

Slavery in the Gulf in the First Half of the 20th Century

A Study Based on Records from the British Archives

JERZY ZDANOWSKI

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Glossary

<i>abd</i>	– a slave
<i>amir</i>	– a prince, ruler, or chief
Arab Coast	– the coast of the Persian Gulf from Kuwait to Ras Musandam
<i>Baharinah</i>	– Shi'i Arabs in Hasa and Bahrain
<i>baghala</i>	– the largest type of <i>dhow</i> with decks and a crew up to 100 men, used for ocean sailings
<i>boom</i>	– a large boat
<i>barwah</i>	– an agreement between a captain and a diver
<i>bin</i>	– an Arabic term for 'son of'
<i>bint</i>	– an Arabic term for 'daughter of'
<i>dhow</i>	– any boat or ship in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea with a lateen sail
<i>ghasa</i>	– divers
<i>ghaus</i>	– a diving season
<i>al-ghaus al-bard</i>	– the earliest diving season, literally 'cold diving', which started in the middle of April and continued for 40 days
<i>al-ghaus al-kabir</i>	– the principal diving season, literally 'great diving', which began in June or sometimes in May after the end of the wind called the <i>shimal</i> , and lasted until September
<i>kaffara</i>	– the freeing of a slave
<i>khatm</i>	– a balance of wages due to a diver at the end of the pearling season
<i>khidam</i>	– slaves employed in pearling
<i>majlis</i>	– a council of the elders

<i>The Majlis</i>	– the Persian Parliament
<i>mamluk</i>	– a slave
<i>mawalid</i>	– slaves born in slavery
<i>ma'atuq</i>	– an emancipated slave
<i>mudabbar</i>	– a type of freed slave
<i>mujannah</i>	– the winter diving season when the fishery was conducted by wading in the shallows along the coast
<i>mukatib</i>	– a type of freed slave
<i>musaqqam</i>	– a merchant who dominated the pearl diving industry
<i>nakhuda</i>	– a captain of the boat
<i>qadi</i>	– a judge
<i>quffal</i>	– the end of the 'great diving'
<i>raddah</i>	– the diving season, literary 'return', which started a few days after the <i>ghaus al-kabir</i> was concluded and lasted about 3 weeks
<i>radhafah</i>	– an extra hands
<i>rakbah</i>	– the beginning of the 'great diving'
<i>salaf</i>	– an advance given to a diver about ten days before the commencement of the pearling season
<i>salifat al-ghaus</i>	– a diving court
<i>shaikh</i>	– a title of a member of a ruling family
<i>shahuf</i>	– a small boat
<i>shimal</i>	– a wind in the Persian Gulf
<i>siyub</i>	– a hauler
Swahili coast	– East Africa and Zanzibar
<i>tisqam</i>	– an advance given to a diver in the off season
<i>towash</i>	– a creditor
Trucial Oman	– the Arab Coast of Trucial Oman (today United Arab Emirates)
<i>umm walad</i>	– the mother of a type of freed slave
<i>walaid</i>	– an apprentice

To the memory of Surur el Habashi, a native of Wallamo Province in Southern Abyssinia, and Fatimah bint Muhammad of Minab, Bandar Abbas, and other slaves who were always trying to find an opportunity to run away from slavery

Preface and acknowledgments

On 6th August, 1897, in the House of Commons, Mr. Thomas Bayley, M.P., asked the Secretary of State for India whether there existed treaties between Her Majesty's Government and Arab Chiefs in the Persian Gulf, under which the British authorities undertook to surrender fugitive slaves. Lord George Hamilton replied that he was not aware of any treaties of the character described, but that certain difficulties had arisen in dealing with the slave traffic in certain harbours of the Sultan of Muscat and in the Persian Gulf. In the meantime, the British Political Residency in Bushire in the Persian Gulf reported to the India Office that slaves taking refuge in the British Muscat Agency, on board of HM's ships, or in the Agencies on the Trucial Coast as well as in the Residency were invariably given manumission certificates.¹ The discussion which followed was provoked by the news that once in Muscat even slaves whose release was not provided for under the conditions of the engagements with the sultan were in practice always released whenever their cases were brought to the British representative's notice, while on the Arab Coast and Bahrain, slaves who had been born in slavery, or who had been imported prior to the execution of the agreements with the shaikhs, were returned to their masters. On 11th August *The Times* published an article under the heading 'The Surrender of Fugitive Slaves' in which H. Allen, the Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, referred to the Parliamentary report of 6th August. The Secretary claimed that according to his well-informed correspondent in the Persian Gulf, the practice of the British officials in this region was to give up fugitive slaves and that was part of the British treaties with the Sultan of Muscat

¹ 'Inclosure. Question in House of Commons', 6th August 1897, IOR: R/15/1/201 5/74.

and other shaikhs of the Arabian Coast. The author appealed to discontinue this practice.²

Slavery and traffic of slaves in the Persian Gulf went back to the ancient times. It also had a long record in the times of British presence in the area as a part of the British policy towards the region. In 1831, Lieutenant Colonel Hennel, Resident in the Persian Gulf, reported on the successive adhesion of the Sultan of Muscat and the chiefs of the Arabian Coast to the Great Britain's policy for the suppression of the slave trade. At the same time, he regretted that the Persian Government continued its obstinacy in refusing to join the British Government's efforts in this matter. The problem was that even in the case of the seizure or detention of a Persian vessel carrying slaves Persia denied the Sultan of Muscat's and the Imam of Zanzibar's rights of confiscating such a vessel. The British Resident indicated that the Negro slaves were imported into Persia almost invariably either directly from Zanzibar, or from the Port of Muscat. He thought that if the supply from those two sources was cut off, the trade would entirely cease. He was of the opinion that 'either from the absence of power or the want of inclination, nothing in respect to active measures can be looked for from H.H. the Imam at Zanzibar and son Sayed Thoweynee at Muscat'. The British Resident was sincerely convinced of the final success of the 'philanthropic measures' of the British Government for putting down the slave trade and proposed some technical steps to be taken as sufficient to achieve the goal. In the case of the Imam and his son it was necessary that they were induced to declare any foreign vessel violating their ports regulations against the export or import of slaves as liable to seizure and confiscation, and at the same time to request the aid of the British Government to enable him to execute his engagements with it for the suppression of this traffic. Then, the Resident previewed a simple method of eliminating the traffic. He thought that two vessels stationed at Zanzibar, one in Muscat and one offshore would suffice to put down the slave trade. In the case of the traffic in Abyssinian and Somali slaves in the Red Sea, where the former were Christians and the latter were Muslims, it was necessary to declare the vessels engaged in carrying away either of the classes of slaves as pirates, and liable as such to seizure and confiscation.³

² 'Inclosure. *The Times*, 11th August 1897', IOR: R/15/1/201 5/74.

³ 'Lieutenant Colonel Hennel, Resident in the Persian Gulf, to Lieutenant Colonel Heib, British Envoy at the Court of Persia', Bushire, 9th April 1831, IOR: R/15/1/127 vol. 173.

On 26th November, 1927, thirty years after the Lord Hamilton's reply, P. E. Percival, Judicial Commissioner of Sind, informed the Secretary to Government at Bombay that the traffic of slaves was still common in the Persian Gulf and that there were organizations for securing slaves from India, including British Indian subjects, to work as pearl divers in the Persian Gulf. Indian slaves, who had been recovered from slavery, stated that in Dubai there were up to 1,500 other slaves employed as pearl divers and that a majority of them was of African origin. The matter was brought to the notice of the British Government and the question of slavery in the Persian Gulf was reported in the House of Commons by Sir Austeen Chamberlain the same month. The enquiry showed that slave divers were mostly born slaves but not captured ones.⁴

The case, therefore, proved to be more complex and it turned out that the technical steps were insufficient to suppress the traffic, not to mention the slavery as such.

This book is on slavery in the Persian Gulf in the early 20th century, as documented in the official reports of British officials as well as the slaves' statements made at the British Agencies. Giving a statement was a prerequisite of manumission the slaves were applying for in front of the British officials. In the course of the research 949 statements made between 1907 and 1949 were found and their analysis sheds a light on various aspects of the social, economic and political life in the Gulf in this period. Slavery was an important part of the socio-economic system of the region, which was based on pearl diving and the cultivation of palm trees. The system had existed for ages but it was threatened by a deep crisis in the 1920s and 1930s. This fact had significant implications for slavery.

The book is a study based upon archival material contained in the India Office Records. The documents found at India Office archives were produced by the British colonial institutions, and in particular: (a) the Political Residency in the Persian Gulf in Bushire with its Agencies in Bahrain, Kuwait, Sharjah and Muscat, (b) the Government of India which was responsible for the administration of the Persian Gulf, and (c) the India Office in London. The records concerned have been arranged in the archive group R/15 the Records

⁴ 'From P. E. Percival, Judicial Commissioner of Sind, to the Secretary to Government, Home Department', Bombay, 26th November 1927, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf. The Residency records have been allocated the reference R/15/1 followed by the Agencies: Bahrain, R/15/2, Sharjah, R/15/4, Kuwait, R/15/5, and Muscat, R/15/6.

Additionally to the India Office records, several relevant studies have been used and they are referred to in the Introduction. I would like to stress especially ‘Slavery in Saudi Arabia and the Arab states on the Persian Gulf, 1921–63’ by Suzanne Miers.⁵ It deals directly with slaves’ biographies and gives a brilliant survey of the problem of slavery in the Persian Gulf in the period concerned.

I am indebted to several people and institutions and I wish to name them not only because this book is about debts and indebtedness, but because I felt permanent support from them when I was preparing the text.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Harry T. Norris of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London who never ceased to take an interest in my research work and whose extraordinary academic achievements have always been ‘an example for emulation’ to me.

I presented preliminary reports on my research at several seminars, and in particular in December 2007 at the Faculty Seminar at the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, the Institute of Asian and African Studies of the Hebrew University chaired by Professor Reuven Amitai. Ambassador Robert Finn was so kind as to give me the floor at the Brown Bag Lunch Seminar at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the Princeton University in April 2008. Professor Ulrike Freitag and her most hospitable staff were my listeners in June 2008 at the Zentrum of Modernes Orient in Berlin. My presentation at the seminar at the Sheikh Zayed University at Abu Dhabi in November 2007 provoked some questions from the students concerning the roots of their families and it was the most rewarding moment during my research. I am very grateful to many outstanding academicians who took part in these seminars and paid attention to my research. Their remarks were extremely useful for the further study, but, of course, I am entirely responsible for its final result.

The Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education provided me with a grant to spend time at the India Office Records Library in London and to publish the results of the study. The present book is a result of research made

⁵ S. Miers, ‘Slavery in Saudi Arabia and the Arab states on the Persian Gulf, 1921–63’, in *Abolition and its Aftermath in the Indian Ocean, Africa and Asia*, ed. by G. Campbell, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, p. 120–136.

during the last three years, but my acquaintance with the records of the India Office began in 1989, when the India Office Library was located at Waterloo, London. I wish to express my gratitude to the staff of this institution for allowing me access to all the files in their possession.

Miss Maria Bożenna Fedewicz was my English text consultant and her contribution to this book goes far beyond linguistic suggestions.

Finally, I should like to extend my thanks to Miss Katarzyna Pawlak for the tables and some sociological instructions.

I cannot thank enough my wife Irina and daughter Natalia for their patience and forbearance in the face of endless pressures.

As transliteration of Arabic words in this book is concerned, it must be admitted that official correspondence found in the records contains the names of places and names written in different variant forms, depending on a writer. It was decided to preserve the original forms and only the most common names of the period, such as: Ibn Saud, Hijaz, Sharjah or Batinah were adapted to the system used.

Introduction: Slaves, pearls and the British in the Persian Gulf at the turn of the 20th century

Slaves were imported to the Persian Gulf mainly from East Africa. Estimates of the total number of slaves kidnapped or bought in East Africa in the 19th century and then exported abroad vary significantly. Most estimates of the number of slaves who passed from the coast to Zanzibar and to points north each year for the period between 1800 and 1870 range from 6,000 to 20,000. Between 1870 and 1876, the year the slave trade was abolished in Zanzibar, 300,000 slaves were sent to the island and to Arabia, the Persian Gulf and India. These figures give a total East African Arab slave trade of 1,257,100.¹ Higher estimates said about over two million slaves sent from Zanzibar abroad between 1830 and 1873, when the exportation of slaves by ships was forbidden. There are opinions that if mortality of slaves and losses en route are taken into account, the total number of East Africans enslaved and sent from the region could reach over 20 million.² Ralph Austen gives more conservative estimates and thinks that 800,000 slaves were exported from East Africa to the Muslim world in the 19th century. They were transported to the north and 300,000 of them across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and the rest from the Swahili coast.³ This process was a consequence of industrialization and the

¹ See: M. Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989, (first published as *L'Esclavage dans le monde arabe*, Edition Robert Laffont, Paris, 1987), p. 186–187.

² See: G. Campbell, 'Introduction', in *Abolition and its Aftermath in the Indian Ocean, Africa and Asia*, ed. by Gwyn Campbell, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, p. 5.

³ R. Austin, 'The 19th Century Islamic Slave Trade from East African (Swahili and Red Sea Coast): A Tentative Census', in *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*, ed. by W. G. Clarence-Smith, London: Frank Cass, 1989, p. 21–44.

growth of the international economy. The demand for unfree labour was determined by the spread of virulent diseases which left many countries depopulated and limited the stock of free wage labour.⁴

At the turn of the 19th century the exportation of slaves from East Africa was governed by Omani rulers. On 1785, Oman managed to re-establish its political authority over Kilwa, which it had lost several years before. The Omani rulers purchased slaves in Kilwa for the Muscat market and for their growing needs in Zanzibar. Rising European demand for slaves also contributed to the expansion of the slave trade and to the sharp rise in prices for slaves. In Kilwa the prices went up from 25 Omani dollars to 40 dollars a head. According to the estimates, in 1811–1821, 2,500 slaves were annually exported from the Swahili coast to the Europeans only. The Sultan of Oman levied duty for exportation and generated the growing revenues. In Kilwa the duty was 10 Omani dollars per head and a total of 25,000 dollars a year constituted a third source of the sultan's income. A British officer who visited Zanzibar in 1811 considered about three-quarters of the island's 200,000 population to be made up of a servile labour. Later on slavery became the main source to sustain the clove plantations on the island. According to the above-mentioned officer, up to 10,000 slaves were exported each year to Muscat, India, and the Mascarene Islands.⁵

The second source of slave importation was the upper Nile valley and Abyssinia. Approximately half a million people from these regions were taken to Egypt and another half to ports of the Red Sea for export to Arabia and the Persian Gulf. A great majority of the slaves were youths under fifteen years of age and most of them were girls. The European travellers recounted in their diaries that slaves were to be seen practically everywhere in Arabia. The Swiss traveller Jean Louis Burckhardt, who travelled in the early 19th century with slave caravan from Shendi to Suakin, stated that some 5,000 slaves annually passed through this town. He admitted that the slave girls were commonly prostituted by the slave traders.⁶ In 1838, for instance, an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 slaves were arriving in Egypt alone each year, and some of them were bound for domestic service there or for export to undertake similar service, but others for use as concubines, construction and factory workers,

⁴ See: G. Campbell, 'Introduction', in *Abolition...*, op. cit., p. 1–7.

⁵ See: M. Gordon, op. cit., p. 184–185.

⁶ Ibid., p. 173.

porters, dockers, clerks, soldiers, and cultivators.⁷ The English traveler Charles M. Doughty, who travelled to the Central Arabia in the 1880s recounted that African slaves were brought up to Arabia every year with *hajj*. He met many slaves from Abyssinia who told him that ‘in their country were trunks of wild coffee-trees great as oaks’. We read that ‘there are bondsmen and bondwomen and free negro families in every tribe and town; many are home-born and free-born, *muwalladin*. A few persons may be seen, at Teyma, of the half-negro blood; they are descendents from freedmen, who grown to substantial living have taken poor white women of the *sunna* or smiths’ caste, which is reckoned illiberal. A pleasant looking young Heteym woman in the Kella at M. Salih was the wife of a negro *askar*, Nejm’s freedman who had been sent to keep the cisterns at Moaddam’.⁸

Many of East African slaves were sent to the Persian Gulf. In 1850, the British Native Agent in Lingah reported the arrival of two vessels from Berbera bringing cargoes of female slaves to the port. He also stated that another vessel which had been chartered by two individuals belonging to Charak had brought up 40 slaves from Zanzibar. One vessel brought 27 Abyssinian female slaves and half of them were landed in Bandar Abbas and half in Lingah. Another vessel brought 20 Abyssinian female slaves.⁹ In 1857, the British Political Resident in Bushire reported, ‘When their vessels arrived from the African coast with slaves, they disembarked them on the coast of Batinah in Sohar, and then brought them over land to the date groves in Ras al-Khaimah and other places’.¹⁰

Although Abdul Sheriff emphasizes that in the 19th century the demand for African slaves in the Middle East was low as few economic sectors there experienced development, the situation in the Persian Gulf seemed to be more complex.¹¹ Thomas M. Ricks stresses that prior to the 18th and 19th centuries,

⁷ See: R. Segal, *Islam's Black Slaves*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2001, p. 60.

⁸ Ch. M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, with an Introduction by T. E. Lawrence, vol. I–II, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1979 (first published in 1888), vol. I, p. 603, vol. II, pp. 250, 289.

⁹ ‘From Lieutenant Colonel Hennell, Resident in the Persian Gulf, to Lieutenant Colonel Sheil, the Envoy at the Court of Persia, Bushire, 24th June 1850’, IOR: R/15/1/123 vol. 166.

¹⁰ ‘From the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, dated 25th September 1857’, IOR: R/15/1/127 vol. 173.

¹¹ Abdul Sheriff, ‘The slave trade and its fallout in the Persian Gulf’, in *Abolition...*, op. cit., p. 105–106.

slaves in Iran and the Persian Gulf societies were marginal to the Persian, Arab and Indian population. They functioned out of the public sphere in houses and workshops, and only in the 18th and 19th centuries slaves and slave trade became significant. The reasons for this change were the growth of trade and the labour shortage in the region, which created new demand for imported labour, and in particular, for slaves from East Africa.¹²

According to Th. M. Ricks, annual importations to the Persian Gulf in the 19th century were much greater than in the previous one. In 1772–1782, the annual import covered 500–600 slaves and in 1782–1842, it was 800–1000, while in 1842–1872 it reached up to 3,000. The total imports were accordingly 30,000–36,000 slaves for 1772–1782, 48,000–60,000 for 1782–1842 and 60,000–90,000 for 1842–1872. In 1872–1902, the total imports decreased and was 1,500–3,000 slaves or 500–1000 per year. 80–90 per cent of the imported slaves, especially in the period of the dramatic increase of the number in 1842–1872, were most likely re-exported from the Gulf into the Ottoman and Iranian hinterland to work as cash-crop or irrigation canal workers in Fars and Kirman.¹³ This data corresponds with other estimations. According to Arnold B. Kemball, British Resident in the Persian Gulf, around 3,500 slaves were imported annually in the second quarter of the 19th century. The season for the Gulf traffic in slaves was between the 1st July and the 1st November. In 1841, 117 boats arrived at the port of Charak only, having slaves on board, and they brought 1,217 Africans and Abyssinians.¹⁴ R. Austen estimated that between 3,000 and 3,500 slaves were retained each year in the Gulf region in 1830–1866.¹⁵

In the 19th century, slaves came to the Persian Gulf primarily from East Africa via the Omani ports of Sur and Muscat, and partially to the small Arabian ports of Sharjah, Dubai or Ras al-Khaimah. Direct slave trading between the Persian Gulf ports of Bandar Abbas, Lingah, Ras al-Khaimah and Basrah was

¹² Th. M. Ricks, 'Slaves and Slave Traders in the Persian Gulf, 18th and 19th Centuries: An Assessment', in *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by W. G. Clarence-Smith, London and Totowa (N.J.), 1989, Frank Cass, p. 60.

¹³ Th. M. Ricks, op. cit., p. 67.

¹⁴ A. B. Kemball, 'Suppression of the Slave Trade in the Persian Gulf', in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, No. XXIV. – New Series. *Historical and other Information connected with the Province of Oman, Muscat, Bahrein, and other Places in the Persian Gulf*, Bombay, Bombay Education Society's Press, 1856, p. 646–649.

¹⁵ R. Austin, op. cit., p. 29.

also carried on. Many slaves were eventually carried into Turkey, Persia, Sind, and the territories on the Western coast of India. A. B. Kemball admitted that the treatment of the African slaves was neither severe nor cruel. During the sea voyage they were not bound or kept under particular restraint. Rice, dates, and fish in sufficient quantities formed their food, and a coarse cloth round the middle of the body constituted their clothing. The male slave labor was used in a great variety: as soldiers, farm labourers, cash crop workers, irrigation canal workers, pearl divers, fishermen, maritime sailors, dock workers, porters and domestic servants in towns and villages on the both sides of the Gulf. The role of the imported female slave labourers was the same as it was in the previous centuries: they functioned as domestic servants or concubines.¹⁶

There was a great proportion of female slaves imported to the Gulf in the first half of the 19th century. In Kuwait and Lingah there were about twice as many females as males, while in Muscat the proportions were 45 to 55 and in Sur there was a male preponderance (40:60).¹⁷ On the Persian coast, the number of men bears in the case of Africans a pretty equal proportion to that of the women. But of Abyssinians the greater number were females, in the proportion, perhaps, of two to one¹⁸. As Abdul Sheriff mentions, it stood in contrast with the Atlantic slave trade, where a majority were adult males, with females constituting less than 20 per cent of the total number. It may suggest that a system of slavery in the early 19th century was driven more by socialization and reproduction of the slave community and less by immediate productivity.¹⁹

In 1841, prices for Africans in Zanzibar were 7 to 15 Omani dollars for boys from 7 to 10 years of age and 17 to 20 dollars for full grown men. The females were somewhat more valued than the males: a stout young man was sold for 35 or 40 dollars. The profit on the above in Muscat was 20 per cent, and in Basrah and Bushire never less than 50 per cent. The Abyssinian females were much prized for their beauty and figure: their value was from 60 to 200 dollars. The males also were much valued: their price varied from 50 to 150 dollars and upwards.²⁰

¹⁶ A. B. Kemball, *op. cit.*, p. 647.

¹⁷ 'The British Resident in the Persian Gulf to the Government of Bombay, Bushire, 21st November 1889', IOR: R/15/1/200 5/65 I.

¹⁸ A. B. Kemball, *op. cit.*, p. 649.

¹⁹ See: Abdul Sheriff, *op. cit.*, p. 104–105.

²⁰ A. B. Kemball, *op. cit.*, p. 649.

The largest number of male slaves sent to the Persian Gulf was absorbed in the pearl fisheries industry. Pearl diving was the most important industry in the Persian Gulf. The outcome of the pearling season determined the livelihood of merchants, boat-owners, creditors, brokers, sailors and divers. Every year the season's catch was bought by dealers from India and Europe. The Gulf pearls were partially taken to Europe directly, and partially were sent to Bombay where they were pierced, graded and exported to Europe. Paris was the European centre of the Gulf pearls. Some of them were sent to Zanzibar, but this channel of exportation was a minor one.

According to John G. Lorimer, a British consular officer who produced a comprehensive survey of the Gulf, in 1904, the number of boats employed in the pearl diving was about 4,785, and the number of people directly engaged in pearling was over 74,000. The value of the pearls exported from the Gulf, estimated in 1833 at 300,000 pounds and in 1866 at 100,000 pounds, was in 1905–1906 1,434,399 pounds at the lowest computation. At the same time the value of the mother-of-pearl exported amounted to 30,439 pounds. The great bulk of the pearls from Bahrain, Lingah and Dubai was exported to Bombay, where they were classified for dispatch to European and other markets, but some were sent to Baghdad. The Baghdad markets favoured the white pearls and the yellow ones found a sale in India and Turkey. Indifferent and bad pearls were sold to Persia, where they were used to ornament articles. In 1902, Manamah and Lingah were the principal ports of exportation; the former drawn to itself all the trade of the middle, the latter that of the lower Gulf.²¹

Bahrain remained the main place of exportation of the pearls in terms of value. In the years 1905–1906 the value of pearls exported from Bahrain was 1,26,03,000 rupees and it was followed by Trucial Oman with 80,00,000 rupees.²² Lingah exported pearls of the value of 6,95,861 rupees, Kuwait – 1,34,700 and Muscat – 22,500 rupees. In spite of yearly fluctuations, the total estimated value of the pearl export from the Gulf was steadily growing and almost doubled between 1873 and 1906. In the case of Trucial Oman it increased

²¹ J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and the Central Arabia*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, Vols. I–II, 1908–1915, Vol. I, *Historical*, Appendix C *The Pearl and Mother-of-Pearl Fisheries of the Persian Gulf*, p. 2220–2236.

