National Liberation Front – Bahrain	
جبهة التحرير الوطني—البحرين	
Founded	15 February, 1955
Headquarters	Manama
Ideology	Marxism–Leninism
Political position	Far-left
Council of Representatives	0 / 40
Shura Council	0 / 40
Website	
nlf-bahrain.com (http://www.nlf-bahrain.com/)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politics of Bahrain Political parties Elections 	

Between 2002 and 2006 the NLF and PDTA had three members in parliament, including the deputy speaker, Abdulhadi Marhoon. However, all lost their seats in the election of 2006 when Sunni and Shi'a communal "Islamist" forces won almost all seats.

See also

- March Intifada
- Majeed Marhoon
- National Union Committee
- Ahmad Al-Thawadi

References

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