²² The sums of rupees are given in the system of crores and lakhs (lakh = 100,000, crore = 10 million = 100 lakhs), e.g. 1,26,03,000 means 12,603,000 rupees and 6,95,861 means 695 thousand, eight hundred and 61 rupees.

almost 5 times and it was the same in the case of Bahrain. In Muscat it was slightly higher but it decreased in Lingah and Bushire. The principal factors of the fluctuations were the quality of the pearls obtained, which varied from year to year, and the prices ruling the market. This second factor was perhaps the more important one as the average prices for pearls almost doubled since 1877. In 1899, in anticipation of the Paris Exhibition of 1900, the speculators tried to rise the prices but they failed and many bankruptcies followed. In 1901, the yield was good in terms of quality and quantity, and with the approach of the coronation of King Edward VII the prices had risen considerably.²³

The bulk of the pearl banks lied on the Arabian side of the Gulf from the coast of Trucial Oman, a few miles to the west of Dubai town up to Bahrain archipelago. The largest and richest banks were situated to the north and east of Bahrain. The pearl banks of the Persian side were poor as well as small and were situated between Lingah and Tahiri, and again near Kharag Island.²⁴

There were several diving seasons, called *ghaus* (literally ‘diving’). The earliest season was *al-ghaus al-bard*, or ‘cold diving’. It started in the middle of April and continued for 40 days. During this season the operations were performed at shallow waters. The sea was so cold that the divers worked in alternate half-hour shifts. The next and principal season was called *al-ghaus al-kabir*, or ‘great diving’ and began in June or sometimes in May after the end of the wind called the *shimal*. This season lasted until September. Its beginning was known as the *rakbah*, and the end as the *quffal*. J. Lorimer adds that in 1906 the *ghaus al-kabir* in Bahrain lasted from 16th May to 18th September. The other season was the *raddah*, or ‘return’ and it started a few days after the *ghaus al-kabir* was concluded. It lasted about 3 weeks. In 1906, the *raddah* in Bahrain began on 20th September and ended on 14th October. Besides the seasons of pearling at sea, there was also a winter season called the *mujannah* when the fishery was conducted by wading in the shallows along the coast. The pearl output obtained during that season was generally small. In winter a number of the Gulf pearlery used to visit the Ceylon banks and Socotra and the Red Sea where they remained continuously for two consecutive seasons.²⁵

The unit of organization was a boat’s crew with the *nakhuda* or captain. The *nakhuda* was, in 7 or 8 cases out of 10, the owner of the boat and was entirely

²³ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I: *Historical*, p. 2252–2253.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 2221.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 2229.

responsible for the crew. Next in importance to the captain were the *ghasa* or divers who were followed by the *siyub* or haulers. The haulers were, generally, assisted by one or more *radhafah* or extra hands. Sometimes a *walaid* or apprentice was taken and his duty was to catch fish and prepare food. The total crew of a pearl boat varied from 10 to 40 men. The divers were mostly poor Arabs and free Negroes or Negro slaves. Persians and Baluchis were also engaged in diving.²⁶

The money of the people engaged in the pearl diving created a buying power and stimulated importations which guaranteed revenues from the customs for the local governments. The diving industry fuelled boat-building as well as sail-making. The money required to equip the boat for sea and to maintain the crew was partly advanced from those interested in the operation and partly borrowed from a special class called *musaqqams*. They were, generally, wealthy people, but some of them did not have sufficient capital and conducted their business by means of loans obtained from wealthy Arab or Indian merchants at a 10 to 25 per cent interest. The manner in which the debts of operatives to financiers were adjusted was the core of the whole business and covered different forms of contract. Traditionally, the *musaqqams* class was very strong and dominated the industry but in the early 20th century their position was no longer what it had been before and their numbers were dwindling. In Bahrain in 1908, there were only 3 *musaqqams* and not more than 10 per cent of the Bahrain fleet had dealings with them, while earlier the majority of boats had been fitted out with their assistance.²⁷

Thus, pearling operations were carried on largely with borrowed capital and the whole industry was governed by prevalence of debt. Many *nakhudas*, especially those who were not owners of boats, owned more than they could pay to their *musaqqams* on account of the expenses of fitting out their vessels. In a similar way, the divers were indebted to their *nakhudas* for advances. Under such a system of finance and in such a society, the rights of lenders had to be safeguarded and the obligations of *nakhudas* to *musaqqams* and of divers to *nakhudas* were regulated by special tribunals. They were called the *Salifat al-Ghaus* or ‘diving courts’ and they were constituted in every Arab principality, when required, by the local shaikh, who appointed one or more men – as a rule *nakhudas* of repute – to act as judges. The *Salifat al-Ghaus* did not administer oath and when an oath was necessary, the parties were sent to a *qadhi*, or judge.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., p. 2228.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 2227.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 2233–2234.

The survey of J. Lorimer is extremely useful in revealing the African and slave presence in the Persian Gulf at the turn of the 20th century. It proves that people of African origin were a significant part of the population of Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the Trucial Oman. The African population was also very conspicuous in Oman. In 1904, there were 4,000 Africans out of a total of 35,000 people in Kuwait. A third of them were *ma'tuq*, or emancipated slaves, while the remains were *mamluk*, or the enslaved. In Qatar there were 2,000 free Africans and 4,000 slaves not living in their masters' houses, apart from domestic slaves living in the houses of their masters. The total population of Qatar was 27,000 at that time. According to Lorimer, there were nearly 5,000 free Africans and 6,000 slaves out of a total of 45,000 on two islands of Bahrain. However, he stresses that it was impossible to distinguish 'Negro' families from the communities by whom they were owned. The Sunni Arabs of Bahrain tended to intermingle with African slaves to that extent that 'there was a noticeable infusion of Negro blood' among them. Nevertheless, the mixture of Arab and Negro blood was prevented by the fact that a full-blooded African slave was more valuable than a half-caste one. Slaves were generally married to slave wives by their masters who took possession of the offspring. There were a few cases when a slave was married to a free women by his master.²⁹

African slaves were more numerous on the Trucial Coast. According to a British report of 1881, there were 10,040 slaves out of a total of 36,400 for 9 towns on the Trucial Coast (Ras al-Khaimah, Hamrah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Hamriyyah, Ajman, Sharjah, Khan, Dubai and Abu Dhabi).³⁰ In 1904, the Africans from the Swahili coast still composed a considerable part of the total population of Ajman, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Umm al-Qaiwain and Sharjah. J. G. Lorimer estimated that about 72,000 people lived there and that Negro slaves were exceptionally numerous in the coast towns. He admitted that Swahili language survived among Negro slaves of the full blood.³¹

Arabs intermixed with African slaves through a system of secondary marriages with slave women or concubinage. Additionally, there was a permanent influx of Indian girls from the Malabar coast and even Bombay in the middle of the 19th century, who were brought to the region for sexual services. The same process took place on the Persian side of the Gulf. The

²⁹ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. II *Geographical and Statistical*, pp. 241, 1051, 1531.

³⁰ See: Abdul Sheriff, p. 109.

³¹ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. II: *Geographical and Statistical*, p. 1437.

ethnic elements which intermingled were Persians, Arabs, Baluchis and Africans. The populations of such towns as Bushire, Kung and Lingah were extremely heterogeneous and was described as ‘a medley of races’. In Bandar Abbas the population was heterogeneous and this segment which was a mixture of Persians, Baluchis, Arabs and Africans was known as Abbasis and spoke the Abbasi patois with a significant Swahili ingredient.³²

Outside the Persian Gulf, the Africans composed a considerable element of Oman. This country had a long history of contacts with Zanzibar and the East Africa coast. Most of male slaves imported to Oman were employed in the date plantations. Lorimer stressed that the number of Africans and half-caste (*mawalid*), bond and free, was large. The majority of them came from the Swahili coast and there were few Ethiopian women and Nubians. The Arabs of pure blood were very few because of concubinage with slaves or marriages with free African women. In Muscat there were 10,000 Africans and 15,000 people of mixed African and Arab race out of a total of 40,000. Africans were also very conspicuous in Matrah, where they were concentrated in a separate quarter. However, Lorimer believed that it was the Baluchi who composed the strongest segment of the Muscat and Matrah numerically. A heavy infusion of African blood was showed by a large proportion of the population of Sur on the southern coast of Oman. This port had close commercial relations with Africa and its inhabitants were involved in slave trade. Offspring of Omani Arabs born by slave mothers were called Bayasirah and had an inferior social status.³³

The lack of proper documentation of slave trade makes a general estimation of the percentage of African slaves in the population of the Persian Gulf difficult. The estimation of Lorimer’s figures, which are considered sometimes inflated, shows that the African presence in the Persian Gulf littoral varied from 1 per cent in Basrah to 11 per cent in Kuwait, 25 per cent in Muscat and Matrah and 28 per cent on the Trucial Coast. The total number of slaves can be estimated as 36,880 out of a total of 253,000, which gives the average percentage of 14,5 for the region (including Basrah, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Trucial Coast, Lingah, and Muscat and Matrah).³⁴ Ricks gives lower proportions; in his view between

³² Ibid., p. 10–11.

³³ Ibid., pp. 296–297, 1183–1185, 1198–1200.

³⁴ Calculations of Abdul Sheriff based on Lorimer’s estimates, Abdul Sheriff, op. cit., p. 111.

1722 and 1902 African population of East African origin constituted 6,3 per cent of the total population. On the other hand, Austen's opinion is that a general rate of slaves for the region was 10 per cent.³⁵

At the turn of the 20th century, it was the British Government who played a principal role in the repression of the slave trade in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The emancipation of African population in the Gulf did not, however, begin with the formal manumission of slaves by the British in the 20th century. The release of slaves was a part of Islamic norms. Although Islam did not abolish slavery, it recommended to free a slave as an act of piety and charity. At least two *hadiths* refer to the slave manumission. The *hadith* entitled 'Excellence of Emancipating a Slave' says, 'Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: If anyone emancipates a Muslim slave, Allah will set free from Hell an organ of his body for every organ of his (slave's) body. Sa'id Marjana said: When I heard this hadith from Abu Huraira, I went away and made a mention of it to Ali b. Hasan and he at once emancipated the slave for which Ibn Ja'far was prepared to pay ten thousand dirhams or one thousand dinars'.³⁶ Another *hadith* 'How should the masters treat their slaves and expiation if they show high-handedness' tells the following story, 'Sadhan Abu Umar reported: I came to Ibn Umar as he had granted freedom to a slave. He (the narrator further) said: He took hold of a wood or something like it from the earth and said: It (freedom of a slave) has not the reward even equal to it, but the fact that I heard Allah's Messenger say: He who slaps his slave or beats him, the expiation for it is that he should set him free'.³⁷ Thus, Islam also stressed fair treatment of slaves, including adequate food and clothing and support of old slaves. Islam prescribed several ways of manumission of slaves, including a possibility of buying freedom by a slave himself. This type of freed slave was the *mukatib*. Under this arrangement, a contract was made between the owner and his slave, usually for the payment of a particular sum of money, and after payment was completed, the slave was free.³⁸

³⁵ See: Abdul Sheriff, p. 112.

³⁶ *Sahih Muslim being Traditions of the Saying and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami'-us-Salih by Imam Muslim rendered into English by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976, vol. II, Chapter DXCI, p. 790.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, Chapter DCLXII, p. 882.

³⁸ See: H. J. Fisher, *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa*, Hurst, London, 2001, p. 75.

The manumission was accomplished by a formal declaration on the part of the master and recorded in a certificate which was given to the freed slaves. It was a common practice to permit secondary marriages with slave girls and the offspring of these relations were free children with full rights like those who were born of free mothers. The mother of such children (she was called *umm walad*) could not be sold and was supposed to be freed on the death of her master.³⁹

In the case of a slave who was *umm walad*, Muslim law required the freeing of her children after the master's death. This way of emancipation was called *mudabbar*. A *mudabbar* slave received his master's assurance that, on his master's death, he or she would be freed. After such an assurance was given the *mudabbar* slave could not be sold, but he or she continued to work for the master, and his/her property was, at least from the legal point of view, at the master's disposal. A master could still enjoy sexual relations with a female slave who was *mudabbar*. There were, however, several restraints. A man could retract his last testament, if he wished, including the provision to emancipate a slave. A slave could not be made *mudabbar* unless he/she felt within that third of the estate over which the testator had powers of independent allocation. A debtor whose patrimony did not cover his debts was not eligible to free a slave. And again, if someone owned a part of a slave (when the ownership was shared between two or more people) and he freed the slave, the latter did not become free until due compensation was paid to the co-owner.⁴⁰

Manumission was an especially pious act because it was not required. Since slavery was basically accepted by Islamic doctrines, the man who emancipated a slave and gave him a manumission certificate was considered a man of exceptional piety. The freed slaves enjoyed the legal rights of the free born people, but their former masters remained their patrons. The ex-masters were legally responsible for arranging the ex-slaves' marriages and were legal heirs of all the property the slaves acquired after they were freed in the absence of children. Frederick Cooper, in considering the slave situation in the East Africa in the 19th century, stressed that as a result of this traditional attitude toward manumission coastal people had difficulties in understanding the liberation of slaves by the British authorities. Since their masters did not free them in accordance with Islamic law, the status of slaves manumitted by the British changed only in terms of the

³⁹ See: B. Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East. An Historical Enquiry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 8–9.

⁴⁰ H. J. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

foreign law. Most people understood that the emancipation by the colonial government was no more than a purchase and referred to slaves manumitted in as ‘slaves of the government’ or ‘slaves of the Consul’.⁴¹

Frederick Cooper stresses that in the East Africa manumission was a regular occurrence in the 19th century. In both Zanzibar and the mainland, slaves were often freed by their masters as atonement for wrongdoing, in gratitude for recovery from an illness, as a provision of a will, or as a reward for loyal service. Freed slaves received a certificate from the *qadi*, which they often wore in a small silver case around the neck. Cooper shows, however, that manumission, being a part of a larger pattern of charity in Muslim societies, did not include in Zanzibar the slaves who picked the cloves at the plantations. Thus, there was a dual nature of a slave for his master – he/she was a person worthy of generosity and at the same time, a transferable object.⁴²

Humphrey J. Fisher describes the legal Islamic texts which dealt with slaves’ emancipation and which determined the customs of manumission in Africa. The freeing of a slave was a form of expiation for some wrongdoings and was called *kaffara*. The emancipation of a slave was the necessary (*wajib*) expiation for non-intentional homicide. For breaking Ramadan intentionally, the expiation was either to free a slave or to fast for two subsequent months. Whoever swore to renounce sexual relations with his wife – this was called *tazahara* – could resume them only after the expiation of freeing a believing slave, without bodily defects, whom the master owned fully and whose servitude was total.⁴³

Fisher highlights an important aspect of African slaves’ situation which was their conversion to Islam. Judging by the names of African slaves brought to the Persian Gulf in the early 20th century all of them were Muslims. According to the descriptions of European travellers, the conversion of African slaves to Islam was quite general. In the West Africa, slaves were treated as prisoners and if they did not voluntarily practice Islam, they were settled in cultivable areas, under clerical supervisors who both organized the farm work and initiated the slaves in Islam. In the case of prisoners of war, who were also treated as slaves, they were kept for three days with the clerics who tried to convert them; if they refused, they were executed on the third day. Fisher stresses that when converted, the slaves could

⁴¹ F. Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1997, p. 242–243.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 244–245.

⁴³ H. J. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 76.



The Buxton Memorial in London erected to commemorate the emancipation of slaves after the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act

not count on emancipation. The author argues with some champions of Islam who declared that a slave who embraced Islam was free, and agrees that it was true in an apocalyptic or spiritual, but not in the ordinary sense.⁴⁴

The principally anti-slave attitude of the British authorities at the turn of the 20th century was, however, relatively recent. Trading in slaves was a very lucrative enterprise. On board of the fleet which in 1626 brought Sir Dodmore Cotton, a British Ambassador, with his staff from Surat in India to Bunder Abbas in the Persian Gulf there were more than 300 slaves bought by Persians in India and the British representative suggested no remarks. But in 1772 it was decided by the English courts that a slave who set his foot on the British soil, became free. Yet the slave trade and the slavery itself continued abroad under the British flag. Some estimates say that around 1790, out of some 74,000 slaves exported annually from Africa, about 38,000 belonged to British merchants. In 1807, when an act was passed, it became illegal for any vessel to ship slaves from any port in the British dominions after 1st March, 1807, and to land slaves in a British colony after 1st March, 1808. In 1811, the traffic in slaves was declared to be felony and was made punishable to prevent commercial transactions in slaves by British subjects. The next step was made in 1833 with the abolition of proprietary rights to slaves throughout the British dominions. The final liberation of all slaves took place in August 1838.⁴⁵ There was no compensation for the slaves, their ex-owners received 20 million pounds for their loss of unpaid labour. Among them there were prominent persons, such as John Gladstone and his sons, including the future Prime Minister William, who received 85,600 pounds for his 2,183 slaves in Jamaica and British Guiana. Nevertheless, in 1842 there were estimates of still 5 or 10 million of enslaved people in India, which was then governed by the British East India Company on behalf of the British Government. Thus, the emancipation of slaves was a long process. The last Act of Abolition in the British Empire took place in 1928, when slavery was abolished in the Gold Coast.⁴⁶

The position of the British Government in regard to slavery in the Persian Gulf can be described as uncompromisingly hostile to the slave trade and adverse to slavery as an institution. Certain questions, relating to the meaning

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

⁴⁵ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I, *Historical*, p. 2475.

⁴⁶ See: M. Sherwood, *After Abolition. Britain and the Slave Trade since 1807*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2007, pp. 1–2, 15–17.

and application of agreements and enactments, were, however, from time to time discussed, and especially subsidiary matters connected with anti-slavery proceedings provoked various opinions between the main British institutions responsible for preventive operations, but the general actions of the British anti-slavery policy at the turn of the 20th century in the area were quite effective – the traffic in slaves was stopped and the slavery as an institution weakened.

From 1800 to the 1920s the policy of the British Government on the littoral of the Persian Gulf was consistently to avoid any interference in the affairs of the hinterland. In the early part of this period it was solely concerned with making the seas safe for commerce; with putting down piracy; and at a slightly later stage, with suppressing the slave trade. In 1844, A. B. Kemball, Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf, admitted: ‘The general policy of the British Government in relation with the Arab States is the entire suppression of piracy, and consequent security to the trade and traders of all nations. /.../ The first principle of our policy is a total non-interference in local matters concerning only themselves /.../’.⁴⁷ However, as the strategic importance of the Gulf area, particularly from the Indian standpoint, became greater, the British authorities consolidated their relations with the rulers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Muscat, and with the Trucial shaikhs.

The first agreement on the slave trade in the Persian Gulf was the General Treaty of 1820 signed with the shaikhs of Trucial Oman. It was laid down by the 9th Article of that Treaty that carrying off slaves from the coasts of Africa or elsewhere and transporting them in vessels was plunder and piracy, and that the subjects of the signatories would restrain from doing anything of such a nature.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ ‘Observations on the past policy of the British Government towards the Arab Tribes of the Persian Gulf. By A.B. Kemball, Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf. Submitted to Government on the 18th October, 1844’, in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, op. cit., pp. 62, 74.

⁴⁸ The text in C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries*, vol. XI, *The Treaties relating to Aden and the South Western Coast of Arabia, the Arab Principalities in the Persian Gulf, Muscat (Oman), Baluchistan and the north-west frontiers province, revised and continued up to the end of 1930 under the authority of the Government of India*, Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933, p. 245–249; , see also: ‘Major-General Sir W.G. Kerr to the Bombay Government’, 11th April 1820, in J. A. Saldanha, *The Persian Précis*, vol. 2 *Précis of Correspondence regarding the Affairs of the Persian Gulf*, 1801–1853, p. 107–113.

In 1837–1838, it was, however, decided, not to put pressure on the Trucial shaikhs or on the ruler of Muscat to abolish the slave trade in their dominions entirely, and the reasons for this policy were political, particularly the awareness of the fact that the slavery was a part of the local social system and its abolition could destroy the political stability. New agreements with the shaikhs of Ajman, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ras al-Khaimah were signed in 1839, 1847, 1856 and 1873, by which the five Trucial shaikhs committed to prohibit the exportation of slaves from any place on board of vessels belonging to themselves and their subjects, and consented to the detention and search, and – when in breach of the agreement – to the confiscation of such vessels by British cruisers⁴⁹.

On 4th September, 1822, the first treaty for the suppression of slavery was concluded with the ruler of Muscat. It prohibited the sale of slaves to Christian nations by the subjects of the ruler. It also empowered the British Government to establish an agent in the sultan's dominions to watch the trade. On 17th December, 1839, the ruler of Muscat authorized the detention and search by British Governmental cruises of Omani vessels suspected of being engaged in the slave trade. Until 1856 the ruler of Muscat ruled both Oman and Zanzibar. After the death of Sayid Sa'id these two territories became separate sultanates. As a result, the old agreement was revised and in 1873 new agreements with the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Sultan of Muscat were concluded. Vessels engaged in carrying slaves were declared to be liable to confiscation by British officers and courts and the closure of all public markets for slaves was declared by the ruler of Muscat. But the most remarkable provision of the Treaty of 14th April, 1873, was that all persons thereafter entering the sultan's dominions were free. In Zanzibar the complete abolition of the slave trade was declared on 5th June, 1873.⁵⁰

At the end of January 1847, at the instigation of the British Government, a decree was promulgated by the Sultan of Turkey, under which Turkish merchant vessels were prohibited from engaging in the slave trade. It was agreed that offending vessels might be captured by British as well as by Turkish ships. In the former case the vessels seized were to be delivered over by the

⁴⁹ The texts in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, op. cit., pp. 669–670, 670–678.

⁵⁰ See: C. U. Aitchison, op. cit., p. 237–239; *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, op. cit., pp. 248–249, 249–250, 250–256, 660–662.

captors to the Turkish authorities in the Persian Gulf. Earlier, in 1812, the Pasha of Baghdad issued an order of handing over to the British Agent in Basrah any native of India kidnapped and brought to the Turkish Arabia. These regulations were confirmed in a treaty concluded in Constantinople on 25th January, 1880 between the Porte and the British Government. By this agreement the Turkish Government undertook to prohibit the importation of African slaves into any part of the Ottoman dominions, and not to allow the exportation of such, except as domestic servants travelling with their masters or mistresses, in which case they should be provided with certificates. British cruisers were authorized to visit, search and detain merchant vessels suspected of being involved in the African slave trade, and these rights were to be exercised in the Red Sea, in the Gulf of Aden, on the coast of Arabia, in the Persian Gulf, on the East coast of Africa and in Ottoman waters where there were no constituted authorities. This treaty was brought within the operation by means of an Order in Council on 26th August, 1881.⁵¹

On 31st May, 1861, the Shaikh of Bahrain subscribed to the three agreements accepted by the shaikhs of Trucial Oman and agreed, in view of protection to be afforded him by the British Government, to abstain from slavery and other unlawful practices by sea.⁵²

By 1900 no agreement on the subject of slavery was obtained from the shaikhs of Qatar or Kuwait, or from those of Hasa. The latter province was a dependency of the Wahhabi Amirate of Najd, and former two were under the influence of the Turkish Government. The Shaikh of Qatar concluded the treaty with the British Government on 3rd November 1916, under which he accepted obligations similar to those of the other Trucial chiefs. It was agreed, however, that he and his subjects would be allowed to retain Negro slaves already in their possession, on condition of their treatment being satisfactory. No formal engagement existed as yet in the case of Kuwait, but the degree of control and influence exercised in that Amirate by the British Government was regarded as sufficient to enable to impose in practice an effective check on slave traffic within its boundaries.⁵³

⁵¹ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I *Historical*, p. 2482.

⁵² See: C. U. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 72, 118–120, 235.

⁵³ See: C. U. Aitchison, op. cit., p. 258–261; *The Persian Gulf. Historical Summaries 1907–1953*: vol. II *Historical Summary of Events in the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, 1928–1953*, Gerrards Cross, Archive Editions, 1987, p. 135.

In 1870 the Wahhabi Amirs established themselves on the sea coast and they became a matter of concern to the British Government, who was, however, cautious to abstain from all interference with their activities in the hinterland save to the extent that these might bear on the position of the other maritime rulers of the Trucial area and thus lead to piratical outbreaks, the revival of slavery, or the absorption of Muscat or Bahrain. London had no treaty relations with the Wahhabi Amirs, and its communication with them (apart from formal representations or demands for reparation for injuries committed at their instigation or by their subjects or vassals) was confined to polite exchanges of letters.⁵⁴ On 10th May, 1927 the Treaty of Jeddah was signed with Ibn Saud who undertook to co-operate by all means at his disposal with the British Government in the suppression of the slave trade, while a separate exchange of notes took place on the same occasion regarding the retention by the British consular officers of the right to manumit slaves.

The suppression of the traffic in slaves in Persia was governed by the British-Persian Convention of 2nd of March, 1882. The Persian Government agreed to take steps for the suppression of the trade, and allowed the British to search, detain, and bring for trial before the nearest Persian authorities Persian merchant vessels engaged in carrying slaves. The measures taken under the Convention resulted in the reduction of the slave trade on the Persian littoral to relatively unimportant dimensions. The extent, however, to which the slave traffic between the Persian and the Arab Coast continued to persist was considered by the Government of India as disquieting, and the possibility of its revival on a larger scale was very real. The lack of effective control by Persia of Persian Baluchistan was especially dangerous and resulted in a small but regular traffic from that area. In April 1928, the Persian Government declared that the Slavery Convention of 1882 was derogatory to Persian dignity and pressed for its abrogation. The British authorities wished to retain the Convention but their position was complicated by the existence of the League of Nations' Slavery Convention of 1926, which imposed on the states adhering to it an obligation to prevent and suppress the slave trade. Once Persia signed the League of Nations' Convention, the case for a special agreement between it and the Great Britain became substantially weakened. The position of the

⁵⁴ 'Historical Memorandum on the Relations of the Wahhabi Amirs and Ibn Saud with Eastern Arabia and the British Government, 1800–1934, 26th September 1934', IOR: R/15/1/745 India Office Memorandum No. B. 437, P.Z. 5620/1934.



A map of the Arabian Sea region

British Government was that Persia would be incapable of discharging effectively her obligations as there was no Persian navy. Moreover, there was a danger that the Persian obligations would be officered from foreign and non-British power. Consequently, the British Government aimed at retaining control by the British Navy of preventive action at the sea against the slave traffic.⁵⁵

As the main source of the slaves' exportation was East Africa, in 1871 a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to enquire into the subject of the East African slave trade and in 1873 a mission to Zanzibar and Muscat was sent to arrange a treaty with the Sultan of Muscat. In 1874, a British cruiser arrived in the Zanzibar station and the operation of preventing the exportation of slaves from the Eastern African coasts started. In two years it was reported that the dealers abandoned the wholesale exportation and that the slaves were brought to Arabia in small lots. At the same time the dealers began to use the French flag, which secured them against search by British vessels. The use of the French flag by the subjects of the Sultan of Muscat, provided by the Commercial Treaty with France of 1844, became common in the 1890s and this practice – often unauthorized and fraudulent – was extended to the vessels of Trucial Oman and the traders of Basrah. At the beginning of the preventing operations British cruisers provided surveillance of 2,500 miles of the Arabian coast from Mukallah to Basrah but after 1884, when a serious increase in the importation of slaves from Africa to the Gulf was reported, they started to watch 500 miles of the African coast, which proved to be more effective.⁵⁶

Between 1884 and 1908 dozens of Arab vessels were stopped and searched. The principal reason of the increase in importation was at that time a severe famine upon the mainland of Africa, which brought down the price of slaves. The British Government, because of the reverses in the Sudan, eased its efforts to prevent the slave trade in this country, which was the second reason of the increase. The slaves were brought to Aden and then transported to Batinah, or shipped to Sur in Oman, which was considered one of the chief emporia of the traffic from Africa. In 1886, operations against slavers entering the Gulf were undertaken on a large scale. Four cruisers were employed and as a result about 200 Arab crafts were stopped and searched. Ten years later,

⁵⁵ See: *The Persian Gulf. Historical Summaries 1907–1953*, vol. II *Historical Summary...*, op. cit., p. 136–137.

⁵⁶ See: *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, op. cit., p. 250–256; J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I *Historical*, p. 2495.

however, the total number of slaves imported to Sur was estimated at 300 per annum. The cargoes of slaves consisted at that time of only five to ten Africans each, and only occasionally amounted to 50. As the demand in the interior behind Sur was not great, for the system of irrigation in these districts did not demand slave labour, the majority of the slaves were re-exported in small vessels to the Batinah district of Oman, where irrigation was mostly from wells. Some of them were retained there but the rest was distributed to Trucial Oman by land or to the coasts of the Persian Gulf by sea.⁵⁷

In 1890, Colonel E. Ross, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, stressed that in spite of the fact that slaves were not openly sold in the dominions of the sultan of Muscat by public brokers, the illegal traffic was briskly carried on all over Oman. No effectual steps were taken by the sultan to suppress the notorious traffic. There were many thousands of Africans in slavery in Oman, who under the Treaty of 1873 were illegally in bondage and the number was rapidly increasing. The Government of India was of the opinion that the Sultan of Muscat ought to issue a proclamation similar to that issued by the Sultan of Zanzibar on the subject of the prohibition of traffic in slaves but the Sultan of Muscat opposed this idea. He claimed that the proposed proclamation would be resented by the population of Oman and lead to insurrection. The Political Resident shared this opinion and highlighted the difference between the political conditions of Zanzibar and Oman. He considered it impossible for the Sultan of Muscat to give effect to a decree of the proposed tenor throughout the territories under his nominal rule. In existing circumstances nothing would be gained by the issue of a decree which would be a mere 'brutum fulmen' even if the sultan was willing to issue it.⁵⁸ Finally, the proclamation was issued on 17th April, 1873, and it said, 'Let it be known that we have entirely forbidden all traffic in slaves either publicly or privately and that in the event of our finding anyone engaged in the same in our dominions or dependencies he will forfeit his property as well as his personal safety'.⁵⁹

The question of the importation of African slaves into the Persian Gulf through Oman received much attention again in June 1900, when Captain

⁵⁷ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I *Historical*, p. 2498.

⁵⁸ 'From Colonel Ross, Political Resident in Persian Gulf, at Bushire, to Cunningham, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, at Calcutta, 29th December 1890', IOR: R/15/6/20.

⁵⁹ 'Slavery in the Persian Gulf, 15th February 1939', IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

Cox, British Political Agent at Muscat, visited Sur. The inquiry among the local Indian community showed that in the last several months over 1,000 African slaves had been imported to this port. Of this number 850 arrived in five large vessels, of which three carried the French flag. The majority of the slaves imported to Sur in 1900 changed hands there and was then distributed northwards by land. The demand for slaves was good and children were fetching 120, male adults 150, and girls 200 to 300 the Muscat dollars.⁶⁰

In the season of 1901 about 1,000 slaves were again landed in Sur, and in 1902 it was reported that the trade was flourishing. Nevertheless, the direct measures against the Sur slave-traders were impossible, for the French flag question was still unsettled and the danger of offending French susceptibilities still existed. In this situation, sudden retribution overtook the slave dealers of Oman in an unexpected quarter, nearly 3,000 miles from their homes. In the middle of February 1902, a flotilla of Arab vessels was anchored in a small inlet of Samuco Bay in Mozambique. The Omani Arabs formed a large camp there, and being armed, they actively engaged in the purchase of slaves. On 8th March, the Portuguese war-vessels arrived at Samuco Bay and joined a land force of armed natives commanded by a Portuguese officer. A battle took place and 114 Omani Arabs were captured. 12 of their vessels were taken and in the camp 725 slaves were found. They had been collected by the local tribe from various sources and sold to the Omanis at an average price of 3 Muscat dollars a head. The case was finally disposed on 3rd October, 1903, when the court sentenced 54 dealers to transportation for 25 years to Angola. The Shaikh of Samuco was also brought to justice. The Omani vessels were destroyed. The news of the catastrophe reached Sur and turned the town into a scene of lamentation and the seizure had a very depressing effect on the trade in slaves from East Africa. On the other hand, it led to a serious increase in a trade in Baluchi slaves from the coast of Persian Makran to the Batinah coast of Oman.⁶¹

At the turn of the 20th century the traffic in slaves from Makran to Arabia were carried on by people from Jask, Bahu and Dashtyari districts, who were purchasing slaves from the inhabitants of Bahu and from Kalat subjects in

⁶⁰ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I *Historical*, p. 2499. The Muscat dollar was converted up to 1897 at the rate 1 dollar = 2 rupees, and from 1897 to 1906 at the rate 3 dollars = 4 rupees.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2500–2501.

Dasht and were selling them to merchants from the Oman coast. The principal places of export were Tank and Wank in the Bir district, but slaves were also shipped at Galag and Sadaich. Many of the slaves exported were Africans, but among them were some low class Baluchis who had been sold by petty headmen. The trade was stimulated by the proceedings of some local chiefs, who scoured the country with an armed retinue and reduced poor Baluchis to slavery and were selling them. One of them was Said Khan, the ruler of Gaih, who invested profits of slave-dealings in rifles and ammunition. His example was followed by Mir Barkat of Jask, who formed a gang for slave-kidnapping. The victims were captured also in Gaih and Bint neighbourhoods, and even in Bashakard. The enslavement of free Muslims was contrary to the law of Islam and some *mullas* of Jask addressed frequent remonstrances, but the rulers concerned refused to desist. It was estimated that from Jask alone 450 slaves were exported to Arabia during three years ending in 1904. In 1903, there was a considerable influx of fugitive slaves into the free port of Gwadar, a dependency in Makran of the Sultan of Oman. These slaves believed that their owners intended to sell them into slavery abroad. Of 95 slaves manumitted in Muscat in 1904–1905 no less than 60 were Persians or Baluchis exported from Makran to the Batinah coast.⁶²

In the 19th century and till 1925 copies of the Slave Trade Proclamation were sent from India to the Gulf: in 1873 and in 1874 to Muscat, Bahrain, Sharjah, Bandar Abbas, Lingah, Basidu and Gwadar and, finally in 1925, they reached Muscat, Bahrain, Kuwait, Bandar Abbas, Gwadar, Sharjah, Basidu, Mohammarah, Lingah and the Karachi Telegraph Officials at Jask, Hanjam and Charbar. Inhabitants of the Arabian coast of the Gulf were warned that the India Penal Code would be applicable in every case of smuggling slaves from the sea to the coast.⁶³

Apart from the slave trade to and in the Persian Gulf as carried on by sea, the second aspect of the phenomenon was domestic slavery and the traffic of domestic slaves, or slaves born in slavery in the area. The general opinion was that domestic slavery as practised in the Persian Gulf was of a comparatively harmless character. Among the rulers and inhabitants of the countries surrounding the Gulf there was a strong social and also religious feeling in

⁶² Ibid., p. 2510–2511.

⁶³ ‘Proclamation’, IOR: R/15/1/ 214.

favour of its continuance. For these reasons, and on account of the difficulty of intervening with beneficial effect in the internal affairs of independent and quasi-independent states, the British Government generally abstained from active interference with domestic slavery in the Persian Gulf. In the case of Persia the practice was that runaway slaves were not admitted to premises owned by the British Government, as the result could be a great influx of slaves, leading to political complications with the Persian authorities. The exception was made when the slaves were in imminent danger. William G. Clarence-Smith stresses, however, that 'domestic slavery', a phrase so frequently repeated in the studies on the attitude of Islam to slavery, is to some extent a misleading term as the duties of a domicile slave covered a range of purely productive tasks.⁶⁴ This remark perfectly reflects the situation in the Persian Gulf in the period under study. Male slaves were used there as divers in summer-time and as house-servants in winter.

According to the statistics provided by J. Lorimer, the practice of setting slaves free by the British officials started in 1852 and till 1908 693 slaves were rescued at sea and 1,853 released by the exertions of the British authorities. Among the latter group there were two types of slaves: (1) those released under the treaty as 'recently' imported by sea, and (2) domestic slaves released otherwise than under the treaty. There were, however, very few domestic slaves among those emancipated until 1908, as the custom to manumit domestic slaves was a rather new phenomenon in the Gulf. It became socially accepted first in Muscat in the 1890s. It happened occasionally that, with the consent of the Sultan, domestic slaves who were proved to have been badly treated or whom no owner appeared to claim were manumitted, and if they were returned to their masters they received a guarantee of kind treatment. An attempt to introduce manumission of domestic slaves in the Trucial Oman in 1899 failed as the Shaikh of Sharjah declined to entertain such a proposal of the British Resident in the Persian Gulf on the ground that his subjects would demand compensation of him for every slave manumitted. In Bahrain an attempt was also made to obtain from the leading tribal chiefs the written agreement that they would not buy, sell or give away slaves but the chiefs were not amenable to persuasion and the project was abandoned. The Government of India authorized, however, the Political

⁶⁴ W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, Hurst, London, 2006, p. 3.

Agent in Bahrain to manumit slaves, acting on his own responsibility with the consent – which might not be withheld – of the shaikh of the island. The instructions permitted the emancipation of domestic slaves when they were abused or no sufficient guarantee was offered for their subsequent good treatment.⁶⁵

The manumission was carried on by the British Government at that time in Egypt. In 1877, the Convention for the Suppression of the Slave Trade was signed by the British and Egyptian Governments and four special offices were established in Cairo, Alexandria, the Delta and the upper Egypt to register manumissions and to find work for freed slaves and to place the children at schools. Following the British occupation of Egypt in 1883, the activities of the manumission offices increased. By 1889 they had freed 18,000 slaves. The manumission certificate was useful to find a job, but with the development of free market in Egypt and the erosion of the guilds, more and more slaves found job in the cities and thereby an important reason for holding back on manumission was eliminated. It turned out that free labour was cheaper and less troublesome than slave labour. With the recovery of the Sudan, the Anglo-Egyptian Declaration of January 1899 was announced and the slave trade in this country was abolished.⁶⁶ It also had a significant consequences for the manumission in the Persian Gulf, where slaves from the Sudan were numerous. If they applied for manumission, their cases were proceeded under the rules of the above-mentioned Declaration.

Suzanne Miers, in the chapter on slavery in Hijaz, shows that in Hijaz the British practised consular manumission almost from the day of the appointment of a British consul in Jeddah in the 1870s. The Hijazi and the Turkish authorities of the country bitterly opposed this policy but the British public and the Anti-Slavery Society adamantly rejected the return of fugitives. The problem was that slavery was recognized by the *Qur'an* and accepted as such by the Islamic clerics. Hijaz was a poor and barren land. Its prosperity depended on the pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Every year many pilgrims brought slaves and sold them to defray their expenses, while others purchased slaves and took them home.⁶⁷ Slaves manumitted at the request of the British consul were of two kinds: persons from British or

⁶⁵ J. G. Lorimer, op. cit., Vol. I *Historical*, p. 2514–2516.

⁶⁶ M. Gordon, op. cit., p. 179–181.

⁶⁷ S. Miers, 'Slavery in Saudi Arabia and the Arab states on the Persian Gulf, 1921–63', in *Abolition and its Aftermath...*, op. cit., p. 120.

other colonial possessions who had been kidnapped and brought to Hijaz by slave brokers, and slaves who took a refuge at a British consulate or on a British ship. The latter kind applied for freedom and often complained of ill-treatment. The number of emancipations was small, but consular manumission provided an avenue of escape and, in consequence, threatened the institution of slavery.⁶⁸ Between 1926 and the end of 1933 a total of 209 slaves was freed at the British request. Almost all had been brought to Arabia as children or had been born into slavery. All spoke Arabic. There were fewer women among fugitives but this did not indicate that male slaves in Hijaz outnumbered females. The truth was that women found it harder to escape, concluded Miers.⁶⁹

In the Persian Gulf the chief institution responsible for manumission was the British Residency in Bushire on the Persian coast. Its history goes back as far as to 12th April, 1763, when the East India Company concluded a trade agreement with the Shaikh of Bushire. As a result, a factory was opened in this port to replace the factory in Bandar Abbas (Gombroon), which was closed because of the economic decline in this part of the Persian coast.⁷⁰ The new factory was subordinate to that in Basrah which functioned as head station for the Company's trade in the Gulf.⁷¹

In 1778, Basrah was reduced in status from an Agency to a Residency, and it was equal but not longer superior to Bushire. Afterwards, the Resident in Bushire reported directly to Bombay and continued to do so until 1873.⁷² The wars with France were very important for the development of British policy in the Gulf, and the campaigns against the Qawasim' piratical activities between 1806–1820 marked the turning points of British interests in the region. In 1820, the Resident in Bushire became responsible for the affairs of the

⁶⁸ S. Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century. The Evolution of a Global Problem*, Altamira Press, Walnut Creek, CA, 2003, p. 94.

⁶⁹ S. Miers, 'Slavery in Saudi Arabia and the Arab states on the Persian Gulf, 1921–63', in *Abolition and its Aftermath...*, op. cit., p. 123.

⁷⁰ CXXIV 'Extract of a letter from Commission and Instructions to Mr. William Andrew Price, Provisional Agent of Persia, dated 22 January 1763', in J. A. Saldanha, *The Persian Précis*, vol. 1 *Selections from State Papers*, op. cit., p. 162–163.

⁷¹ CXXVII 'William Andrew Price to Benjamin Jervis', in J. A. Saldanha, *The Persian Précis*, vol. 1 *Selections from State Papers*, op. cit. p. 165–166.

⁷² See: Penelope Tuson, *The Records of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf*, India Office, London, 1979, p. XIV.

whole Gulf and his title was restyled 'Resident in the Persian Gulf'. The primary functions of the Residency were no longer focused on diplomatic or commercial relations with Persia, which were transferred to the British Envoy in Teheran – but on political relations with the Arab littoral.⁷³

The duties of the Resident combined the general supervision of almost 1,600 miles of coast from Basrah to Jask in the north and Ras al-Hadd in the south, and conducting relations with local rulers, as well as with the native agents in Bahrain, Lingah, and Sharjah. Since the 1820s the Resident had used to make an annual tour of the Arabian side of the Gulf. In 1843, the Resident was granted consular functions and his post was placed under the authority of the Foreign Office as he acted in the capacity of Consul-General. Since then the cost of maintaining the Residency was divided between the British and Indian exchequers. The functioning of the Residency was permanently overshadowed by the issue of financial matters. Neither the Government of India nor Foreign Office and the India Office were willing to increase the resources of the Residency for extra staff. In consequence, there was little change in the establishment of the post in the 19th century and the duties on the Arabian shore were confined to a great extent to the native agents.⁷⁴

In 1873, the responsibility for the Persian Gulf affairs was transferred from the Government of Bombay to the Government of India. The reasons for this decision were merely political. Increased facilities of communication and the extension of commerce drew Asiatic countries nearer Europe. Wars and rapid dynastic changes in some of these countries demanded prompt decisions on questions of the great international consequences. Nearly all of these questions were of purely imperial character, such as no authority but the highest in India could resolve. The Bombay Government did not oppose to such argumentation and, as a result, the control of the Persian Gulf territories was taken over solely by the Viceroy and his government. Since then the Resident was to communicate directly to the Government of India through the Foreign Department.⁷⁵

⁷³ 'Major-General Sir W. G. Kerr to the Bombay Government', 11th April 1820, in J. A. Saldanha, *The Persian Précis*, vol. 2 *Précis of Correspondence regarding the Affairs of the Persian Gulf, 1801–1853*, p. 107–113.

⁷⁴ P. Tuson, op. cit., p. 7, see also J. Onley *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj. Merchants, Rulers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

In the 1890s and early 1900s, British Consulates or Vice-Consulates were established in Bandar Abbas, Kirman, Ahwaz and Muhammarah in Arabistan, Kirmanshah and Lingah, and all of them were placed under the supervision of the Resident. British influence in the Gulf expanded at that time and on the Arabian side the most remarkable effect was the appointment of a British officer in Bahrain on 10th February, 1900.⁷⁶

The British Political Residency in the Persian Gulf operated from Bushire till 1946 when it was transferred to Bahrain.

⁷⁶ P. Tuson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Chapter I: Manumission certificates

1. The number of statements

Between 1906 and 1949 altogether 949 statements were made by slaves at the British Residency in Bushire (7 applications) and the Agencies in Bahrain (272 applications), Kuwait (3), Muscat (247), and Sharjah (400). Fifteen were made at the British Consular Agencies in Bandar Abbas (7), Basidu (7) and Lingah (1), and two on the British war-of-man. Two statements were made in Dubai in a special case of Indian boys who were kidnapped and brought to this port and recovered by the local Indian community. One case of a slave from Dubai, but of Abyssinian origin, was recorded at the British Consulate in Addis Ababa.

17 slaves, whose names were known, submitted the statements to the Agency in Sharjah in 1937–1938 but their documents have not been found. Similarly, we know the names of 7 slaves who applied for manumission in Muscat and Bahrain and the names of 12 slaves who were manumitted in Bandar Abbas in 1922–1923 but their statements have not been found in the records. Many slaves seeking manumission at the Political Agency in Muscat were from the Trucial Coast as well.

The case of Bahrain needs some explanations. Out of 272 statements made at the Agency there only 21 were submitted by slaves from this country. The slavery was not recognized in Bahrain and certificates of manumission were issued for local population in special cases only. A majority of applicants were refugees from other parts of the Gulf, in most cases from the Trucial Coast.

The first statement found in the records was made by a man called Ambar with father's name unknown. He was a born slave of African origin from Lingah on the Persian coast. When 12 years old, he was sold by his first

master and afterwards changed 3 masters. He was a diver and, as stated at the British Residency in Bushire, he simply desired to be free.¹

One of the latest statements, made on 16th July, 1949, is typical of the time, when free people of African origin were kidnapped by the Bedouins. It was made by a woman named Shammo bint Salim bin Hamud Al-Mijadi, about 37 years old. She was of African origin and born in Buraimi of free parents. Three months earlier she, accompanied by her husband, left the country to collect some fire-wood from Saih. They met five Bedouins who bound their hands and feet and carried them to a village on the western side of Wudam valley. There she was sold to a man for 300 rials and served him in his domestic works for 2 months and 14 days. She stated that during that time she got 'the most inhuman treatment'. She escaped and came to take refuge at the British Consulate in Muscat.²

The latest statement was made at the beginning of October 1949, and this case was symbolic in the sense that it encompassed the long story of liberating people in the Persian Gulf by granting them the manumission certificates. It was made in Muscat by a man of African origin called Zaid bin Marzooq, who had been kidnapped ten years before from Makran. He was a born slave and claimed, as a majority of petitioners, to have been ill-treated and 'engaged in the ceaseless day and night works without paying or sufficient food'. Besides, his master used to beat him for no reason. Shortly after his statement was made at the Political Agency in Muscat, he was convicted by a Sharia court for stealing a rifle and was sentenced to two-month imprisonment. Evidently, he escaped from his master because of that theft and omitted the fact in his statement. Nevertheless, he was granted the manumission certificate because the policy of the British authorities was that nothing could affect a human being's desire to be free.³ The oldest applicant was 70 years old, and the youngest, who accompanied his father, was 9 years old.

¹ 'Statement of a slave named Ambar, dated 26th January 1906', IOR: R/15/1/203 5/194 I, 195 I, 179 III, 169 II, 104 IV.

² 'Statement of Shammo d/o Salim bin Hamud Al-Mijadi age about thirty-seven years recorded at the British Consulate, Muscat, on the 16th July, 1949', IOR: R/15/6/416 13/1.

³ 'Statement of Zaid bin Marzooq, age about 30 years recorded at the British Consulate, Muscat, 2nd October 1949', IOR: R/15/6/416 13/1.

Table 1. Number of statements in 1921–1949

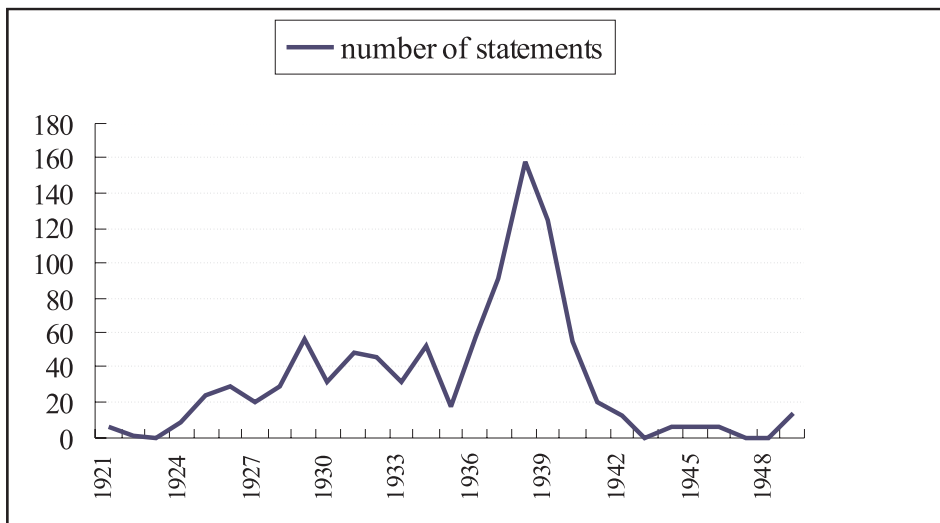
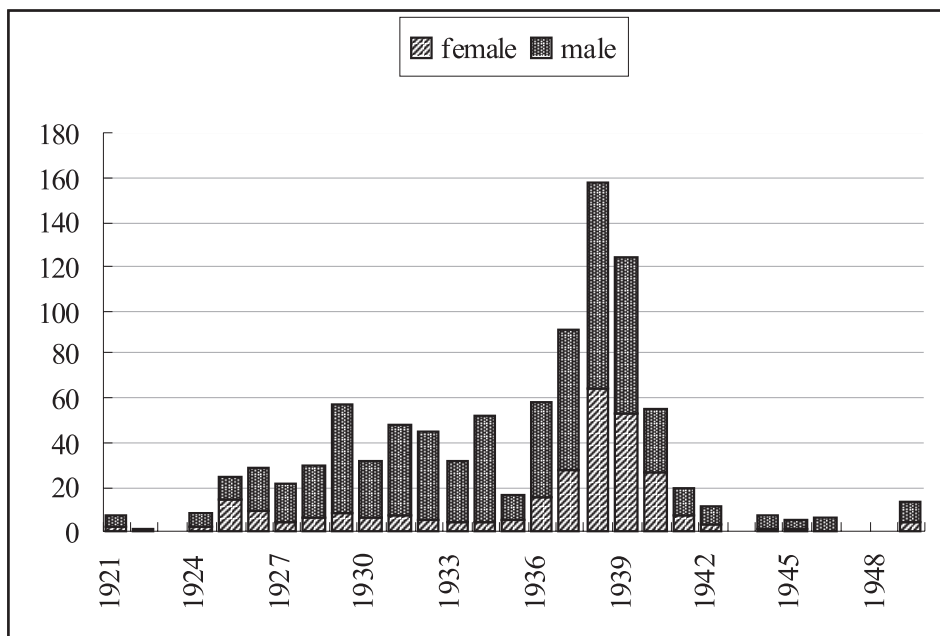


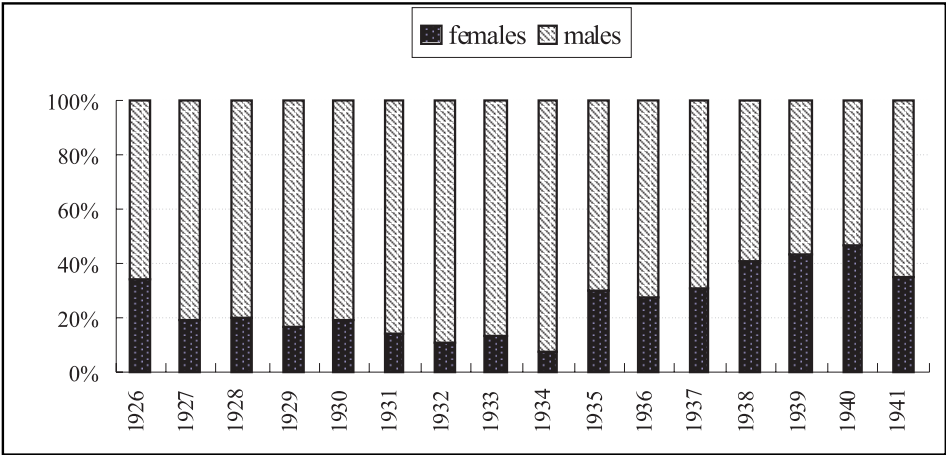
Table 2. Cumulative participation of male and female statements by years



663 statements were made by men and 286 by women. Sometimes whole families reported to an Agency and asked for manumission. The number of women applying for manumission was always lower than that of men, but, in

1935–1939, when the number of applications significantly increased, the number of statements made by women increased disproportionately.

Table 3. Percentage of statements made by female and male slaves



There were three main groups of applicants in terms of their ethnicity: Africans, Baluchis and Yemenis. This division, however, was formal largely because the slaves in the Gulf were intermingled with their masters and a slave of pure blood was hardly to be found.

Table 4. Number of statements made by Africans, Baluchi and Yemeni

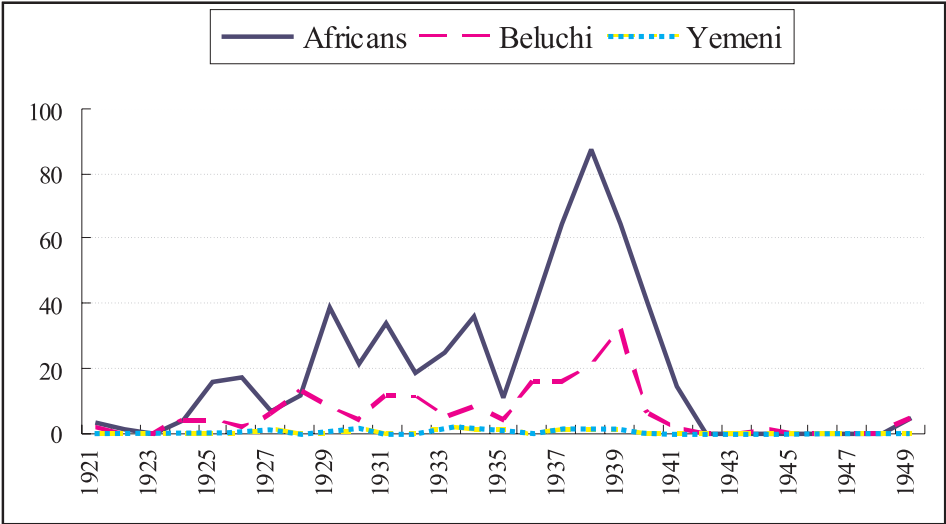
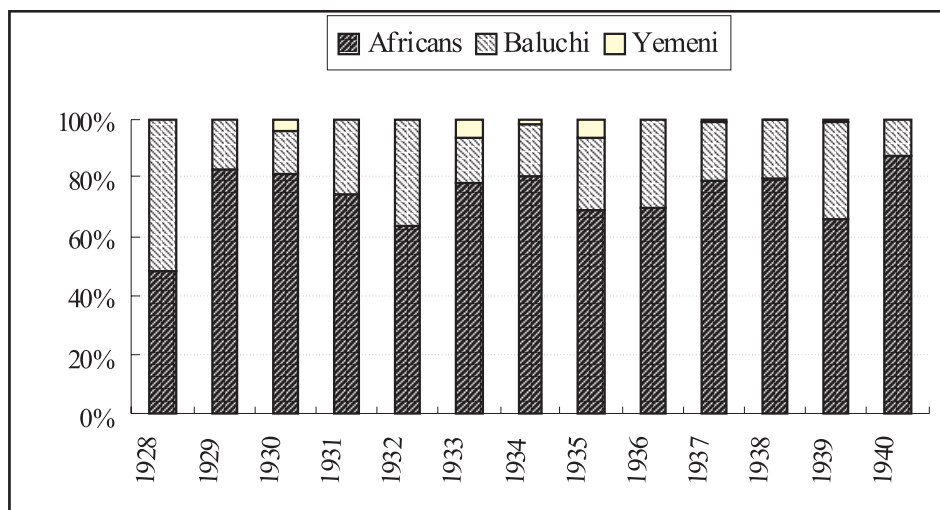


Table 5. Percentage of statements made by Africans, Baluchi and Yemeni



486 applicants complained of ill-treatment by which they meant that their masters had not fed and clothed them sufficiently. 99 claimed that they had been beaten and 10 that they had been kept in chains. 169 slaves were afraid of being sold and this feeling pushed them to run away from their masters and ask for manumission. This argument was dominant especially in the years 1938–1939, which were the years of the deepest economic crisis in the region. In 1938–1939, 29,3% and 33% of petitioners, respectively, declared the fear of being sold as the reason of running away from the masters, comparing with 8,6% in 1932 and 10,3% in 1936. Among those who declared such a reason, the majority were women – 85% of the applicants in 1938, and 66% in 1939.

10 slaves were turned out of the house by their masters because of their disability to work. 3 stated that their masters did not allow them to get married. 15 applicants expressed their desire to be free and considered the state of slavery unacceptable. They were recently kidnapped, as a rule, and wanted to come back home. 43 of them, who were divers, complained that they had not been paid advances by their masters and considered this an injustice. Sometimes the following notice of the British official can be found on a slave's statement, 'He ran away without any reason but to obtain freedom'.⁴

⁴ R/15/2/1826.

441 male applicants were divers and this profession dominated within the group of men. Women, generally, claimed to be servants and only a few of them declared that they had been concubines of their masters. Sexual relations between slave girls and their masters were, however, common according to the indirect information. Some female slaves mentioned quarrels between them and wives of their masters and hostility towards them from their masters' wives based on jealousy. Additionally, some male slaves stated that they were offspring of their masters and their slave mothers.

The tables show fluctuations in numbers of statements and a sharp increase in the number of applications in the years 1935–1939. There were several reasons for that, one of them being the changes in economic conditions in the region.

In January 1921, the Political Agent in Muscat reported to the Political Resident in Bushire on 23 persons brought from Makran to Oman. Slave dealers were Baluchis residing in Batinah and Makran. In Batinah, Sultan of Muscat had little control and there was little chance of recovery of slaves once they were landed.⁵ According to R. E. L. Wingate, the Political Agent in Muscat, the slaves were from the Makran coast between Chahbar and Jask. In February 1921, there were four new cases of slave dealing, comprising 40 persons. In this case, the kidnapped Baluchis were recovered on the spot, they were repatriated to Makran without any British manumission certificate.⁶ The influx of slaves from Makran was due to very bad economic conditions there. There had been bad rains and poor harvest for years. The famine pressed for the sale of boys and girls. Parents could not support their children and had no other saleable property left on which to sustain themselves. On the other hand, there was a demand for arms on the Makran coast. In consequence, in exchange for arms human beings were sold as nothing else saleable was forthcoming, and only in this way could the balance of trade be maintained. Thus, the arms traffic and the slave traffic were closely connected, and there was a suggestion expressed by commanders of the sloops that if the arms traffic from the Arab coast was stopped the slave traffic would automatically cease. It was, however, exceedingly difficult to stop the small dribbles of arms coming across from the Arab coast. Besides, the Political Resident was of the opinion that even if the arms traffic was suppressed it would

⁵ 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to the Political Resident at Bushire', Muscat, 28th January 1921, IOR: R/15/1/221 5/191.

⁶ 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to the Political Resident at Bushire', Muscat, 6th February 1921, IOR: R. R/15/1/221 5/191.

not stop the slave traffic but only reduce it, as long as acute famine conditions prevailed in Makran. Because of the famine hundreds of Makranis were going more or less voluntarily to the Batinah coast to be sold, as it was the only means of keeping body and soul together. Others were kidnapped and brought to the Arab coast where they were seeking refuge at the British Agencies.⁷

Soon after Ibn Saud captured Najd in 1926, a considerable number of slaves was brought to the Trucial Coast for sale. They mostly came from the Hijaz. Famine and starvation played, however, the most important role in the influx of new slaves into the Gulf. The following situation was typical of those times.

Statement of Raihan bin Hussain, slave, about 34 years old, recorded in the Political Agent's Office at Bahrain, on the 1st of November 1930

My birth place is a small village ,called Tayef, which lies in the vicinity of Mecca /.../. Once when I was hardly over 9, I went outside along with playmates to the open fields to play. But to our utter dismay as soon as we had begun playing, some twenty men or so rushed upon us with a fierce attack. We were gagged to avoid alarm and then we were put separately in bags called Khurj, with our hands and necks tied up securely. We all were carried then on camelbacks to Lith for sale. I was purchased by one Saleh bin Barham of Lith, for 250 dollars. I remained with my master for a year or so, when he brought me to Mecca and sold me to a tailor called Mohamad for 65 pounds. After a year I was again transferred to one Ali bin Mansoor Najadi for 730 dollars. He brought me to Anaizeh and after one and a half month sold me to one Mohamad Aljamrood of Shaqrah for 820 dollars. I accompanied my master on camelback to Qatar, where Shaikh Abdullah bin Qasim bought me for 1,500 rupees. After serving there for two years, I was sold to Husain bin Ali, the Director of Customs at Qatar for 1,200 rupees. I served my master for nine years as a hauler, for one year as a cook, for four years as a driver, for three years in the Custom House and for one year as a Launch Engineer. Now he takes all my earnings and gives me nothing. I get absolutely insufficient food and there is often nothing to cover my body with. He beats me almost every day and keeps me in confinement. A few days ago, being tired of the hardships, I slipped away secretly in his absence and came the Agency here. I reached Bahrain by a Steam Launch some eight days ago. Now I pray to grant me a Manumission Certificate.⁸

⁷ 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to the Political Resident at Bushire', Muscat, 6th February 1921, IOR: R/15/1/221 5/191.

⁸ IOR: R/15/1/205 5/161 IV.

In December 1930, Persian authorities reported that one inhabitant of Hanjam, named Rashid bin Ahmad, took 15 men and women and sold them in Dubai.⁹ The Residency Agent in Sharjah made enquiries from Shaikh Said bin Maktum, the ruler of Dubai, and from the divers who were sent to him by the shaikh. It was assumed from the shaikh's letter and the divers' statements that the men sent from Hanjam to Dubai had not been sold but moved to Dubai on account of the starvation of which they were suffering and they hoped to arrange a livelihood at the new place. They claimed they were free born persons and worked as divers with Rashid bin Ahmad. They had used to take advances from him and pay some back from their earnings. For some years their earning in Hanjam had become scanty and therefore they became debtors to Rashid bin Ahmad, who himself became in turn a debtor to Muhammad bin Ahmad from Dubai. The latter was a merchant and traded in pearls and had business with *nakhudas*, advancing them money for pearls. Rashid bin Ahmad and other persons of Hanjam took money and rice from him as advances for pearls. The said Rashid owed him 31,000 rupees on account of the previous year's diving business. When the current diving season was over, it turned out that the earnings of Rashid bin Ahmad were little. As a consequence, Muhammad bin Ahmad did not give him any advance in rice and money. When the divers asked Rashid bin Ahmad to subsidize them he said that he had no money to pay them and however much they tried to get something from him he excused himself on his poverty. Ultimately, he suggested that they should go to Dubai and ask Muhammad bin Ahmad to advance them money and give them rice and thus provide them with a living. For this reason they went to Dubai and brought their families with them. Muhammad bin Ahmad gave them houses and provided them with money. Some of them got jobs in lighters which landed cargoes from mail steamers and the others were going during the pearling season in the boats of Muhammad bin Rashid. Afterward, Rashid bin Ahmad arrived at Dubai and settled accounts with the divers and what was proved against them as due to him he transferred to the debit of Muhammad bin Ahmad against his debit to the latter.¹⁰

⁹ 'From Resident, Bushire, to Consulate at Henjam', 23rd December 1930, IOR: R/15/1/230 5/196 II.

¹⁰ 'From the Residency Agent, Shargah, to Captain Bradshaw, Secretary to the Political Resident', 7th January 1931; Letter dated the 7th Shaban 1349 (28th December 1930) from Shaikh Said bin Maktum Ruler of Dubai to the Residency Agent', Shargah, IOR: R/15/1/230 5/196 II.

The pearl fisheries employed the majority of male slaves in the Trucial Coast and Oman. In this latter country 600 slaves out of a total 1,000 were employed in fisheries. The collapse of the pearl business was critical for the slave divers and their families.

In 1924, for the first time Japanese pearls were introduced in international markets, which posed the threat to Persian Gulf's pearl trade. In 1925, the local pearl market deteriorated seriously, and in 1926 it became even worse because of the low catch and the decrease in European purchase. The *nakhudas* had to accept less cash for themselves and the divers' advance was reduced. In 1927, the catch was better and in 1928 and 1929 everything looked as usual. However, the global recession of 1930 brought the slump in the pearl trade. Only a few merchants in Bahrain managed to sell pearl because of the recession at the markets in Paris and Bombay. The number of boats operated at the banks decreased and a majority of divers was paid no profits because the expenses of diving were higher than the income. The situation worsened in 1931 and during the 1932 main season the industry was struck by low catch. The downward slide of the industry continued during the years 1930–1934 and the future of the industry was becoming increasingly uncertain. In Bahrain the total value of pearls in 1923–1924 was ten lakhs of rupees comparing with twenty one lakhs and twenty five thousand rupees. In 1934 only 340 boats operated at the banks as compared with 509 boats in 1930. Slight improvements were noticed during the years 1935, 1937, 1941, 1943 and 1945, but the main trend was one of gradual decline. The number of boats decreased and there also was a drop in the number of crews manning them.¹¹

The financial depression was an extraordinary state of affairs and the fall in the value of pearls provoked a desire of the owners of slaves along the Trucial Coast to get rid of them (even at a sacrifice in price) in order to save the cost of maintaining them. There were even some indications that the owners of slaves were endeavouring to find a market in Hasa. The slaves did not mind much where they went, so long as they had an owner who fed and clothed them. The *mawalid* class of slave, or people born in slavery, were anxious to remain slaves. Apparently only in the *khidam* class of slaves (employed in pearling) there was a desire for liberty, as it was not customary for them to be given food and clothes

¹¹ See: Mahdi Abdalla Al-Tajir, *Bahrain 1920–1945. Britain, the Shaikh and the Administration*, Croom Helm, London, New York and Sydney, 1987, p. 116–122.

during the winter. The owners of this class no longer wanted them, but were unwilling to part with them till they earned their purchase price.¹² In 1939, the Residency Agent reported that the people in the Trucial Coast towns were 'cashing in' on their slaves, partly because of their fear of manumission by the British Agencies and partly because of the declining pearl industry. According to the information, slaves sold into Najd did very well, as they were well looked after and usually were emancipated after six or seven years and sent back.¹³ In October 1939, a group of three slaves came to the Residency Agency in Sharjah and asked for manumission. They were divers and at the end of the diving season, when they heard about their master's death, they decided to escape. They made statements and indicated the same reason of their running: they were afraid that the heirs of their master would sell them.¹⁴

Noticeably, reasons for seeking for manumission fluctuated depending on times. While in the 1920s the argumentation was focused on cruel treatment by individual masters or on quarrels within families the applicants were part of, in the next decade the arguments changed. The applicants still complained of ill-treatment but now understood in terms of economic conditions. They stressed that they were not fed and clothed by their masters, they were forced to go on diving, and that they were not paid for their hard work at the pearl banks. Many were afraid of being sold. These feelings reflected new economic conditions in the Gulf and a deep crisis in pearl fisheries. A comparison of arguments in 1915 and 1938 proves this thesis. In 1925, there were 24 statements made both by men and women and each case was practically different in terms of reasons which pushed those people to leave their masters. Two of the men had already been manumitted by their masters but they were afraid of being re-enslaved by the heirs of the masters. One man swam off to a man-of-war as he had been ill-treated and wished to be repatriated to Zanzibar. One woman was kidnapped when her husband left for diving, and there were two Abyssinian girls kidnapped and recovered by the British Agent. Thus, there was a small number of statements and no dominant reason of submitting an application. In 1938, the situation was

¹² 'From the Agency, Bahrain, to the Residency, Bushire', Bahrain, 16th January, 1936, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

¹³ 'Office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Camp Bahrain, to the India Office', London, 17th February 1939, IOR: I.O.R. R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

¹⁴ 'Statement made by Sa'id bin Zayed, aged about 30 years. Recorded at Sharjah on the 26th October 1939', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

quite different. The group of applicants considerably increased and among 158 applicants there were 86 divers who complained of ill-treatment and of not being paid. The group was much more homogenous. The term 'ill-treatment' meant that the applicants were not fed and clothed by their masters. 'Not being paid' signified that they were not getting advances before the diving season, which allowed them to get food during the diving. Some of them were threatened to be sold and others were turned out of the house by their masters who did not feed and provide clothes for them. There were 53 born slaves among this group of divers, which additionally emphasizes the critical situation of the local societies caused by the crisis in pearl business. The women who were numerous among the applicants in 1938 were afraid of being sold and separated from their families. These arguments reflected a critical situation of the masters who were trying to sell a part of their slaves to reduce the costs of their maintenance.

It is important to determine proportion of the applicants to the population of slaves as a whole. Unfortunately, we are able only to guess about this because of lack of appropriate data. In 1936, the estimated number of slaves on the Arab coast was about 7,000 on the Trucial Coast and at least 1,000 in Muscat and Oman. In the same year 58 applications for manumission were submitted, which made less than 1 per cent of the whole population of slaves.¹⁵ In 1938, the number of application was higher and reached 158, which means 2 per cent of the slaves' population, but this indicator was still low. Thus, the demand for manumission was not great and the fact was interpreted by the British officials as indicating the comparatively low standard of living of the free labourers.¹⁶ At that time the lot of the domestic slave as compared with the free labourer was comparatively comfortable and this fact did not stimulate slaves to run away from their masters and ask for manumission. Those who did apply for certificates were usually in a desperate personal situation.

2. Procedures

The applicants were illiterate, so, when reporting at an Agency, they were describing their situation orally and in most cases in Arabic, and their words were written down by assistants to the British officials at this Agency. Then the

¹⁵ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Resident, Bushire', No. C/78-20/, Bahrain, 16th February 1936, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38); 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to British Consul, Bushire', C/28, 11th February, 1936, IOR: R/15/6/414 13/1.

¹⁶ 'Minute, file XIII/3', Muscat, 9th August 1948, IOR: R/15/6/418 13/2 II.

applicant put his thumb on the document and his or her statement was translated into English. The statements made in Sharjah, in front of a British official, who was a native or an Indian subject, were sent for further consideration either to the Agency in Bahrain, or to the Residency in Bushire. In 1917, the following Instructions for the Residency Agent at Sharjah were prepared:

All cases of slaves or negro divers taking refuge at the Consulates and Agencies in the Persian Gulf were dealt by the Residency. If you hear of a slave or diver going to a certain Consulate you should not write to the Political Agent or Consul and ask him to return the slave and diver to Shargah. If the man is a slave and not also a diver, it is not necessary for you to do anything. If the man is a diver and you desire to prevent his escape you should write to the Officer concerned saying that you hear that such and such a man has taken refuge at his Agency or Consulate, and that the is a runaway diver and ask that he may be detained pending orders from the Residency.

At the same time the Residency Agent was obliged to send a copy of the statement of a slave and his letter to Bushire with remarks as to the amount of debt, what proof there was of it, whether the man was a slave, etc. When the *nakhuda* of a runaway diver was wishing to go in pursuit and asked for a letter of the Consul or Political Agent, the Residency Agent was obliged to give a letter introducing the *nakhuda* and saying that he had a claim against the diver. He could suggest the *nakhuda* and the diver go before the Salifah Court, if there was one, or before the Sharia Court.¹⁷

Each statement begins with the information of the place of birth and origin of the slave. Then the life story is narrated and reasons for running away from the master. The statement ends with the request to be granted a certificate of manumission.

Statement of Qambar bin Faraj, slave aged about 20 years, the 13th day of June 1932

I was born in a village Saffa in Qatif. My parents were slaves of one Haji Salih bin Ahmad bin Haji Ahmad of Qatif in whose house I was born. He freed my father voluntarily when I was young and sold my mother about ten years ago. As soon as I attained majority I started serving my master

¹⁷ 'Political Residency, Persian Gulf, to the Residency Agent, Shargah', Bushire, 11th June 1917, IOR: R/15/1/202 5/104 II, III.

Haji Salih taking his cattle to the field for grazing in winter and by going for diving in summer. He used to take my earnings and give me only a few out of it. About five years ago he visited Iraq for the purpose of performing pilgrimage and took me with him for service. After spending a short time in Iraq, we both returned to Qatif where I had to serve as before. Finding it impossible for me to serve my master any longer owing to maltreatment and insufficient food and clothing, I was compelled to escape from him and came to Bahrain three days ago in a Jolly boat.¹⁸

From 1934 the Agents in Bahrain and in Muscat were empowered to grant a manumission certificate, so the cases was reported to Bushire but the decision was taken on the spot. Agents, when reporting the case to Bushire, expressed their opinions and recommended or not to grant a certificate. The typical conclusion was: 'I herewith forward two statements made before me for the grant of manumission certificates. I recommend that the certificates applied for may be granted. The applicants speak Arabic and look like Negroes'.¹⁹ In response, the Political Resident authorized an Agent to grant a manumission certificate to the applicant.

The procedure ended with granting a manumission certificate to the applicant. Usually, it took 2 weeks to go through the procedures. On 24th June, 1935 a female slave named Hasinah bint Khamis submitted her application and she was granted a manumission certificate on 8th July, 1935.²⁰ This was the most common length of considering an application.

Sometimes the procedure lasted several months, especially in the case of fugitive divers. These applicants were quite often free people, free born or *mawalid*, born slaves but manumitted by their master, and were running away from their debts. They were playing slaves to avoid paying debts to their *nakhudas*, or captains of the boats. It was commonly known that it was not a slave who was responsible for the borrowed money but his master. In such cases an Agent was obliged to clear the status of the applicant and establish the sum of debts and the people to whom the applicant was indebted.

¹⁸ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

¹⁹ 'The Political Agency, Bahrein, to the Secretary to the Hon'ble the Political Resident', Bushire, No. 924/V.o of 1932, dated the 9th July 1932, IOR: R/15/2/1825.

²⁰ 'The British Residency and Consulate General, Bushire, to the Political Agent and Consul', Muscat, 8th July 1935, IOR: R/15/1/218 5/190 IV.

تقریر حاصل من قبیل عبدالمعین الباقوی عمداً تمسکاً عن سنه ۱۳۴۹
ج ۲۵

ابن روقه من مکران کنت فی سن ثلاثه عشر من سنه الباقوی الذي قد
اسم فاخته من مکران الى ساحل الباطنه باعوني على رجل يسمى المرحوم
بقيت عنده لثلاثة سنين فجاؤني اليه باعني على رجل يسمى سلطان بن
لطان المکران الذي كان في قبده ضرب يجلوني في
خوف ان اهرب منه فقد وجهه لطان صاهر من في الباطنه الذي قد
فهرت والنجت يسه الظالم الباقوی وان تم من هم والباطنه فكل
له في حرة والجره المکران في مکران وان لم يكن كون داي ما اجماع
نفي لهما في قبضه المکران في سنه هذا

انتهى
عبدالمعین الباقوی
خاتمه



Statement made by Hallum a/o Abdullah Baluch, aged about 20. Recorded on the 20th Rajab 1349=12-12-30.

I was kidnapped at the Mekeran when I was 13 years of age. I do not know who were the Baluchis who kidnapped me. They carried me away from Mekeran to the Batinah Coast where they sold me to a man named Salem bin Hamood at Wedam. I remained with Salem for two years after which he took me to Debal and sold me to a man named Sultan bin Humaid. He has never treated me well and has always been putting me in irons and beats and above all keeps me outside so that I should not be able to run away from him. It so happened from God's decree that Sultan bin Humaid fell sick and we were brought to Debal. There I awaited for an opportunity which having offered itself I run away from Debal and took refuge in the Residency Agency, Shargah. I pray the British Government to set me free as I am a freeborn person and had not been a slave in Mekeran. I desire to remain at Shargah and earn my livelihood in the Baluch quarter Shargah.

Recorded in my presence.
Sgd and Sld., K.B. Isa bin Ardul Latif.
Residency Agency, Shargah.

1/11/31

On 5th September, 1921, two people named Bakheet bin Faraj and Amnah bint Musa took refuge at the Political Agency in Muscat. They claimed to be a couple and slaves and complained about their master for ill-treatment. The woman added that her master sold her children. They asked for manumission.²¹ The Residency Agent in Sharjah, from where the slaves escaped, made enquiries which showed that Amnah's master was an inhabitant of Sharjah and not of Dubai, as the woman declared. He was man of good behaviour and did not trouble the slave women in any business but he paid her expenses. Her house was separate from the master's house. Her husband was a domestic slave named Soltan of Qishm and not Bakheet bin Faraj. The latter's master was not the same as the woman's. Contrary to her statement, Amnah did not bear any children in her master's house. In the summer 1920, the woman asked her master to allow her to go to her husband at Qishm and got the permission. As the male applicant was concerned, it turned out that his real name was Naseeb and that he changed it into Bakheed. He was a *mawalid* and owed 787 rupees to a *nakhuda* from Sharjah, who, in turn, was indebted to other men on account of diving. The Residency Agent was of the opinion that certificates of manumission should be issued and handed over to the both slaves, but the man should be sent to the Agency in Sharjah for further investigation in regard of his debts.²²

Whenever the applicant was suspected of committing a crime or theft the case needed further investigation.

In October 1937, a female slave named Sa'adah bint Mubarak from Abu Dhabi asked for manumission at the Political Agency in Bahrain. She declared that she had been treated harshly by her masters. On enquiry it transpired that the women absconded three years before to Dubai with the ornaments of her mistress who used to give her them to wear. Her master got her back to Abu Dhabi and recovered the ornaments from her. Her mistress discontinued giving her any ornaments as she used to do before. 3 years later, when there was some ceremony in Abu Dhabi, the slave asked her mistress to give her some ornaments and the latter refused to do so. The slave women got annoyed and ran away.²³

²¹ 'Copy of Statement. Applicant Amnah Bint Mussa Sawahili aged about 32 years. Recorded at Muscat on the 5th September 1921', IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

²² 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, Bushire', 12th October 1921, IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

²³ 'Statement of the slave Sa'adah bint Mubarak, aged about 50 years, recorded at the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 18th October 1937', IOR: R/15/2/1827.

The cases when a slave was complaining of cruel treatment from his or her master went through a further investigation as well.

In July 1936, the Residency Agent in Sharjah informed the Political Agent in Bahrain about four women whose origins were difficult to establish and who complained of having been ill-treated by their master. We read:

I enclose statements of four slave women.

1. Atwi bint Muhammad Al Sumali. Health and dress of this women are good. She is married and living out of her master's house. It appears that she has no trouble. Her appearance shows that she is originally a Somali woman. She requests for manumission. If you order for the issue of a manumission certificate for her it will be given her so that she can live free without fear.

2. Marhumah bint Saleh. As a result of enquires made it appears that her master is cruel and ill-treats her. Both her health and dress are good. She has also a daughter with her who is of dark complexion as well. She does not appear to be from Africa and accents are like that of Arabs. I recommend for the grant of a manumission to her.

3. Atwi bint Mubarak. This woman seems to be experiencing trouble and difficulty. Her health and dress are not as should be. Enquiries show that her master is cruel and beats her. She deserves freedom from slavery. I hope that you will order for the grant of a manumission certificate to her with her minor daughter.

4. Khaddum. Dress and health of this women are good. There is no sign of trouble in her but enquiries show that the daughter of her master is of severe temper. She beat her when going to Naghaid and as soon as she (Khaddum) reached Dubai she managed to run away. If you order for the grant of a manumission certificate to her it will be given to her to lead a free life.²⁴

When an investigation was over and aspects of the case were cleared out the statement was forwarded to the Residency in Bushire with an usual note: 'I have made enquiries and found out that the statement is correct and under these circumstances the slave deserves manumission. Decision rests with you'.²⁵

²⁴ 'Translation of letter No. 479 dated the 22nd July 1936 from the Residency Agent, Shargah to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/1/210 5/168 VI.

²⁵ 'From Residency Agent, Shargah, to Under Secretary to the Political Resident at Bushire', Sharjah, 23rd May 1931, IOR: R/5/1/209 5/168 V.

Whenever a slave applied to an Agency for manumission, usually the practice was to keep him or her at the Agency while the case was under consideration. This was not always necessary, unless there was a danger that the slave would be re-enslaved, or that he or she could not support himself or herself in a town by his/her own labour.²⁶

The instruction of the Political Resident to the Political Agents in Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat and to the Residency Agent in Sharjah concerning manumission dated of 11th November, 1907, said that runaway slaves who took refuge at British Residencies and Agencies in the Persian Gulf were manumitted only when the respective slave agreement applied to them. The instruction stressed that in Bahrain and on the Arab coast slaves who were born in slavery or who were imported prior to the execution of the slave agreements with the shaikhs, were returned to their masters. The last sentence was based on paragraph 3 of Colonel Meade's letter No. 31, dated 26th April, 1898, which ran: 'Slaves imported to the Arab coast and Bahrain subsequent to the dates of the agreements with the shaikhs of Bahrain, Ras-ul-Khimah, Sharjah, Um-ul-Kowain, Debay, Ajman and Abu Thabi were given manumission certificates on taking refuge at British Agencies. Those who were born in slavery, or who were imported prior to the execution of the agreements with the shaikhs, were returned to their masters'. The practice in Bahrain in regard to such slaves was, however, to make the masters sign papers agreeing to treat them kindly if returned, with the condition that they would be liable to be released if it was found that they were badly treated.²⁷

The rules of 1898 were still applicable in the first years of the 20th century. As time passed and there was less and less slaves imported prior the execution of the agreements, the existing practice changed. Certificates were granted to all kidnapped slaves and there were more and more cases of issuing certificates for slaves born in slavery.


The documents which authorized the British officials to manumit slaves on the Persian coast were: (1) The Slave Agreement with Persia of 1882 (Aitchison, vol. XII, page 97); (2) The Brussels Act of 1890 (Hertslet, volume XIX, page 278). In regard to the former, it was held that the engagements of

²⁶ 'Political Agency, Bahrain, to the Political Agent, Sharjah', Bahrain, the 28th September 1938, No. 297-A/4, IOR: R/15/2/1825.

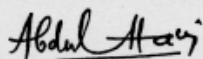
²⁷ 'British Residency in the Persian Gulf', No. 1604, confidential, 6th May 1908, IOR: R/15/1/213 5/183 (D 31).

Statement of slave Khamis bin Zayed, aged about 18 years,
recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain.

I was born in Sur and my parents were slaves to a transport contractor, Abdullah bin Muhammad by name. I was brought up in his house, but he was always cruel to me and made me work hard in diving and other odd hard jobs, never giving me sufficient food and clothing. My father died three years ago and my mother is still with my master too old to move about and accompany me when I left him. My elder brother, Mubarak bin Zayed, was manumitted by the High Government four year ago and I have come with him to request the High Government to help me kindly to live the life of a free man and grant me a manumission certificate.


L.T.I. of Khamis bin
Zayed.

Recorded before me this the 16th day of May 1934.


Political Agent, Bahrain.

the Persian government were not limited to the case of Negroes, but also covered the case of enslaved Makranis or other indigenous persons.

Slave cases fell under four categories. (i) Slaves of Persian masters domiciled in Persia. These cases had to be referred officially to the local authorities with a Consulate representative. A statement of the case and a manumission certificate obtained from the local authorities were required and on the strength of them a British manumission certificate was issued. It was understood that the British officers could not ordinarily manumit without the consent of the Persian authorities. If the slave was not entitled to his/her freedom or if his/her title to be manumitted was doubtful, British Consular Officers had to move the local authorities to obtain a guarantee for good treatment from the slave's master and induce the slave to return to the owner on the strength of it. If the local Persian authorities made unnecessary difficulty, the British Consulate officer had to refer the case to the British Residency in Bushire. (ii) Slaves from Muscat, Bahrain, Kuwait or the Trucial Coast; in those cases, the British Consulate officer had to refer to the Residency, permitting the slave to remain in the Consulate meanwhile. (iii) Slaves of masters who were domiciled in Persian territory, but who were under British protection. Such cases had to be enquired into and dealt with on their merits without the intervention of the Persian authorities. (iv) Slaves of masters who were domiciled in Persian territory, but who were not under British protection. Such cases were in the first instance dealt with in communication between the British Consul and the owner of the slave if one was present. Otherwise, the local authorities were called upon to act as in the case of Persian masters. (v) Slave taking refuge in British territories in Basidu, or in Jask, or in Hanjam. This practice was not encouraged, but when slaves took refuge, a manumission certificate had to be issued by the Consul concerned after an enquiry without the intervention of the Persian authorities.²⁸

The slaves from the Arab coast who sought refuge of the Persian coast were generally sent back to the Arabian coast as the British Consuls on the Persian shore were not eligible to issue manumission certificates. Sometimes they were, however, kept at the consulates and their statements were sent to the Residency Bushire where the certificates were issued. In December 1925, 5 female slaves from Bahrain were manumitted by the British Residency in Bushire and 4 of them were sent back to Bahrain. One of those four was

²⁸ 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202.

a Najdi and she was allowed to live in al-Manamah with her daughter. The others three were of Abyssinian origin and were sent to the American Mission in al-Manamah where they later on married manumitted slaves. The fifth manumitted woman was a Baluchi and was sent to Makran. In April 1926, 3 slaves from Kuwait – 1 female and 2 males and all of them of African origin – took refuge at Bandar Abbas Consulate and were manumitted. At the same time a male slave from Kuwait took refuge at the British Consular Agency in Lingah and was manumitted on 6th November, 1926. In October 1926, 2 male slaves of African origin escaped from Kuwait and went to Lingah, where they asked for manumission certificates. They were returned to Kuwait under escort and from there brought down to Bushire where they were manumitted and then repatriated to Zanzibar. In November 1926, a male slave from Bahrain asked to be freed by the British Consul at Basidu. He was manumitted and sent back to Bahrain in December the same year.²⁹

The British had no slave trade treaty with the ruler of Kuwait, and no general orders were issued by the British government. The Foreign Department of the Government of India suggested in the letter No. 4418, dated 11th November, 1907, that Negroes would not be encouraged to take refuge at the Agency and in the case of a slave belonging to a master domiciled in Kuwait, the British Political Agent in Kuwait would, at his discretion, decline to intervene. When circumstances made this course difficult the case was to be reported to and discussed with the Shaikh of Kuwait, with a view to reconciling the slave and his master. If the case was one of real cruelty the shaikh was to be invited to acquiesce in the manumission. Reference to higher authority needed only be made in flagrant cases in which the shaikh failed to give reasonable relief. In the case of a slave belonging to a master not domiciled in Kuwait, the slave had to be passed on to Bushire, or, if this was not practicable, a report of the case had to be forwarded to the Residency in Bushire for orders.³⁰

Mubarak, the Shaikh of Kuwait, and his sons were known for their humane attitude to slaves. In May 1921, a slave woman who claimed to be a native of the Sudan appealed to the Political Agent in Kuwait for protection against her master, who, she said, was ill treating her, and intended to send her to Qatar for sale. The shaikh said that if she really were a native of the Sudan and

²⁹ 'Statements of the cases of slaves imported to the Trucial or Batineh Coast by sea and their manumission', IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

³⁰ 'Manumission procedure in Kuwait', IOR: R/15/5/85 29/22.

a British-protected person, he certainly would not allow her to remain a slave, but that, in fairness to his own subjects, he could not take any action until this point was established, and he asked the Agent to have enquiries made. Meanwhile he ordered her master to treat her kindly. A few weeks later, however, it became known that her master had beaten her cruelly again, and the shaikh took her away from him until the case was settled. It proved impossible to establish her nationality, but even then the shaikh refused to give her back to her master, and eventually bought her and kept her in his own house.³¹

In the case of Bahrain, the procedure was based on the Engagement of 1856 with the ruler of Bahrain (Aitchison, vol. XII, page 158). All Negroes claiming to be slaves and seeking manumission were received under the protection of the Agency. Males were lodged at the Agency premises under the charge of a guard. Women were as a rule put up outside in the quarter of the freed slaves, for which they made their own arrangements. Each application was dealt with in accordance with the principle laid down in Foreign Department letter No. 551, dated 4th September 1905, in which the attitude of government in regard to the treatment of slavery in Bahrain was defined. There was only one exception to granting refuge to slaves, and that was in the case of those from Kuwait. There were objections in such cases to charging the Government of India the cost of the passage of a Negro sent back to Kuwait; the best plan suggested was to avoid the necessity of doing so by informing the slave that he could not be given a manumission certificate and if he remained at the Agency and his master claimed him, he would have to be sent to Kuwait in order that his case was enquired into, and that his best course under the circumstances was to make himself scarce. In the case of 'Kuwait slaves' the Government of India laid down the following principles for the guidance of the Political Agent: '(1) That no effort should be spared to detect and suppress fresh importation of slaves into the island. (2) That in the case of newly-imported slaves or of slaves who have been subjected to ill-treatment by their masters, every facility should be afforded them for obtaining manumission papers. (3) That in the event of slaves of long domicile applying of their own accord for manumission, each case should be considered on its merits, due regard being had to the period which may have elapsed since importation, the reasons assigned for

³¹ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Kuwait', 26th July 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

not claiming manumission at an earlier date, the treatment accorded in the past by the slave's master, the owner's willingness to furnish guarantees for proper treatment in the future, and, finally, the importance on general grounds of avoiding any widespread unrest among those who have acquiesced in their lot and whose sudden manumission in considerable numbers might constitute a serious source of embarrassment'.³²

The Shaikh of Bahrain was only to be consulted in cases of deadlock or particular difficulty. By general consent the year 1895 ('The year of Zubarah') was taken as the criterion for determining whether importation was 'new' or 'old'. In the case of 'foreign slaves', chiefly from Trucial Oman, Qatar and Turkish Arabia, the applicants' statements had to be taken and reference was made to the Political Resident.³³

The manumission in Muscat was based on the Treaty with the Sultan of Muscat of 1873 (Aitchison, vol. XII, paragraph 230). Manumission certificates were only granted with the acquiescence of the sultan after joint investigation by the sultan and Political Agent. The sultan was not a party to the Brussels Act of 1890. The procedure of dealing with applications for manumission was clearly defined by Major Fagan, a former Political Agent, dated 23rd January, 1899. When a slave applied for freedom at the Agency his statement was taken down in writing. He was then sent to the sultan with an Agency official for the purpose of verifying his statement made at the Agency and of obtaining the consent of the sultan to his freedom. The sultan after questioning the slave either informed the Political Agent that the slave might be freed, when he found him to be of recent importation (after the Treaty of 1873), or in doubtful cases, i.e. when the date of the slave's importation could not be clearly ascertained, the sultan requested that the slave might be detained for from 10 to 15 days pending further investigation or the arrival of his master. In the rare cases of slaves imported before 1873 claiming freedom, the sultan was not asked to agree to their manumission unless cruelty or inhuman treatment was proved, in which case freedom was given with the consent of the sultan; otherwise when slaves not entitled to freedom under the treaty appeared to be well-fed and clothed and in good condition, they were returned to their masters by the sultan, who caused the

³² 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202.

³³ Ibidem.

masters to sign a bond by which they undertook to treat the slaves thus returned with kindness. In the case of British Indian subjects or subjects of 'Native States' taking refuge at the Muscat Agency, their freedom was demanded, as of right, from the sultan and admitted by him as a matter of course, on the principle that the reduction of such persons to a state of slavery could under no circumstances be legal. Of this category the most likely case to occur was that of indigent Baluchis from Kalat-Makran.³⁴ In the late 1930s, when the number of applications increased and it turned out that a majority of applicants were from Sharjah, the Political Agent in Muscat was authorized to issue the manumission certificates and instruct the slaves to report themselves to the Residency Agent in Sharjah. It was expected that this would save delay and ensure the practice in dealing with such cases.³⁵

In the last years of the 19th century cases of slaves imported before the treaty seeking freedom at this consulate were rare. To such persons freedom was denied or rather the sultan was not asked to give his consent unless cruelty or inhuman treatment was proved, in which case freedom was given with the consent of the sultan; otherwise when slaves not entitled to freedom under the treaty appeared to be well fed and clothed and in good condition they were not entitled to freedom and were returned to their masters by the sultan who made the masters sign a bond by which they undertook to treat the slaves thus returned with kindness.³⁶

On the Trucial Coast the manumission was based on the Agreement of 1847, which was re-affirmed in the case of the rulers of Sharjah and Abu Dhabi in 1873 (Aitcheson, vol. XII, p. 178, 184). Certificates were granted by, or on the specific authority of, the Resident after investigation, on report by the Native Residency Agent, and after consideration of the views of the shaikh concerned. The British authorities in India stressed that in the case of the Persian Gulf the use of the word 'slave' as a synonym for 'Negro' should be avoided because there was a large free Negro population in the region and a Negro was not necessarily a slave, just as a slave was not necessarily a Negro.³⁷

³⁴ *Ibidem*; 'Minute', file XIII/3, Muscat, 9th August 1948, IOR: R/15/6/418 13/2 II.

³⁵ 'Memo No. 996/XIII dated 11-8-38 from P. A. Muscat', IOR: R/15/1/220 5/190 VI.

³⁶ 'Memorandum on the practice of manumission of slaves at Muscat', Extract from Memo no. 31 dated 23rd January, 1899, file XIII/3, IOR: R/15/6/418 13/2 II.

³⁷ 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202.

In the case of a slave who served his master for a long time, the probability was that the cause of his desire for freedom was of recent origin, and it was very seldom that such an individual slave could really be repatriated in practice. The position of the British officials was that it was often more in his interest that a reconciliation was effected between him and his master when the latter offered to meet the slave's wishes in some particular respect and treat him better.

The Government of India instructed its officers in the Persian Gulf that as regards Negroes who claimed to be slaves, they had to take care in asserting that the applicants were really slaves and not free men and pearl divers who had run away to evade the liabilities which they so readily incurred. If they were of the latter category, arrangements had to be made to have the claims against them decided by a Salifah Court, according to the practices of the pearl diving industry. In this connection references were invited to the Trucial Coast Pearl Divers Agreement of 1879.³⁸

In the cases of persons born in slavery (known as *mawalid* or domestic slaves) good offices could only be given in circumstances of gross ill-treatment with a view to the extraction of a guarantee from their masters that the ill-treatment should cease. This category of slaves was not entitled to a manumission certificate; on the other hand, the British Consular officers were not obliged to assist their masters to recover them. The Government of India stressed in this connection that domestic slavery was not prohibited in Turkey under the Brussels Act. A domestic slave was one born in slavery, one or both of the parents being at the time bonded slaves.³⁹ This position, however, changed later on.

In the 1930s slaves who took refuge at Bahrain Agency fell under two categories, i.e. 'Bahrain slaves' and 'foreign slaves', according to the residence of their masters. Foreign slave cases were, as a general rule, referred to the Political Resident and disposed of in accordance with his instructions. As for Bahrain slaves, the Political Agent was authorized to manumit them. The authority was implied by the two following provisions: (a) the fact that only 'foreign slaves' cases were required to be referred to the Political Resident and, (b) the provision that the shaikh was only consulted in special cases and reference had to be made to the Residency in cases of deadlock and particular difficulty.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ 'Rules on manumission of slaves in Bahrain', 24th January 1938, IOR: R/15/2/1367.

In the case of civil claims or criminal complaints against the applicant, the following procedure had to be observed. If the claim was connected with a legal transaction it was referred to the Salifah Court where the transaction took place. If it was an ordinary claim for a loan, etc., it was referred to a civil court or a *qadi*, preferably a *qadi* acceptable to both parties. In both cases a representative of the Agency or Consulate concerned was present. In the case of criminal complaints the refugee was first freed if he or she was entitled to freedom and then the complaint was enquired into and settled unofficially, if possible. If this could not be done, the case was referred to a Sharia or Consular Court. It was very important that no claim for debt could lie against a person undoubtedly in state of bonded slavery.⁴¹ In the case of minors released from slavery, both in their own interests and in order to save expenses, the Political Agent was advised to consign individuals during the years of their minority to the guardianship of approved applicants, almost invariably Christians, to be brought up as domestic servants.⁴²

In 1934, the general instructions for the Navy officers were defined and they provided that whenever a fugitive slave was taken into the ship he or she was protected by the British flag, whether within or beyond the territorial waters of any state. An officer was obliged not to admit or entertain any demand made upon him for surrendering such a person on the ground of his/her being a slave. On the other hand, slaves should not be removed from shore and then treated as fugitives; or if, in any exceptional case, their removal should seem to be required by considerations of humanity, the commanding officer, who under such circumstances received a slave on board, should be prepared to compensate the owner for the loss of his slave.⁴³

In 1938, the Political Resident issued a circular memorandum in cancellation of the previous rules of manumission, in which the new political situation was reflected. The first article lifted restrictions to manumit born slaves and said that 'any slave, whether captured or domestic, applying for manumission to a Political Agent, should be given a certificate to that effect by the Political Agent of the area after investigation, and subject to the consideration set out elsewhere in this memorandum'. Slaves applying for manumission until and

⁴¹ 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202; 'Manumission procedure in Kuwait', IOR: R/15/5/85 29/2.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ 'Extracts from General Instructions to Naval Officers', IOR: R/15/2/1826.

while their cases were under consideration were to be accommodated by the political authority to whom they had applied. After they received their certificates they had to be discharged. When a slave from one political region was applying for manumission to the Political Agent of another region, the latter had to give a certificate after he communicated with his counterpart in the first region. Any special cases which were likely to cause political repercussions had to be reported to the Political Resident before action was taken. If the slave's life was considered in danger, the case had to be reported to the Political Resident, and the individual kept in safety. No manumission certificate could be issued on the Persian coast as slavery was not recognized by the Iranian government. In Kuwait, certificates could not be issued as there was no slave treaty with the ruler. As slavery was not recognized by the Bahrain government, no certificates were issued by the Political Agent to local inhabitants. Cases of slaves from Saudi Arabia who applied for manumission to the Political Agent in Bahrain had to be referred to the Political Resident. In the case of subjects of the Shaikh of Qatar, with whom there was a slave treaty, the Political Agent in Bahrain was authorized to resolve the question. In the Trucial Coast, where there were slave treaties with the shaikhs of this area, the Residency Agent in Sharjah had no power to issue certificates, but had to report cases to the Political Agent in Bahrain for action. The certificates could be issued in Muscat as there was a slave treaty signed with the sultan and the Political Agent in this town was empowered to do this. Cases of slaves from Saudi Arabia who applied for manumission to the Political Agents in Muscat had to be referred to the Political Resident.⁴⁴

3. Eligibility

The question of to whom slave manumission rules were applicable was a somewhat delicate one. It was dealt with in the correspondence between the Foreign Department of the Government of India and the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, in particular in the letter No. 4418-E.B. of the former, dated 11th November, 1907, and in the Resident's letter No. 917 of 22nd March, 1907 (paragraph 23) and in the letter of the Political Agent in Bahrain No. 591 of 29th November, 1907 (paragraph 5). A general understanding

⁴⁴ 'Circular Memorandum in Cancellation of the Memorandum of 1913 Concerning Manumission of Slaves, British Residency and Consulate-General, Bushire, dated the 1st August', 1938', IOR: R/15/2/1843.

was to differentiate between Negroes and slaves and to hold that in every slavery agreement which was hitherto obtained from rulers in the Persian Gulf the word 'slave' meant not 'any Negro', or 'a Negro born in slavery or imported previous to the conclusion of the treaties', but 'a Negro imported subsequent to the date of the particular Agreement applicable to his case'. By analogy the word 'slave' for purposes of manumission had to be interpreted with the above reservation, just as it invariably was in Muscat and in Persia. It was also understood that the Shaikh of Bahrain would free Negroes coming in from other localities and claiming freedom on the same principles on which he agreed to the manumission of the slaves of his own subjects. Up to 1908 no slave was released by the British representative in Bahrain on his newly acquired authority. All cases were referred to the Residency in Bushire and the Resident issued the certificates, or refused them as he considered expedient after enquiry. In cases from Hasa, where any local enquiry was practically impossible or very inconvenient, the British authorities waived any reference to the locality of domicile and issued certificates on the statement of the Negro himself.

At the very beginning of the 20th century in the case of a refugee Negro from the Persian side of the Gulf the practice was initiated of the local enquiries before it was decided whether the applicant was entitled to receive a certificate or not. Procedure on this principle worked well when the British representatives in the Gulf consisted of the Resident and his native Agents in Sharjah, Lingah and Bahrain. All cases were referred to the Residency and certificates were issued by the Resident after due investigation. The situation altered, however, with the appointment at the beginning of the 20th century of three more British officers in the Gulf ports, viz., Bandar Abbas, Bahrain and Kuwait, and especially by the Bandar Abbas appointment. There the Assistant Resident was also Consul under the Foreign Office, and in that capacity exercised independent functions. It was in the latter capacity that he dealt with slavery cases and whereas Negroes had in the past been manumitted by the Resident in Bushire only after full investigation, a new practice for Negroes in debt or difficulties was to seize the nearest boat and abscond to Bandar Abbas where they obtained certificates on their own bare statements and without reference to the Political Resident in Bushire or the Residency Agent in Sharjah. This practice of issuing certificates without knowledge of the history provoked ill feeling on the Trucial Coast as it destabilized the pearl diving system and the Resident considered it unacceptable. In consequence, an Assistant Resident in

Bandar Abbas was instructed to refer all cases from the Arab coast, which was not in his jurisdiction as Consul, to the Residency in Bushire.⁴⁵

The Residency and Agencies observed the rule that manumission certificates were granted to the slaves of the subjects of those rulers with whom Great Britain had signed agreements on slave trade. In February 1937, a slave from Sunainah in Oman made a statement at the Agency in Sharjah. He was a subject of Muhammad bin Salmin bin Rahmah, the Shaikh of al Bu Shamis desert, who was not under the control of any of the rulers of the Trucial Oman Coast, and there was no agreement between him and the British Government as regards slave traffic. As the slave was born in the house of the master who resided at Sunainah, the Residency Agent decided that he was not entitled to a manumission certificate.⁴⁶

On 6th June, 1936, a woman from Dammam in Hasa approached the Agency in Bahrain. She escaped from her master as she wanted to join her husband who was a diver in Bahrain and got a manumission certificate from the Agency. The woman asked the Agent to help her to recover her 7-year old son whom she left in Dammam. The case was difficult for the British authorities as the woman was a Saudi subject and there was no slave agreement with Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the British had no agent on the Hasa coast who could help in recovering the boy. The Political Agent promised to persuade the master to give the woman her son back if he came to Bahrain.⁴⁷

On 30th March, 1928, a man named Abdullah reported to the Political Agency in Kuwait and stated that he was a native of the Sudan, having been born near Khartoum, whence he was stolen and brought to Hijaz, sold and taken to Najd, where he was given the name Bakhit. After serving for 15 years in Najd he was brought here and sold to a merchant named Fallah al-Kharafi, who two years later sold him to his present owner, Ghanim bin Uthman. He accompanied this master, who was the captain of a sailing boat, on two voyages to India last year. Towards the end of the first voyage he was badly beaten by his master for no cause, and on his arrival in Basrah he lodged a complaint against him. According to his statement, the case was enquired into and he was given a document of

⁴⁵ 'From the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Simla, Shiraz, June 29th 1908', IOR: R/15/1/213 5/183 (D 31).

⁴⁶ 'Translation of a letter No. 202 dated 9th March 1938 from the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/1/ 210 5/168 VI.

⁴⁷ IOR: R/15/2/1826.

manumission, which was afterwards taken from him by his master. On the return from the second voyage to India Ghanim bin Uthman tried to sell him to some Persians in Mughu but the local government objected to the sale. He left him with one Sultan bin Hamud to whom he had wanted to sell him. The case was unusual because the slave was a native of the Sudan and was a British-protected person, and, as such, was entitled to his freedom. He appeared to be about 20 to 22 years of age and certainly was born after 19th January, 1899, when the agreement was signed between Great Britain and Egypt establishing their joint sovereignty over the Sudan. A person born in the Sudan after that date was presumably a British-protected person. The case was sent to Bushire and the certificate was granted to the applicant.⁴⁸

Slaves from Somaliland were eligible to ask for the British protection. In December 1921, a deputation of Somalis claimed British protection in Kuwait on behalf of a half-witted slave boy of about 12, who had been sent by someone to Jubail for sale. One of them identified him as a cousin who had been stolen from his parents in Sur 7 years before. While the case was being inquired into, the shaikh called on the Agent and volunteered the remark that he did not think it was necessary to prove that the boy was any particular Somali's cousin, but that it was quite enough to show that he was a Somali, since in that case he must be either a British subject or a subject of one of the British allies, France or Italy, and as such he was entitled to his freedom. Subsequently, the statements of 2 or 3 Somalis that the boy was one of their race were taken by the *qadhi*, and the boy was declared free.⁴⁹

In regard to Persian Baluchistan fugitives from the Arab coast, such men, kidnapped from Persia, and taken overseas, who then escaped back to their native land were afraid of being re-enslaved. Some of them came to the British Consulate and asked for manumission certificates. The Resident was of the opinion that such a certificate should be issued by the local Persian authorities and that the British Consul should intervene on behalf of Persian refugees in Persia only when they feared molestation or re-enslavement from their Persian owners. On the other hand, the employers from the Trucial Coast demanded the British Agents in Sharjah and Bahrain should make action to compel fugitive

⁴⁸ 'From The Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Secretary to the Hon'ble the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', No. 554-29/3, dated the 30th March 1928, IOR: R/15/1/207 168 IX.

⁴⁹ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Political Secretary to H. E. The High Commissioner', Kuwait, 13th May 1921, IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

slaves or indebted absconding servants who reached Persia to return home. The Resident thought that in the absence of an extradition agreement between Persia and the Trucial shaikhdoms Consul could not make such action. The runaway and indebted people from the Trucial Coast who took refuge at the British Consulate on the Persian Coast and asked for manumission as slaves and were manumitted there, sometimes went back to Sharjah or Dubai to work on their own account. The Residency Agent was not obliged to give them any further assistance unless and until they took refuge at the Agency, when the question of their real former status was to be investigated *de novo*. If it was proved that they were slaves, they were considered not indebted but they could not be allowed to live in the Trucial Oman. If they were not slaves, the Salifah Court decided the amount of their indebtedness.⁵⁰ When runaway slaves from the Arab coast landed on the Persian one, they were technically refugees on the Persian soil. Yet, since the Persian authorities didn't show any interest in them, they were embarked on British ships and being therefore free under Persian law, were conveyed to a British Agency on the Arab coast for manumission.⁵¹

4. Value of the certificate

The British certificate neither prevented its bearer from re-enslavement nor protected him or her from ill-treatment. Nevertheless, many slaves were applying for the certificate as a guarantee for more safe life.

Statement of slave Johar bin Sultan aged about 35 years, 23rd day of April, 1932.

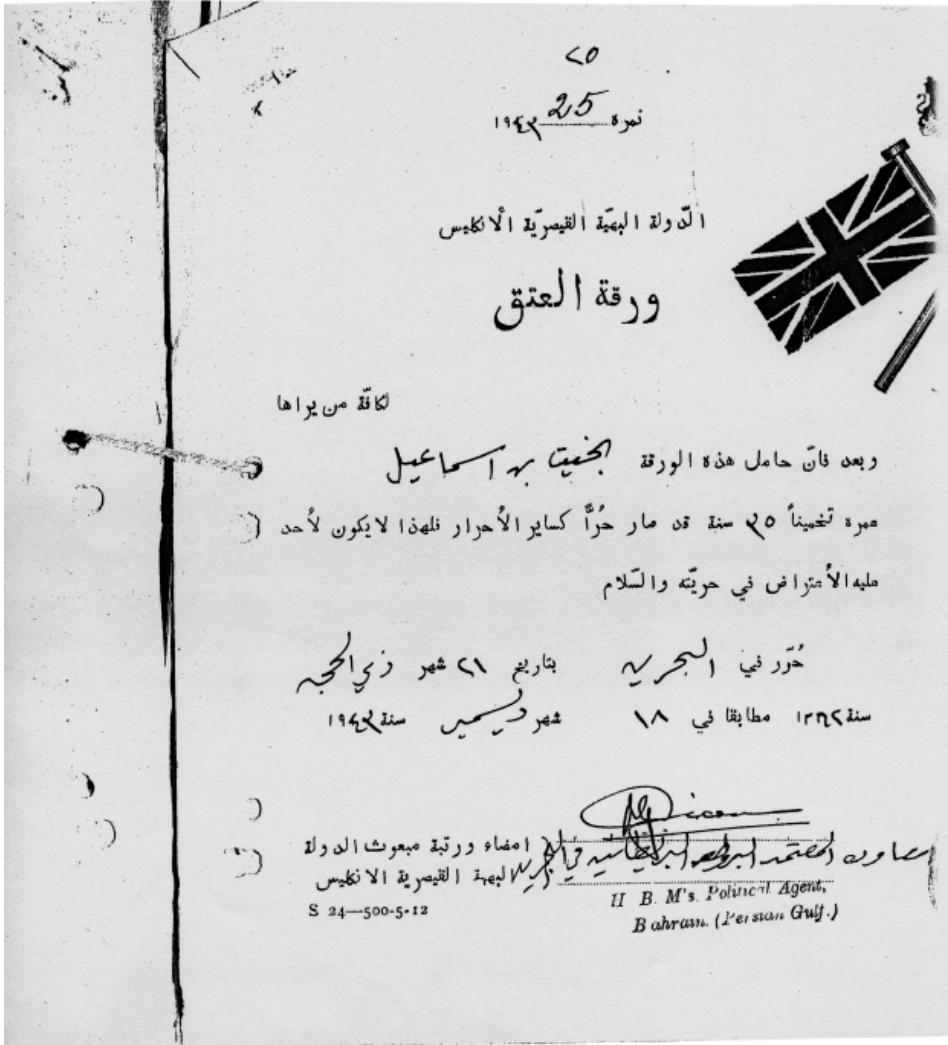
I was born in Abyssinia. In my early age I was kidnapped by some Bedouin slave-dealers who brought me along to Mecca and sold there to some Nejdīs. The Nejdīs took me to Qatar and sold to Khamis bin Hasan Al-Sulaiti. He got me married with one of his slave girls and I have got a son from her who is about ten years old. I served my abovementioned master for a period of 10 years. Then he gave me to one Muhanna bin Hammad as a gift who died after I spent a period of 6 years in his service. After his death I was bought by one Ghanim bin Salman Al-Sulaiti who

⁵⁰ 'British Residency and Consulate General, Bushire, to Consul at Bander Abbas', Bushire, the 30th December 1926, IOR: R/15/1/208 5/168 IV.

⁵¹ 'Telegram XX, from the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire, to His Majesty's Minister, Tehran, No. 54, dated the 18th May 1933', IOR: R/15/2/1825.

brought me with him to Bahrain about 6 years ago. I served him for one year only but as he used to treat me with every possible severity I left him and lived with Hayah bint Ahmad, the mother of my former master Muhanna bin Hamad. At present I am working as a launch-driver and earning my livelihood.

Although I did not receive any maltreatment from my present mistress but still for my own safety I ask the favor of the High Government to



A manumission certificate

grant me a Manumission certificate so that in future nobody will claim me to be his claim.⁵²

On 4th July, 1938, a man named Suwaid bin Zaid, holder of the manumission certificate No. 7 dated 20th January, 1938, issued by the Political Agent, Bahrain, reported to the Agency in Sharjah the following story:

After taking the manumission certificate from the British Agency, Sharjah, I remained at Sharjah and was working there. After that I went to Umm al-Qaiwain where I made acquaintance with a free man of Batinah named Hamood, a laborer in Umm al-Qaiwain. I arranged with him to go to Muscat and we started on foot from Umm al-Qaiwain. After 2 days we reached Bokha. From Bokha we intended to cross over to Batinah in a small boat but on the way in Bokha we met Sheikh Ahmad bin Sulaiman, Sheikh of Bokha accompanied by a man named Ahmad of Henjam, diver of Said bin Buti who knew me. He informed Sheikh Ahmad bin Sulaiman that I was a slave of Said bin Buti, whereupon Sheikh Ahmad ordered his men to take me and my friend Hamood to the fort. They took us and chained us. On arrival at Dubai, one of the slaves of Said bin Buti came and took me in chain to the house of his master Said. I remained in that state till after sunset, after which they removed the fetters. Suliman bin Muhammad of Bokha, Zayed bin Saqar, Obeid Abood, Suwaidan, Kuli son of Salim, Said bin Balil, Yasir and Marzooq Mutawwa started searching my person. They took away my manumission certificate, bound me with rope and took me to the fort to keep me in custody till the pearling season and then to take me for diving. My friend Hamood was set free as soon as we arrived at Dubai. After I had passed a long time in the fort, Sheikh Said bin Maktum ordered for my release from prison and gave me clothing.⁵³

Masters of manumitted slaves were often trying to recover them and took away the certificates from them. If a certificate was damaged purposely this fact was treated as the damage of a British document and the case was sent to India for further action to be taken. In January 1938, a statement was made to the Residency Agent in Sharjah by Suwaid bn Zaid, to whom a manumission certificate had been issued under authority of Residency letter No. 9 of 14th

⁵² IOR: R/15/2/1825.

⁵³ 'Statement of Suwaid bin Zaid, holder of Manumission certificate No. 7 dated the 20th January 1938, issued by the Political Agent, Bahrain', Sharjah, 4th June, 1938, IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

January, 1938. Suwaid stated that he was in Bokha, on the western side of Cape Musandan, when he was arrested, together with a free man named Hamood, by the Shaikh of Bokha, as he was identified by one of the shaikh's companions as a slave of Sa'id bin Buti of Dubai. Sa'id bin Buti had in fact been Sauwaid's master, and it was from him that he ran away, and applied to the Residency Agent in Sharjah on 17th December, 1937 for a manumission certificate. Suwaid and Hamood were taken to the fort and chained up, and eight days later were sent to Dubai, where they were taken to the house of Said bin Buti. Hamood was released, but Suwaid was searched and his manumission certificate was taken away from him. He was released by the Shaikh of Dubai under the pressure from the Residency Agent, and stayed at the British Agency. The Shaikh of Dubai made enquiries about the manumission certificate, and everyone named by Suwaid denied taking it, which was to be expected. In any case, Sa'id bin Buti knew well that Suwaid was a freed slave and had been granted a manumission certificate, whether he could then produce it or not. The Agent in Sharjah considered this as a case of defiance of a British manumission certificate and suggested that steps were to be taken against the Shaikh of Bokha. He also suggested that Sa'id bin Buti was taken and brought by a sloop to Bahrain under arrest. He decided that a fine of 1,000 rupees was to be imposed on him.⁵⁴

There were cases when slaves, manumitted by their masters, were claimed by the heirs of those masters. Such slaves reported to the British officials and asked for a British certificate of manumission. They believed that with this certificate they would remain secure from the heirs and kidnappers.

Some slaves, already manumitted by the British Agency, thought the certificate gave them a kind of British protection and often contacted the British Agencies on different matters in order to get support. In 1940, an ex-slave Zahrah bint Ghuloom, manumitted a year before, contacted the Residency Agent in Sharjah and asked to recover her son who was probably kidnapped and sold.⁵⁵

In 1924, the Residency Agent in Sharjah reported on a curious case. A man, Sultan bin Aman, an Abyssinian from Zanzibar, was brought to Dubai

⁵⁴ 'Government of India to the Residency at Bushire', 25th August 1938, IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

⁵⁵ 'Translation of statement made by the manumitted slave Zahrah bint Ghulum bearer of Manumission Certificate No. 96 dated 14th October 1939. Recorded at Sharjah on 26th April 1940', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

in 1908, and later on manumitted by his master. In 1924, he got a certificate of manumission from the British Consulate in Muscat. He started to do business on his own account and was trusted by local merchants who lent him money. During the period he was involved in trade he contracted debts to the extent of 7,010 rupees. The sum was invested in a venture in which he lost heavily. He undertook to pay his debts gradually but he was a bankrupt and could not pay any money against his debts. A committee of local merchants demanded from the Residency Agent in Sharjah to punish the man for his fraud. He was a bearer of the British manumission certificate and the merchants considered the British authorities responsible for his behaviour. In the meantime, Sultan went to Bushire and asked the British Political Resident to help him to recover money from his debtors. They owed him 4,824 rupees. The Resident rejected his request as he did not want to interfere in local affairs. The sons of Sultan's former master pretended to re-enslave him for his debts but he escaped and disappeared.⁵⁶

In the early 20th century there was a discussion whether a manumitted slave became a British subject or not. The position of the Government of India was that the British manumission certificate was nothing more than it purported to be, that the bearer of one was only entitled to the British assistance in the case of interference with his/her liberty. In some ports of the Gulf the impression, however, appeared that a British manumitted slave became *ipso facto* a British subject. The British authorities in India thought there was no need to actively dispel this impression as it worked in the slaves' interest. The British officers in the Gulf were encouraged to give friendly offices a deserving individual holding a British manumission certificate, but to the extent to which the local authorities would accept them. The authorities in India decided that slaves whose cases were under consideration were eligible to receive subsistence allowance at the rate of four annas per day. The cost of food and of repatriation had to be drawn on a separate bill and attached to the monthly cash account sent to the Controller, India Treasuries in Calcutta.⁵⁷

In 1938, when there was still a sort of impression amongst the slaves on the Trucial Coast that once they were manumitted they became quasi-British

⁵⁶ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 15th July 1924, I.O.R. R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

⁵⁷ 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202; 'Manumission procedure in Kuwait', IOR: R/15/5/85 29/2.

subjects entitled to protection from the British, the Political Resident stressed once again that the certificate only released them from slavery.⁵⁸

The exercise of the right of manumission played the role of general preventive measure discouraging slave owning. The certificate of manumission was a guarantee for the good treatment of slaves for those who lived within reach of a British Agency. Many slaves manumitted locally by the British officials, were re-enslaved. In cases of local manumission the British officials retained the certificate of manumission as a precaution against re-enslavement, and a receipt was given to the slave and she or he was advised to inform the Agency of any further oppressive action taken by the former master. As long as the number of local manumissions was small, it was possible to keep record of the slaves' subsequent movements. When the number of applications increased, the control became more difficult. In Hijaz, where manumission was also practised by the British Legation in Jeddah, re-enslavement of manumitted slaves was common. Consul Bullard suggested in his dispatch No. 34 of 9th June, 1925, that provision should be made for the repatriation to Africa of every manumitted slave who wished to leave Hijaz. The cases of manumission without repatriation were rare because, in such a case, manumission could only be secured by means of persuasion. Sir Gilbert Clayton granted the right of manumission only to those slaves who applied for manumission and repatriation. In Hijaz the chief importance of the exercise of the right of manumission lied in its value as a bargaining asset in any negotiations on the legal abolition of slavery.⁵⁹

Evaluating the system of issuing manumission certificates, H. V. Biscoe stressed that in the course of time it was universally known throughout the Gulf that the British authorities did grant manumission to any slave applying for it and there was no doubt that the large majority of the slaves could escape to them and obtain freedom if they so desired. The reason why so many of them did not do so was that in the large majority of cases the domestic slave was little worse off than the free man: they were bound by the stern rules of economic

⁵⁸ 'Circular Memorandum in Cancellation of the Memorandum of 1913 Concerning Manumission of Slaves', British Residency and Consulate-General, Bushire, dated the 1st August, 1938, IOR: R/15/2/1843.

⁵⁹ 'Memorandum on Slavery and the Slave Traffic in the Kingdom of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies', 'Enclosure' in No. 1 'Mr. W. L. Bond to Mr. A. Henderson', Jeddah, March 6, 1930', IOR: R/15/1/226.

necessity and had to obtain their livelihood in a territory where nature rendered it peculiarly difficult to do so. The master of a slave in his own interest fed him adequately, gave him sufficient clothing for the climate and as a rule provided him with a wife and a dwelling place. The Political Resident once had in his own employ a slave: when asked why he did not apply for freedom he replied that his master fell on evil days and could not, therefore, afford to keep him and turned him out to earn his own living; if, however, he was at any time out of work his master always fed him till he got work. He expressed his entire readiness to go back and work for his master whenever the state of the latter's finances permitted. His attitude was typical of the large majority of domestic slaves in the Persian Gulf; they were not concerned with an abstract consideration but with a much more practical one that on the whole they obtained a modicum of the necessities of life. Furthermore, many of the slaves were born in their masters' families and regarded themselves to be members of the households and frequently were attached to them by ties of sentiments.⁶⁰

5. Reliability of the slaves' stories

The information contained in the statements was, generally, considered as reliable. In very few cases the Agents doubted about places and dates found in the statements. However, there is no doubt that slaves had their own strategies and that sometimes there was a lie in the story told to the British official.

In June 1931, a slave named Raihan bin Ubaid asked for manumission and declared that his master Ahmad bin Rashid from Qatar was a very cruel man and used to beat him 'very mercilessly'.⁶¹ The enquiry made by the Political Agent showed that in April 1930 Raihan accompanied by three other slaves ran away by a small boat as they stole articles from the box of the brother of the Shaikh of Umm al-Qaiwain and took refuge on the Persian coast. The further investigation showed that the original name of the slave was Faihan and not Raihan and that he was a slave of the Shaikh of Umm al-Qaiwain. He was born in slavery and served the father of the ruler. Faihan worked in winter in the house of shaikh and in the summer in the shaikh's diving boat. Faihan was

⁶⁰ 'From Lieut.-Colonel H. V. Biscoe, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi', No. 637 of 1930, Bushire, the 18th March 1930 'Domestic Slavery in the Persian Gulf', IOR: I.O.R. R/15/5/311 9/1.

⁶¹ 'Statement of Slave Raihan bin Obaid, about 28 years old, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrein, on the 6th day of June 1931', IOR: R/15/2/1828.

respected and well treated and supplied with money for his expenses and clothing. He used to accompany the former Shaikh of Umm al-Qaiwain and the new one when they were going on horse riding. He and his companions broke into the box of the shaikh's brother and stole some money and clothing. The shaikh sent the letter to the Political Agent and asked that justice be administered in the case of the runaway slaves.⁶²

On 25th November, 1939, the slave named Sangoor bin Nakwala, a Zanzibari aged 45, from Dubai, asked for manumission at the Political Agency in Muscat. He explained that his master Mohammad bin Mur troubled him very much and used to give him hard work of which he got tired. He ran from Dubai about a year before and came to Sohar from where he reached Muscat. On enquiry it turned out that his master Muhammad had died many years ago and the widow of his master manumitted him about 15 years ago. He used to go to diving without any molestation.⁶³

In October 1937, a slave named Fairoz bin Zaiyid from Ajman reported to the Political Agency in Bahrain and asked for manumission. He explained that he had run from his master because he was afraid of being sold to a new master who was known as a cruel man and tortured his slaves. On enquiries made by the Political Agent it turned out that the applicant escaped from his master because when he was in the diving, he committed a vile act on the boat and was afraid of being punished.⁶⁴

On the same day a slave man called Faraj bin Zahid from Sharjah submitted the application and indicated on the same reason of his running away from his master. The Political Agent admitted that the slave did not show signs of ill-treatment and made some enquiries about him. The information obtained showed that the slave remained in the service of a woman who sent him for diving every year with various *nakhudas*. During the last season he ran away after he had taken an advance of 40 rupees. His mistress alleged that he was indebted for a sum of 440 rupees on account of diving.⁶⁵

⁶² 'From Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Secretary to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, 23rd July 1931', IOR: R/15/2/1828.

⁶³ 'Translation of a letter No. 94 dated 11th February 1940 from the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/2/1828.

⁶⁴ 'Statement of slave Fairoz bin Zaiyid, aged about 50 years, recorded on the 20th October 1937', IOR: R/15/1/127 vol. 173, 1851/52.

⁶⁵ 'Statement of slave Faraj bin Zahid, aged about 40 years, recorded on the 20th October 1937', IOR: R/15/1/127 vol. 173, 1851/52.

On 6th March, 1935, a Baluchi from Sharjah, named Pirok, came to Muscat and asked for a manumission certificate. He moved from Jask to Sharjah with his family to earn his livelihood and was a diver. He claimed that his son was kidnapped when he went to the pearl fisheries and begged the Agency to help him in releasing his son. He needed the certificate for himself to be sure that he would not be enslaved.⁶⁶ The case was sent to Sharjah for further investigation. The enquiries made there showed the man gave his son as security for a debt in Ajman to a Baluchi who took the boy with him to Makran. Later the boy was brought back by a servant of the Baluchi who announced that the boy would be sold unless the money for which he had been given as security was paid. Eventually, Pirok succeeded in inducing one of the shaikhs of the ruling family in Sharjah to pay 87 rupees for the boy.⁶⁷

At the beginning of October 1949, a man of African origin who was a born slave made a statement at the Political Agency in Muscat. He claimed to have been maltreated and beaten for no reason by his master. He requested to favour him with a manumission certificate to enable him to enjoy the rest of his life in freedom.⁶⁸ Shortly after his statement was made, his master complained against him and another slave, who also applied for a manumission certificate, to the Sharia Court reporting that he had stolen 2 rifles, 2 belts, some gold and some cash. On being questioned the accused denied the charge so the complainant was instructed to produce evidence in support of his allegations. He asked for time to summon his witnesses, which was granted and as there was a danger of the accused absconding the two slaves were detained in custody. Three days later, they admitted to having stolen the weapons and said they had pawned one of them with a certain individual in Muscat. Their story was investigated and the rifle recovered by the owner on payment to the pawnbroker of 10 dollars.⁶⁹ The accused were then convicted on their own confession. The Political Agent had considerable discussion with the Minister

⁶⁶ 'Statement of Pirok son of Darak Baluch born at Yakdar in Jask aged about 40 years. Recorded on 6th March 1935', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

⁶⁷ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Resident at Bushire, 3rd June 1936', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

⁶⁸ 'Statement of Zaid bin Marzooq, age about 30 years recorded at British Consulate, Muscat', IOR: R/15/6/416 13/1.

⁶⁹ 'Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muscat, 5th November, 1949', IOR: R/15/6/416 13/1.

of Foreign Affairs to ensure that proper enquiry was made, and that this was not in fact a conspiracy on the part of the owner and a lower court. The Agent sent for a brother of the petitioner, who eventually admitted that his brother had brought away one gun of his owner. The petitioner was, nevertheless, granted the manumission certificate because the policy of the British was that nothing could affect a human being's desire to be free.⁷⁰

In January 1938, a statement made by Bilal bin Fairuz, a slave from Abu Dhabi, was submitted to the Residency Agent in Sharjah. Another statement made by his wife Idah bint Fairuz was attached. We read in it:

My name is Bilal bin Fairuz. My age is about 30 years. I was born at Abu Dhabi in the house of my master Isma'il al Bakir, an Iranian resident of Abu Dhabi. 20 years ago my master Ismai'l transferred me to Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ghanim, a native of Abu Dhabi in lieu of a certain debt which the former owed the latter. I remained in the service of my master Abdullah who got me married to Isah, a female slave of Ahmad Abul Abd. My master Abdullah used to send me to diving every year. I was always receiving gross ill-treatment at his hand and he was not providing me with clothing. My wife Idah and myself ran away from Abu Dhabi and arrived in Dubai three days ago. I have come now to the British Agency to request that I may be free from slavery.⁷¹

The wife of the man Idah bint Fairuz also complained of the cruelty of her master who forced her to serve him even when she was sick and gave her hard work.⁷² At the same time the Residency Agent received a letter from the ruler of Abu Dhabi in which he was saying that these slaves stole gold ornaments from their masters and ran away. Bilal and Idah denied all the charges made against them and demanded proof, alleging that their masters made this accusation against them in order to be able to take them back. The Residency Agent personally was not convinced that these two slaves

⁷⁰ 'Manumission of slaves Obaid bin Mohammed and Zaid bin Marzooq, British Consulate, Muscat, November 7, 1949', IOR: R/15/6/416 13/1.

⁷¹ 'Translation of the statement made by slave Bilal bin Fairuz born at Abu Dhabi, aged about 30 years, recorded at Shargah on the 3rd January 1938', IOR: R/15/1/210 5/168 VI.

⁷² 'Translation of statement made by slave woman Idah bint Fairuz, born at Dubai, aged about 40 years, recorded at Shargah on the 3rd January 1938', IOR: R/15/1/210 5/168 VI.

had committed theft but further examination proved that golden ornaments were stolen by Bilal and Idah and sold to a broker. When the hut of both slaves was inspected, a sum of money was found. Their guilt was established and the Agent requested the ruler of Sharjah to detain them with him until the certificates of manumission were received from Bushire. Afterward the case was transmitted to the court.⁷³

⁷³ 'Translation of letter No. 54 dated 15th January 1938 from the Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/1/210 5/168 VI.

Chapter II: The slaves

1. Origins

There were two principal groups of slaves on the Arabian coast: imported ones and those born there. 522 slaves out of 949 who submitted statements declared to be Africans and they were the most numerous among applicants, but only 121 of them were born in East Africa ('Swahil', East Africa and Zanzibar), and 6 in Abyssinia. The others were born in different part of the Arabian Peninsula and Persia. The majority of these people was born in the towns of the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf and in Oman. They were usually given slave wives by their masters on reaching the age of puberty, and thus had for generations perhaps been bound with the same families with whom, therefore, their relationship was often not without personal sentiment. These slaves were riveted to their particular tribe or village by ties of children and wife, or mother or father, ties which made it unlikely for them to desire any change of their condition, especially as they had never known the state of freedom. Their origins went back to different places in East Africa, Abyssinia, the Sudan, and West Africa. Africans from East Africa had been free people and were kidnapped and brought to the Persian Gulf as slaves. A small group of applicants was born in Yemen. They had been either free people kidnapped and enslaved or ex-slaves of African origin manumitted by their masters for religious reasons and kidnapped or re-enslaved by the heirs of their late masters.

There were 37 applicants who claimed to be Abyssinians and the majority of them was born in different places in Abyssinia, including Addis Ababa. One of them stated:

Statement of Othman bin Jarka, aged about 25 years, born in Addisababa, Abyssinia, Shargah, 26th July 1938

I was born at Addisababa in Abyssinia. I am about 25 ears old. When I was about 12 years old I was kidnapped /.../ and brought from Addisababa to a place called Taqri in Aden. After four days I was taken in a boat to Midi where we reached after about 7 days. After my arrival at Midi, the man who kidnapped me from my country sold me to another man of Midi named Aman. /.../ I remained in his service for about a month and after that my master Aman sold me to Ibrahim. /.../ Ibrahim brought me from Midi on camel to Hasa. The journey took nearly 20 days. At Hasa I remained in the house of Ibrahim 7 days and after that he sent me with certain cameleers whose names I do not know to Qatar. In about 5 days we reached Qatar from Hasa. When I arrived at Qatar, the cameleers sold me to Hamad bin Muhammad of Liwah. My master Hamid took me from Qatar to Liwah. I served him 4 years and then my master took me to Abu Dhabi and mortgaged me to a woman of that place named Maryam bint Muhammad. I remained in her service for about 3 years. As my master was unable to redeem me from the woman Maryam bint Muhammad, the latter sent me from Abu Dhabi to Dubai with a Bedouin named Sa'id bin Sikan who sold me to Khamis bin Rashid of Dubai. I served my master for about 4 years during which period he used to send me for diving. This year I fell sick after summer Quffal but since the last two days he was pressing me to go for diving. I, therefore ran away.¹

However, the majority was composed of slaves born in the Gulf. They were usually of slave parents, and were brought up in the masters' houses, like a man named Khamis bin Anbar, who made a statement on 18th January, 1932, at the Political Agency in Bahrain.

I was born at Sharjah, my parents are slaves of one Ahmad bin Darwish of Sharjah in whose house I was born. I have been brought up in his house and serving my above mentioned master together with my parents and brothers, but finding it impossible for me to serve my master any longer on account of his cruelty and ill treatment, I have managed to escape from him. I fled away to Bar Makran some two years back and from there I went to Hinjam after which I have come to Bahrain some

¹ IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

two months ago. I have now come to the Agency so that I may get a Manumission certificate to lead a free life.²

Interior Oman sent its own slaves to the Trucial Coast and to Batinah, because of drought and a diminishing capacity to support its old population. The territory was derelict and poverty stricken. General desiccation made a half of its date groves out of cultivation or had a similar effect by the impoverishment of the harvest, and driven a third of its population abroad. Zanzibar and the Trucial Coast have been the chief absorbers, Batinah a weak third. It were not only Batinah and Interior Oman but also the Ja'alan which were to minister to the needs of the pearl fisheries. Here the slaves were Africans or Abyssinians, a trickle said to come by sea to Aija or by the overland route from Jazir, mostly from Myculla or Shihr.

Some African slaves, especially from Somaliland, were kidnapped at the Batinah coast, when they were looking for job. They used to leave their native place in order to earn their own livelihood.

Statement of Ali bin Muhammad Somali, born at Allayah, in Somaliland, aged about 45, recorded at Sharjah on the 18th September 1938

Two years ago I left my native place in order to work for earning my own livelihood. Proceeded to Aden, Mukalla, Muscat and Batinah. From Batinah I went to a village called Jimi of Braimi. One day while I was proceeding from Jimi to another town in Braimi named Hamasah, I was kidnapped by certain Bedouins and taken to Abu Dhabi. I was sold at Abu Dhabi /.../.³

People were kidnapped when they were on their way to Mecca on their pilgrimage, as shown by the following statement of a Muslim from India:

11 months ago I left my town Ajmere with the intention of going on pilgrimage. I travelled by foot and went to Sind where I met a Sindi boy named Safar aged about 16. He joined me on going to Haj and we travelled together till we arrived at Gwadur where a Baluchi gave us free passage to Muscat. We arrived at Muscat and thence we traveled by land to Dubai. Owing to winter season we stayed five months at

² 'Statement of slave Khamis bin Anbar, aged about 20 years recorded in the Political Agency Bahrain on the 18th January 1932', IOR: R/15/2/1825.

³ IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

Dubai where we were earning our livelihood by begging at the doors of the Arabs' houses. We met a Baluchi who said that he had a boat by which he could take us to Kuwait. /.../ He embarked us on a boat which left at night time. In the morning we did neither see the Baluchi who was with us nor his friend who accompanied us to the boat. After two days we arrived at Abu Dhabi where we disembarked and kept with a Persian who knew to speak Hindustani. /.../ He informed us that we had been imported for sale /.../.⁴

Slaves born in Hijaz and Yemen were kidnapped when they were children by Bedouins and brought via Mecca and Medina to Hasa with pilgrims or more frequently by slave brokers. Generally, they recalled the names of their kidnappers even if they were small at the moment of kidnapping. Especially mothers recalled the names of the buyers of their children. There had been a long chain of owners before they were brought to the Gulf.

There was a limited influx of Armenian and Georgian girls who were imported to the Gulf for marriage purposes. In 1928, there were about 60 white young female slaves in Kuwait and a traffic of those girls still existed in spite of the proclamation issued on 14th September, 1924, by the Shaikh of Kuwait to the effect that the traffic in Armenian girls was prohibited within the boundaries of Kuwait as they were free born and it was unlawful to enslave them. A lady of the American Mission individually inspected 16 girls whose names were given to the shaikh but none of them wished to be rescued or even acknowledged that she was or had been a Christian. The case caused great excitement in the town, particularly when 4 similar girls were 'rescued' in Bahrain, and sent to Basrah against their will – a fifth one resisting so strenuously that she had to be left behind in Bahrain.⁵

People were brought to the Gulf from so distant countries as India. In November 1925, a boy named Safar bin Muhammad from Shahwar near Minab was kidnapped and recovered by the Residency Agent in Sharjah. In January 1926, the case of Ali bin Abbas form Kanuru near Minab was reported to the Agent at Sharjah. This man was kidnapped in Minab by 5 men from Oman and brought to Sharjah. Finally, he was recovered and sent home. In March

⁴ 'Statement made by Nawazi Miyabi Chotomia, an inhabitant of Ajmere, India, aged about 31 years, recorded on 28th April 1928', IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

⁵ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Political Secretary to H.E. The High Commissioner, Kuwait, 13th May 1921', IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

1926, the Police Office in Karachi reported that a man named Musa bin Haidar, aged 14, was kidnapped from this city and finally sold to a pearl merchant in Dubai. The Residency Agent in Sharjah tried to recover him but failed. In November 1926, Mubarak bin Ramazan from Bint, about 20 years, was kidnapped and brought to Sharjah, where he was recovered by the Agent and handed over to his brother who came to the Gulf looking for him.⁶ In November 1926, the Hindus in Dubai found two Hindu boys in Dubai, named Moti son of Garaof of Lucknow, aged 17, and Shankar son of Shamrao of Pona, aged 15, kidnapped from Karachi. The boys were handed over to the Residency Agent in Sharjah, and eventually sent by the sloop *Lawrence* to Bombay in January 1927. Furthermore 5 more Indian boys were recovered between November 1926 and May 1928.⁷ In March 1927, the Commissioner of Police in Sind reported about 2 boys between 12 and 18 who were kidnapped and brought to the Persian Gulf. In February 1927, the Residency Agent in Sharjah was asked by some people from Minab to recover and hand them over their 2 relatives kidnapped and purchased by residents of Dubai. One of those two kidnapped was purchased as a gift for the ruler of Abu Dhabi and was released after the case was reported to the Residency Agent in Sharjah.⁸

On 23rd November, 1926, 7 of the principal Hindus of Dubai made a petition to the Political Resident and Consul General for Bushire in which they brought to his notice that some slave brokers were carrying on trade in boys and girls through their Dubai agents. They also informed the Political Resident that Indian boys and girls were being brought and sold through Baluchi (Makrani) agents. As the names of these people were indicated, the Public Prosecutor in Karachi formulated his allegation and presented the case to the Court of the Judicial Commissioner of Sind. The principal witness was Shanker Shamrao, an Indian boy who was captured by the mentioned brokers and recovered by the Resident Agent in Sharjah. He stated in court that the broker from Dubai, in whose house he was confined, traded in boys and girls. He further stated that in Dubai, where he was made to work as a pearl diver,

⁶ 'Statements of the cases of slaves imported to the Trucial or Batineh Coast by sea and their manumission', IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

⁷ 'Memorandum of cases of slavery in the Persian Gulf brought to notice from November 1926 to May 1928', IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

⁸ 'From Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, at Bushire', Sharjah, 9th March 1927, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

there were 1,000 up to 1,500 other slaves employed on the same work and that he saw at least 100 slaves of whom 15 or 16 were from India. They had their feet cut to prevent them from running away.⁹

The second largest group of applicants were brought from the Persian coast, in particular from Makran. They were both Baluchis and Africans. The latter were slaves and the former were free people, but both were kidnapped by slave dealers. Poverty at all times compelled surplus emigration and on arrival, many of those in want became slaves automatically, by incurring debt obligations and mortgaging their future services. The capture and enslavement activities were carried out in Makran entirely by its inhabitants. There were two main routes of slave trade from Makran to the Arabian Peninsula, a northern one from Bungi and Sirik going chiefly to Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Khor Fakkan, and Dibah; a southern one from the Makran ports of Sirgan, Galag, Gurdim, Parag, Puzim and Kunarak to the Yal Saad ports, chiefly Khadhra, Wudam and Shirs. Estimates of slave numbers going through Yal Saad ports vary between 20 and 100 per annum. On arrival, their journey north was almost invariably by camel. The route followed the inside of Batinah date groves to Falaj Al Qubaiyal. Those destined for Buraimi were said to be taken by way of Wadi Jizzi, but the majority was bound for Dubai with a choice of roads over the mountains via Wadi Hatta or Wadi Qor or Wadi Ham. The last route was usually favoured to escape the attention of Dhahirah Bedouins, themselves not averse from securing a 'cheap' slave.

The slaves from Makran were also landed at Ghallah, which was the port of al-Fujairah, owned by an independent ruler.¹⁰ In June 1928, the Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, Persian Gulf Section, sent to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf in Bushire the names of persons engaged in slave traffic between the Makran coast and the Arab coast of the Persian Gulf. Those people were Baluchis, and procured other Baluchis, both men and women, and shipped them to Dubai where they handed them over to confederates for sale. They took rifles and ammunition in exchange for the slaves and on returning to the Persian coast, they sent them to the local rulers, the latter paying for the rifles and ammunition with cash and a further supply of

⁹ 'From the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Home Department, to the District Magistrate, Karachi', Karachi 23rd December 1927, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

¹⁰ 'Extract from Letter NO. 44.E/32. dated the 16th August 1928 from the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

slaves who were in turn shipped to Dubai. The slaves were embarked for Dubai from two places, namely Bris and Sirik. The local rulers borrowed money from traders for the purpose of financing their slave trading business, and the loans were to be repaid in cash and a supply of rifles and ammunition. It was known that the leading rulers – Dost Mohamed Khan of Bampur and Mirza Khan of Rudbar – were involved in slave trade. While the British sloops were engaged in Kuwait, the slave traders took the opportunity to ship their slaves across to Dubai as the chances of their being caught were small.¹¹

People from Makran were kidnapped from their houses. The kidnappers entered the houses at night, arrested the inhabitants, put them on camels and then embarked on a boat.

Statement made by Bibak daughter of Muhammad Rudbari aged about 27 years, from Gahur Mushkak under the rule of Mirza Khan of Rudbar, recorded at Shargah on the 21st January 1928

My husband Husain Shahwar and myself were sleeping at our home when we were suddenly attacked by 10 Baluchi camel-riders. They killed my husband and carried me and my daughter Jamilah off. /.../ They then took us to Muhsin bin Mubarak Baluchi who bartered us for a rifle and embarked us on boat and took us to Dubai.¹²

Girls from Makran were bought by slave masters of the Trucial Coast to get married to their slaves, both Africans and Baluchis, for reproduction.¹³ In the late 1920s slaves from Makran were transported in large groups. On 13th December, 1927, the Residency Agent in Sharjah was informed that a *boom* (large boat) belonging to the Baluchis carrying Baluchi boys and girls for sale had anchored between Hamriyyah and Umm al-Qaiwain. He at once left Sharjah by his motor boat with a view to seize the boat and went to Ajman, Hamriyyah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ras al-Khaimah but did not trace any boat.¹⁴

¹¹ 'From the Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, Persian Gulf Section, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire', Karachi, 7th June 1928, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

¹² IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

¹³ 'Statement made by Halimah bint Muhamad, aged about 30 years. Recorded at Sharjah on 31st August 1939', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

¹⁴ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire', 4th February 1928, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

Baluchi people were kidnapped from the Batinah coast where they used to live for many years as free labourers. In December 1927, a man arrived to the Agency in Muscat and made the following statement:

Statement of Sulaiman bin Ali aged about 30 and his wife Zarknatoon, Muscat, 20th December 1927

Our ancestors (forefathers) came from Jask and settled in Batina. We were born in Batina /.../. We reside at Falaj al Qubail, near Sohar. But we do not stay in one place and always go from place to place to earn our livelihood. We had a son named Matoo, aged about 9 years. One day our son went out to play in Wadi Khasarah. He did not return. He was stolen by the Beduins. This happened on the 8th of Id al Kabir (3 years ago). We searched for our son. We went to Khan Shargah and found our son with Mesah bint Anad. We identified our son. We did not give an alarm. We went to the Residency Agent, Shargah, and asked him to release our son. He replied that we should bring a letter from the Balyuz (Political Resident). We have now come here and request H.B.M's Consul, Muscat to help us in the recovery of our son.¹⁵

There is no doubt that among children kidnapped in Abyssinia there were also Christians. They were converted into Islam and their names were changed into Islamic ones. In September 1932, the Political Agent in Bahrain reported on an individual who was allowed to land in Bahrain, having arrived by launch from Doha in Qatar. This man gave the name of Masud bin Ali, but on enquiry he stated that he was Faraj Dustah, a native of Abyssinia, subject of the ruler of Addis Ababa, and was a Christian. He also stated that he had been a slave, and had been sold at Doha, but had escaped.¹⁶ His statement was as follows:

Statement of slave Masud bin Ali aged about 35 years, 3rd of September, 1932

I was born in Addis Ababa. In my boyhood, while once I was out in the fields grazing cows I was kidnapped by some unknown Nejdīs. They brought me straight to Doha in Qatar and sold to one Badr bin Rasid. I remained in his service about 5 years. Later on I was sold to one Ali bin Rashid of Wakrah (Qatar) and I served him for about four years.

¹⁵ IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

¹⁶ 'The Passport Office, Bahrain, to the Political Agent, Bahrain, Memorandum', 1st September 1932, IOR: R/15/2/1825.

I used to go for diving every season and earn for my last mentioned master. He was a cruel man and I was not given anything from my earning. Some time afterwards I requested him to sell me to some other slave dealer who may be kind to me but of no use. I repeated the same request sometime afterwards and I was beaten mercilessly for this. I managed to escape in a sailing boat and came to Bahrain.¹⁷

Slaves from Yemen were brought to the Gulf via Central Arabia.

Statement of slave Faraj bin Muhammad aged about 25 years, recorded at the Political Agency, Bahrain on the 12th of July 1933
I was born in Zabid (Yaman). My parents were free people. I left Zabid for Hudaidah searching for work. On one day, while I was walking outside Hudaidah, a band of Yamani robbers kidnapped me and took me to Midi on Yaman coast. At Midi, they sold me to one Muhammad bin Ali Al Aqsam of Abu Arish. I remained with him for one month. Later on he sold me at Sabia to one Abdul Aziz bin Duhaime of Shaqra in Najd, who took me with him to Mecca. I remained with him for about four months. He then sold me to one Muhammad Ali Al Qarrah who at once sold me to my present master Muhammad bin Nasir Al Khalifah who took me to Ain Dar within Hasa Territory. I used to go for diving and earn for my master. He took all my earnings and did not give me anything. He was not giving me even sufficient food and clothing.¹⁸

People of African origin kidnapped in Yemen and Tihama and put to slavery were generally of slave parents, but some of them were of free parents – ex-slaves, manumitted by the masters. Arabs kidnapped in these countries were children of free parents.

Statement of slave Masood bin Said aged about 38, 21st day of September 1932

I was born in Tihama (Hedjaz). My parents were free people. In my boyhood I used to work in our garden in Tihama. Once a number of slave dealers kidnapped me from our garden and took me to a village in the north called Wadi al Barzah in the Hedjaz territory. I was sold there to some people whose names I do not know. I remained with them for five months. Later I was sold to some Bedouins who soon after sold me

¹⁷ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

¹⁸ IOR: R/15/2/1828.

to some others. I was brought to Hasa and sold to Shaikh Abdulla bin Jilwi, Amir of Hasa, by those masters. I remained in his service about 17 years. He set me free 20 days ago.¹⁹

Similarly, people, generally kids, kidnapped by the Bedouins in the Mecca region were either of slave or free parents.

Statement of slave Falih bin Thunayyan aged about 35 years, 15th of November 1932

I was born in Mecca. My parents were slaves. When I was of age I went to Madina with my masters. They sold me there to some other masters whose names I do not remember now. After spending a considerable time in Madina, I was brought to Doha (Qatar) and sold to Khalifah bin Jasim Al-Thani. I remained with him about one year. Then he sold me to Thunayyan bin Essa, my last master. I used to go for diving and earn for him but he was not giving me anything out of my earnings. He even told my Nakhuda not to hand over my earnings to me. For want of sufficient food and clothing occasionally I had to go half fed and half clothed. During the winter I was sent by my master outside the town to collect firewood for him. I also used to make coal for him very often. I managed to escape from him.²⁰

Some free people from Hijaz were captured during the battle for this region in the late 1920s and enslaved.

Statement of slave Suroor bin Ali aged about 25 years, 13th of December 1932

My birthplace is Mecca. My parents were free people. While I was about 15 years old, I was kidnapped by some Bedouins during the fall of Tayef in the hands of Ibn Saud and brought to Hasa for sale. In a short time I was sold to one Muhammad bin Na'if, a slave dealer, who subsequently sold me to one Muhammad bin Rashid An-Niimi of Bahrain. He took me to Qatar with him and I remained in his service in Qatar for five years.²¹

Among those who were brought from Hijaz to the Gulf in consequence of the wars there were some soldiers of the defeated parties.

¹⁹ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem.

Statement of slave Abdullah bin Hasan, aged about 30 years, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, 30th May 1936

I was born in a village named Nasbah in Hedjaz. My father was a slave but my mother was a free women. When I was about 15 years old, I was taken to Mecca together with a number of others and recruited in the army which the Sherif mobilised against Ibn Saud during the Turubash fighting. We marched towards Turubah but we were defeated. Consequently I was captured by the Akhwan, taken to Riyadh and handed over to King Ibn Sa'ud. I was immediately sold to one Abdullah bin Aifan, a Najdi of Shaqrah who brought me to Hasa and then to Dammam and sold to Rashid bin Sa'id Dosiri. I have since been in the service of my master. I used to go for diving and earn for him.²²

Slaves brought from Oman were generally of African origin and of slave parents.

Statement of slave Zayed bin Salmin aged about 38 years, 13th of December 1932

My birth place is Batina (Oman). My parents were slaves. When I was a child my mother and myself were sold to one Ahmad bin Salih who took us both to Qatar. Since that time I started serving my master. He engaged me as a Nakhoda in one of his boat. I used to take the boat to the diving banks every season and in the winter time I used to sail for Basra, Kuwait etc., carrying load and cargo.²³

Slaves from Zanzibar were usually kidnapped and turned into slavery.

Statement of slave Salim bin Khamis aged about 40 years recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain

I was born in Zanzibar. In my early age I was kidnapped by some unknown slave dealers, who brought me to Dubai. At Dubai I was sold to Shaikh Majid bin Thani whom I served for a period of about twelve years. Shaikh Majid afterwards sold me to one Ali bin Muhammad bin Misnad of Khor in Qatar. I served him for seven years and then he transferred me to one Ahmad Al Manni, whom I had to accompany to Abu Dhaloof on Qatar coast.²⁴

As slave trade in Zanzibar was forbidden, sometimes the people of Zanzibar were proposed to serve at the Batinah coast and be paid as servants. When

²² IOR: R/15/2/1826.

²³ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

²⁴ Ibidem.

they arrived they were brought to Burami and sold to the inhabitants of the Trucial Coast. We read in the statement of an Abyssinian who lived in Zanzibar and whose father belonged to the Sultan of Zanzibar:

One /.../ of Sur who was then in Zanzibar, settled with me to pay me 30 rupees per month and take me in his service as a servant. I accepted the same and followed him on his journey. When we arrived in Sur, he remained there for about 4 months and then he took me to Batina where he wished to sell me but nobody offered to buy me for they took me to be a Somali, so Thabit took me to Dubai where he sold me /.../.²⁵

People of Sudanese origin were kidnapped sometimes in unusual circumstances.

Statement of slave Abdullah Al Utaibi aged about 40 years, 12 day of July 1933

I was born at Khartum. When a child, I was kidnapped by the Turkish Army which was then in Egypt. I was taken to Dangala, where I was sold to one Hajji Ahmad Al Maghribi. I was absconded from him and went to Darab in Abyssinia where I remained for two years. Some Bedouins of the Bishareyah tribe in Sudan kidnapped me and took me to Jeddah where they sold me to one Abdullah bin Wasil. I remained in his service for one year. Afterwards he sold me to one Mutairi Bedouin with whom I remained for six months. When I was accompanying my master in the desert at the time of the Sherif, I was kidnapped by 'Utaibah Bedouins. They sold me to one Abdullah Izzir of Sha'arah (Najd), with whom I remained for two months. Then he took me to Hota and sold me to one Nasir bin Rashaid. I remained three months with him, after which he took me to Qatar and sold me to one Amer bin Khalfan with whom I remained for two years. Then I was sold to Ali bin Thani who took me to Qatar.²⁶

Another slave, named Juma, native of Zanzibar and 26 years of age, stated that he served as an orderly to a captain of British Forces against Germans in East Africans and showed a mark of wound on his leg obtained at that time. After the war he was a cook-boy to the British Political Officer

²⁵ 'Copy of statement made by Sultan bin Aman, Abyssinian, of Zanzibar at the Consulate at Muscat on 22nd July 1924', IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

²⁶ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

of Killifi but was discharged a few weeks before the date of capture. He was kidnapped five years before from Zanzibar when taking passage to Mombasa on a *dhow* (a boat) to get work there. The *dhow* never called at Mombasa but sailed to Dubai where he was sold to a man named Hamid. He requested repatriation.²⁷

Individual slaves were brought from so distant countries as Syria. In 1937, a man reported to the Political Agency in Bahrain and stated that he was born in Damascus of free parents. His father died when he was 2 years old and his mother died 2 years later. He was employed as a servant by an Egyptian whose name he did not recollect, with whom he remained one year. Then he was sold to a Hijazi Bedouin who took him to Khurmah in Hijaz only to sell him to a slave trader – who, after 4 months, took him to Hasa and sold to another slave trader. This latter master took him to Qatar with other 25 male and female slaves and sold him to a Najdi provision merchant in Dohah. He kept him one year and then sold to one Muhammad bin Muhammad al Naimi with whom he remained 2 years. Then he died and his brother took him to a coastal port in Qatar and sold at a public auction to a Qatar subject whom he had been serving for the last 17 years. His last master used to send him for diving. The story clearly indicated that in the 1920s there were public auctions of slaves in Qatar.²⁸

Slaves sometimes were sold by other slaves. In August 1938, a female slave named Hajoor was accused of kidnapping a boy in Sharjah. Enquiries made by the Residency Agent in Sharjah proved that the Bani Qatab tribesman was a medium between the slave Hajoor and one of the Bedouins to whom the boy was sold. The Shaikh of Dubai summoned this tribesman and he admitted that he had acted as a medium and that a Bedouin bought the boy for 140 rupees. This tribesman undertook to restore the boy if the sum of 170 rupees was paid to him. Eventually, the boy was found at a place called Saji'ah, about 100 miles south of Sharjah, and handed over to the messenger of the shaikh. Hajoor, when questioned by the shaikh, did not admit her crime in spite of the recovery of 140 rupees.²⁹

²⁷ 'Summaries of declarations of refugee slaves', IOR: R/15/1/209 5/168 V.

²⁸ 'Statement of slave Faraj bin Ibrahim, aged 30 years, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 25th November 1937', IOR: R/15/2/1827.

²⁹ 'Extract from Shargah News Report No. 17 for period from 1st to 15th September 1938', IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

There were cases when a free-born person, as a rule a woman of African origin, was sold by the family members. In 1933, a woman named Ruwayyah bint Tanaf bin Hadeed of Braimi made the following statement:

Statement made by Ruwayyah bint Tanaf bin Hadeed of Braimi aged about 35 years. Recorded on 13th January 1933

My parents are originally from Braimi and free born persons. My father died 4 years ago. My mother named Ayshah is still alive in Braimi. I was born at Braimi. I have 5 brothers, namely Jumah, Saif, Khamis, Abaid and Salim. I married my cousin Nasib bin Jumah. One year after my marriage when my husband was away my brothers took me by force to Shargah where they sold me to one Meira bint Fatimah. I stayed about 9 years with her during which period she was always ill treating me.³⁰

2. Slaves' position

Slaves at the Arabian coast were divided into three categories: (a) those imported from interior of the Arabian Peninsula; (b) those imported from Makran; (c) those who were born at the coast.

In the 1920s slaves for sale in the markets of Kuwait were imported by Najdis and kept in the shops of local merchants. People who were desirous of purchasing slaves visited such shops and did the bargaining there. In 1928, the chief merchants and agents for slave-traffic were Bin Mawwash, Muhammad bin Shalfan and his brother Abdullah. They were also partners of Mulla Salih, secretary to the ruler of Kuwait. When Ibn Saud occupied Hijaz and the Ikhwan looted al-Ta'if, many of the captured slaves were imported to Kuwait for sale. They were sent to local slave-brokers, but as the latter had no room to accommodate a large number of slaves, they made small rooms in the shape of boxes to keep them in. Among the slaves in Kuwait there were many who were kidnapped from Yemen from their free parents. There were also some Armenian and Georgian girls who were imported to Kuwait as slaves. Such girls, though they were purchased like slaves, were taken for marriage purposes and got better treatment. In 1928, there were about 60 white girl slaves. Whenever the people of Kuwait wanted to purchase a white slave they considered the cost of that girl as a dowry. This was done to avoid any charge brought against them by the British and gave them the chance of getting

³⁰ IOR: R/15/1/218 5/190 IV.

their money back if the slave woman did not want to remain with her master. Many white girls were brought to Kuwait from Iraqi Kurdistan by Kurdish merchants who bribed the custom officials at the borders between Iraq and Kuwait and sold the girls to Kuwaiti slave-brokers.³¹

The Kuwaiti people purchased slaves for serving in their houses but not for trade. However, when such slaves were not on good terms with their masters they were sent back to the market for sale. If they could not get good prices in the town, they were sent to Oman or Qatar for sale. Slaves purchased by the shaikhs enjoyed better life. They were married to slave women or men and were properly fed and clothed. Such slaves, after serving their masters for a few years, were usually given their freedom to go out and work for themselves. But though they were given this sort of freedom they could not refuse to comply with any orders which their masters might issue to them. Slaves purchased by the shaikhs were never sent back to the market for sale except for rare cases when the servant was disobedient and obstinate. In Kuwait, slaves in the service of the merchants who served their masters properly were also given their freedom. Some of the Kuwaiti merchants were considered to be the best masters and their servants enjoyed better treatment. In 1928, among them was Hamad al-Khalid, who supplied his ex-slaves with free houses and furniture. Such a house became the property of the slave and his children. In Kuwait, free slaves who on account of sickness or disability were not able to maintain their family were given from the charity funds of their masters a yearly or a monthly allowance. Many slaves were given as gifts to the ruling families of the seashore towns by the shaikhs of nomadic tribes of Arabia. Such slaves were not sold but were driven out from the rulers' houses when they proved to be useless or misbehaved. Slaves born at the master's house from a slave father or mother were called *mawalid*. They got better treatment from the masters. Their children were fed and brought up with the children of their masters, and in many cases they were given the same education as their masters' children.³²

In 1928, it was estimated that there were about 2,200 slaves in Kuwait besides 2,000 who had been given their freedom. Their number was gradually decreasing, as there was no regular supply. Occasionally a man who went on

³¹ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Political Secretary to H.E. The High Commissioner, Kuwait 13th May 1921', IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

³² 'Sayyid Abdul Razzaq's Note on slavery at Kuwait', the 4th August 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

the pilgrimage brought back a slave with him for his own use; and Najdis brought in an odd slave from time to time. Those were barely sufficient to keep up the numbers, however, as, in addition to wastage by death, it was not an infrequent occurrence for a slave belonging to one of the richer families to be freed with his family as a reward for faithful services. In 1928, a good slave, whether man or woman, was worth from 1,000 to 1,500 rupees and a child from 800 to 1,000 rupees. Very much higher prices were to be obtained for a strong slave in Qatar, and it was quite common for slaves from Kuwait to be smuggled there for sale.³³

In 1936, Kuwait's population, including villages and the Bedouin population, was approximately 70,000. Besides Arabs and Bedouins, some 8,000 people were of Persian origin, whose forefathers migrated to Kuwait during the 19th century. In 1930, the number of slaves was estimated at 2,000, and in 1936 it was much smaller.³⁴

In 1936, the estimated population of Bahrain was 120,000, including 90,000 of Shi'is (Baharinah and Persians) and 30,000 of Sunnis. The number of the population of Trucial Coast was 80,000 and they were almost entirely Arabs. The principal industries of Bahrain was pearling, date growing, fishing, boat building, and oil development. In the case of the Trucial Coast it was pearling and fishing. Slavery in Bahrain was abolished as the result of the treaties made between the Shaikh of Bahrain and the British Government in 1847, 1856 and 1861. The number of slaves in the Trucial Coast was estimated as 7,000. Most of them were of African or Arab-African descent. A few were pure Yemeni. There was no system of making a man a slave for debt or for non-payment of blood money. In the interior of the Trucial Coast a man who had to pay blood-money made a collection from his tribe to enable him to do so, but this debt by no means involved him in slavery. The African slaves were for the most part Muslims, at least outwardly. A little witchcraft was sometimes practised, usually by Negresses. During winter some slaves on the Trucial Coast were employed in plantations, fisheries and as camel-drivers and herdsmen of cattle. Slaves were not employed as porters or labourers in the towns. Many of them were, however, allowed to do any work that they could find in order to get clothes and pocket-money, but they were fed by their masters. The Political Agent in Bahrain admitted that slaves usually compared

³³ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Kuwait', 29th September 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

³⁴ 'From Captain G.S.H. de Gaury, Political Agent, Kuwait, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire', 21st February 1936, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

favourably in better physical condition with free people of the same type. The real problem of emancipation of slaves was economic, and man's primary need was to get food and clothing. The Agent was of the opinion that a slave's problem was often that of ensuring his master keeping him (and so feeding him) rather than of attempting to obtain freedom which imposed the obligation of feeding himself. Work was not easy to get as employment depended on the pearl industry, which had suffered from deep depression.³⁵

In the Trucial Oman slaves were not sold in open market as this was prohibited according to the formal agreement between the British Government and the shaikhs of the Trucial Oman. The sales, however, were carried on privately between the inhabitants and not openly. There was no town on the Oman coast that could be indicated as notorious for the sale of slaves. The majority of new slaves were imported from Makran coast and Batinah and thence taken to Buraimi and Trucial Oman. The inhabitants of Batinah, subjects of the Sultan of Muscat, and the Baluchis of Makran, were imported secretly from Batinah and Makran to Buraimi and sold to the Bedouins there. The Bedouins imported one or two secretly and sold them to the inhabitants of the Trucial Oman.³⁶

The population of Muscat and Oman was estimated in 1936 as 500,000, consisting chiefly of Arabs, with about 5,000 Baluchis and 1,500 Negroes. The principal industry was date growing and export of dried fish. There were at least 1,000 slaves, 600 of them Africans, 300 persons of mixed African and Arab blood, and 100 Baluchis. Slaves were generally Muslims. Probably not more than 100 or so were imported from Africa, and the great majority of Baluchi slaves were imported from Persian Baluchistan. The others were born in Muscat and Oman. 300 were employed in plantations, 600 in fisheries, 100 as camel-drivers or as herdsmen of cattle. Slaves were not employed as porters or labourers in the towns. The Political Agent in Muscat admitted that the liberation on the death of the master was practiced but usually the liberated man was again enslaved by the heirs. Slaves, if liberated, could only endeavour to find work similar to what they were doing as slaves.³⁷

³⁵ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Resident, Bushire', No. C/78-20/, Bahrain, 16th February 1936, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

³⁶ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Bushire', 22nd August 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

³⁷ 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to British Consul, Bushire', C/28, 11th February 1936, IOR: R/15/6/414 13/1.

Slaves in these states fell into two categories: (a) household, (b) industrial. The first category was on the whole fortunately situated. It covered individuals employed as bodyguards to shaikhs, coffee-makers, and domestic servants. The lot of slaves in this category was generally far from hard and often compared favourably with that of free tribesman. The slaves were assured of their livelihood in the region where nature made this difficult to obtain, and were frequently attached by sentiment to the family in which they served. The second category included the date gardeners and the pearl fishers. The latter class was by far the most numerous since the whole of the Arabian coast to a large extent lived on the pearl trade, while considerable date groves were few in number. The condition of the industrial slaves was less satisfactory than that of the household slaves, but it did not compare unfavourably with that of the freemen. The free pearl-fishers enjoyed the fruit of their labors but had to support themselves between pearling seasons (i.e. for about two thirds of the year). The slaves' earnings went to their masters, but between seasons they were supported by their masters in comparative idleness.³⁸

In Kuwait, in 1936, it was estimated that only about 100 'slaves' were engaged in pearl-fishing, which was the principal industry of the town. Even these, however, were not sent in the capacity of slaves, but they went independently and kept any money they made from the sale of pearls on the same terms as other divers. In Bahrain, where slavery no longer was recognized, there existed a large and free community of the descendants of slaves who were frequently referred to as *abd* (slave) to distinguish them from the descendants of free men. It was often erroneously stated that Bahrain pearl-divers were slaves. The reason for that was that they were at one time practically in the position of slaves, since they were always in debt to the boat-captains (who cheated them of their just profits) and their debts were passed on to their children, who fell into the power of the captains. These abuses, however, were reformed, and the system of rules was laid down which ensured the independence of the divers. On the Trucial Coast and in Qatar, where slavery was still common in the 1930s, it was mainly 'industrial', since this desolate coast depended entirely on the pearl trade. The number of slaves employed in pearl-diving was not known, but was estimated at several hundred, and was thought to amount to about one third of the whole diving community. Both household and industrial slavery subsisted in Muscat.³⁹

³⁸ 'Slavery in the Gulf, 1 Jan 1930–18 Sep 1936', IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

The possession of slaves brought prestige and was considered a sign of well-being. In Najd the average was 2 slaves for every house of a wealthy person. Tribal chiefs kept slaves but the number differs according to the position of each chief. Eminent *amirs* (governors) like Ibn Jalawi of Hasa or the amir of Hail kept as many as 50 slaves for their domestic service.⁴⁰ In 1939, when the deep crisis in the pearl industry provoked a wave of slave-selling, it turned out that many *nakhudas* owned dozens of slaves. In May 1939, a man named Ahmad bin Khalaf of Abu Dhabi was disposing of his slaves by selling them to Qatar traders through brokers in Abu Dhabi. The Qataris came to Abu Dhabi to buy slaves, and after the transaction the slaves were shipped under dark in a sailing craft, which at once left for Qatar. This man owned about 200 slaves (men and women), which he had bought some years before.⁴¹

Statement made by Jumah bin Awadh, born in Pannuj, Mekran, aged about 40. Recorded on the 14th November 1939

My master used to send me to the diving banks for diving every year. He was taking all my earnings. I was living in my master's house and he was supplying me with my requirements. At the end of this diving season he turned me out of his house after taking all my earnings and refusing to give me anything. I have therefore come from Debai to Sharjah in order to take refuge at the Government House and beg to be released from slavery.⁴²

Some slaves stated that they were the slaves of local rulers. In January 1928, a slave reported at the Political Agency in Bahrain and alleged to be a slave of Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim al-Thani, ruler of Qatar. He served the shaikh for 7 years as a diver and when the *nakhuda* of the boat complained against him Shaikh Abdullah started to ill-treat him. He put him in irons and called him a guilty Negro and threatened to sell him into Oman. Two months later the shaikh released him but then changed his mind and sent for him. Abdullah refused to go to him and reported at the Agency.⁴³

⁴⁰ 'No. 198 of File A/2 V.O.', Bushire, 12th May 1934, IOR: R/15/2/1825.

⁴¹ 'Note made by the Interpreter of the Political Agency and Consulate, Muscat, on 30th May 1939', IOR: R/15/1/220 5/190 VI.

⁴² IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

⁴³ 'Statement recorded on the 19th January 1928, of Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, aged about 35 and alleged to be the slave of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jasim al-Thani, Ruler of Qatar', IOR: R/15/1/204 5/161 III.

Slave trade was very profitable. The following statement of a slave shows the amount of money the brokers and owners made on selling and re-selling him. It also shows that even Ibn Saud, king of Saudi Arabia was involved in the trading.

Statement of slave Bakhit bin Mubarak born at Bisha (South Hijaz) aged about 28 years, recorded in the Political Agency Bahrain on the 6th November 1937

I was born as a slave at Bisha. At the age of 12 years while I was playing with other youngsters, I was kidnapped by a relative of my masters who took me to Zahran and sold me to one Muhammad bin Saeed for 10 dollars. The latter took me to Tihamah where I was sold to one Eid, for 20 dollars. Eid took me to Khamis al Mukhwar (Thursday market of Mukhwar) where he sold me to a certain Saleh bin Maeedh for 45 dollars. The Saleh brought me back to Bishah where he sold me to a Nejdî called Abdullah bin Afan of Shaqrah for 100 dollars. Abdullah bin Aifan took me together with another 13 male and 16 female slaves to Riyadh where King Ibn Saud took three female slaves and two male slaves from amongst us. Then we left for Hasa where I was sold to Muhammad bin Saad al Mutawa for 500 dollars. All these transactions and the changing of masters took place within a period of seven months. Muhammad al Mutwawa who purchase me at Hasa brought me to Qatar where I was sold at Doha to my present masters Abdullah bin Rashid and Nasir bin Rashid with whom I stayed for 14 years. During the dispute between Bahrain and Qatar my masters emigrated to Bahrain with all their belongings and I came to Bahrain with them. I was always watching for an opportunity to come to the Agency and seek protection.⁴⁴

The next statement says that a slave was sold 6 times within 26 years of his life in slavery (between 1904–1930) and the total amount of money earned by the brokers and owners by the consecutive selling of him and his wife was 15,400 rupees, which was a huge sum of money.

Statement of slave Mubarak bin Yahya Yamani aged about 32 years recorded at the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 22nd April 1930

I was born in the town Ibb of Yaman. When I was about 7 years old, one Friday before prayer there took place a quarrel amongst our tribes and all inhabitants of the place ran away. I was one of those who took shelter

⁴⁴ IOR: R/15/2/1827.

under a hill in village named Iblain. There came some people of Sur who kidnapped about 6 boys and 3 girls. One Salim caught me, put me in a bag and took me with him to Aden. After remaining 10 days there he took me to Mokalla to the top of a hill and left me there my hands and legs bound. My original name was Mohamad bin Yahya, but they changed it to Mubarak. They warned me not to answer to my original name threatening to kill me if I revealed it. I remained 4 months on that hill in this hardship. Afterwards they brought me to a village Bu-Abali in Batna. I remained there with them two months, from there they brought me to Shargah and sold me to one Abdur Rahman Saffar for 1,500 rupees. This master was beating me and treating me harsh. I went to the late Abdul Latif, the British Agent in Shargah and complained against my master but he did not take notice but he returned me to the master. After 15 days again I went to Abdul Latif, the British Agent and complained. He told to my master to dispose me so my master handed me over to Bin Afsan Dalla for this. The dallal took me to Dubai and sold me to Saif bin Hamad Aqaidah for 1,700 rupees. This time I was 12 years old. My new master was taking me to diving banks. I was diving for him and he was taking all my earnings and would not give me enough food and wear. I went to Isa bin Abdul Latif, the British Agent in Shargah and narrated my grievances which did not appeal to him much. He took 100 rupees from my master and returned me to him. My master imprisoned me about 2 months, then sold me to Ahmad bin Ghalib for 2,000 rupees. I remained with him for 6 years. He got me married to a slave girl Zafoor. Afterwards he sold me with my wife to Ahmnad bin Bashir the cousin of Issa British Agent for 3,200 rupees. After remaining 9 years with him, he sold us to Mohammad bin Issa bin Dakhan for 4,000 rupees. We remained one year in his service. He in turn sold us to Abdull bin Yusuf, a merchant of Dubai for 3,000 rupees. We remained 4 years with this master. As he was also treating us cruelly, I seized the opportunity to run away and went to Dalmah in the craft of Nakhuda, one Ahmad bin Ghanim. My wife could not accompany me. She is in Dubai in our Master's house. It is about 8 days that I am here. Now I have come to the Agency to ask the favor to grant me a certificate so that I may live a free life.⁴⁵

The possession of a slave was an investment. He or she could be sold at any time with an excellent profit, or could yield an income employed as a labourer.

⁴⁵ IOR: R/15/1/205 5/161 IV.

About three years ago Salim bin Sa'id al Kanni died while his wife was my step-daughter, Kalthoom bint Khalifah. The estate which he left included two slaves, Harib and Anbar. His heirs were Kalthoom, Obaid al Akroot and a woman relative living in Sharjah. They offered Harib and Anbar for sale. I therefore bought Anbar for 190 rupees and his brother was purchased by Kalthoom for 170 rupees. I wanted to send Anbar for diving but he did not agree and he asked me to sell him and as I am a needy woman and in debt to others I sold him to a Bedouin known as Assam for the sum of 190 rupees /.../.⁴⁶

He or she could be sold when the situation of the owner was worsening.

Statement of slave Zayed bin Salmin aged about 38 years, 13th of December 1932

My birth place is Batina (Oman). My parents were slaves. When I was a child my mother and myself were sold to one Ahmad bin Salih who took us both to Qatar. Since that time I started serving my master. He engaged me as a Nakhoda in one of his boats. I used to take the boat to the diving banks every season and in the winter time I used to sail for Basra, Kuwait etc., carrying load and cargo. Formerly my master was very kind to me but recently he got cruel towards me through the instigation of his wife who dislikes me which led to the result that my master ceased giving me expense and sufficient clothing. Lately it has come to my ears that my master is going to sell me to some other master as he is on the edge of poverty. /.../ I absconded from him.⁴⁷

Slaves generally were transferred to other owners for a part of debts. Sometimes, they admitted to have debts of their own.

I was born in Mekran of free parents. When I was a small child I was kidnapped by certain Persian slave dealers while I was grazing cows and oxen. They took me to Batinah by a sailing boat together with a lot of other slaves /.../ They kidnapped me to one Abdullah who brought me to Bahrain and then to Qatar and sold me to my present master Khakifa bin Ghannam. I stayed at Qatar for 20 years and then my master shifted to Jubail and took me with him. It is now 15 years that I have been in Jubail in the service of my master. He used to take me for diving in his

⁴⁶ 'Statement made by Alia bint Isa bin Buti of Ras al-Khaima. recorded at Sharjah on 29th July 1941', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

⁴⁷ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

boat and take over my earnings without giving me anything. My master became indebted to a Bahrain nakhuda named Mubarak Bu Khammas and transferred me to him in lieu for a portion of the debt. I go for diving every year with this nakhuda. I own him 400 rupees on accounting of diving. Although I work for Mubarak Bu Khammas but I am still the slave of Khalifah bin Fgannam whom I serve when the diving season is over.⁴⁸

In the late 1930s the barter of slaves in partial liquidation of debts became more common because of the effects of the general trade depression. It was the more deplorable as it resulted in the separation of families and in the sale of young girls, mere children, as concubines. This traffic was difficult to detect as it was carried on surreptitiously and involved no increase in the given number of slaves. Moreover, it was frequently to the advantage of the individual slaves themselves to be transferred from a poor to a rich owner, who was able to give them better food and kept them in greater comfort. The fear of being sold and separated from the family was, however, the main reason of running away and requesting for a manumission certificate. On 26th March, 1934, the British sloop *Lupin* anchored at Khasab. Immediately two men reported on board and requested to be manumitted. The elder gave his name as Salfah bin Nubi and stated that he was the father of the other, Bilal, and that they both belonged to one Khalifa bin Mohamed bin Thany of Khasab. He claimed that they were being sent with others to Dubai in a *dhow* then lying off *Lupin*'s starboard quarter, and that he had younger son Sallum in that *dhow*. At the same time three other men came off from shore stating that they were also slaves wishing to be manumitted. The commanding officer sent an armed boat away to search all *dhow*s lying in the bay and five more slaves were found, including a woman named Zamzam bint Awadh. The woman had been manumitted by her master several years ago in Abu Dhabi and settled at Khasab. About a month before her master sent for her with the intention of selling her to some Bedouins. All the men were slaves of Mohammed bin Thany, a pearl merchant from Khasab. After his death they were inherited by his son Khalifa, who also took over a debt owed by his father to Mohammed bin Ahmed Delmoo, a pearl merchant of Dubai. Khalifa visited Dubai and came to an agreement with Mohammed that the slaves should be sent to Dubai in partial liquidation of his debt. The

⁴⁸ 'Statement of Sultan bin Abdullah, aged about 40, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 1st of November, 1937', IOR: R/15/2/1827.

slaves remained 6 days on board and then landed in Muscat where they were manumitted.⁴⁹

The common practice everywhere in the Gulf was to mortgage slaves, which practically amounted to selling them. It prevailed in the Trucial Coast shaikhdoms. The slave women Halimah bint Sarur from Sharjah, born at Addis Ababa, who applied for the certificate in August 1937, was mortgaged several times. Her first master mortgaged her to another one for 400 rupees. She stayed with the second master six months, after which he mortgaged her to Shaikh Sultan bin Saqr, ruler of Sharjah for an unknown amount. After a year she was mortgaged by the ruler to a company for 300 rupees. Then the woman escaped and came back to her first master who mortgaged her to a man from Sharjah for 223 rupees. She served him four months and when he intended to sell her she ran away and arrived at the British Agency in Sharjah.⁵⁰

There were slaves who stated that they were well treated but the majority claimed the certificate on the grounds of having been maltreated, beaten, oppressed, kept in chains and even tortured. Maltreatment is the most common reason found in the statements. It seems that this term expressed the fact that the masters didn't provide applicants with sufficient food and clothing, especially in winter, between the diving seasons. We find the following declarations which attest this: 'I was never given enough clothes to wear and my master used to take work from me by force', or 'My master was cruel to me and was not providing me with proper clothing'. Commonly, 'He was not providing me with any money or clothes and further he was ill-treating me. I could not tolerate his injustice any further', or 'In spite of working very hard for him he used to ill-treat me and was not giving me sufficient food or providing me with necessary clothing'.

There is no doubt that many of them were beaten and treated really cruelly. We find the following declarations of the slaves applying at the Agencies for manumission: 'He tied me and beat me very severely and kept in custody for a long time'. 'He burnt me with red iron near each of my ears'. 'Often their treatment to me was very harsh and when I fell sick they compelled me to work to the peril of my life'. 'This year when the season of diving set in he gave me a sum of 8 rupees with order to be prepared to go to dive. When

⁴⁹ 'From the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "Lupin" at Sea, to the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, H.M.S. "Shoreham", 10th May 1934', IOR: R/15/1/209 5/168 V.

⁵⁰ 'Translation of statement made by Halimah bint Sarur of Addis Ababa age about 28 years, recorded at Shargah on the 15th August 1936', IOR: R/15/1/210 5/168 VI.

I refused to receive the money he kept me in Custody under fetters'. 'He was receiving all my earnings and if I ever asked for a small sum I received beating instead of money'. 'When I fled to Ajman, my master caught hold of my wife in place of me, cut off her hair and beat her'. 'This year my master intended to sell my daughter /.../, I objected /.../ but my master forcibly took away my daughter and sold her /.../. He put me in a dark place under iron fetters and beat me very severely'. 'My master asked me to go to diving as usual but I refused to go. My master struck me and tied me in the sun for two days. Later he fettered and put me in a room in his house for 25 days'. 'The wife of the master struck my older daughter and wounded her face'. 'Throughout my past age I never been treated as human being'.

The British Agent sometimes attested marks of ill-treatment (scars of burning or beating) on the bodies of applicants but the most common was the remark, 'the slave doesn't show any marks of ill-treatment'. Some slaves attested a good treatment they received from their masters during illness. They were sometimes sent by their masters to Bahrain to the hospital of the American Arabian Mission where they got the best treatment and recovered.

Statement of slave Bashir bin Turki, aged about 25 years, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, 6th April, 1936

I was born in Gala, a village in Abyssinia of free parents. While I was a small child, I was kidnapped by certain slave-dealers whom I do not know and taken at once to Aden. From Aden I was taken to Midi in Asir. Then I was taken to Mecca together with 70 other slaves and sold to King Ibn Saud. I remained in Mecca for about two months and then I was sent to Riyadh and presented to Abdul Aziz bin Turki, a member of the ruling family. All this time I have been in service of my master. Since recently I fell sick and my master sent me to Bahrain for treatment together with another slave. We came to Bahrain 10 days ago via Hasa and put up with the Qusaibis. I was given treatment and recovered my health.⁵¹

Slaves enjoyed some privileges of free life. Some of them were sent to schools and received education. The owners had a particular interest in this as these slaves could do a more valuable work.

Statement of slave Nasib bin Muhammad aged 22 years recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain on the 14th of May 1938

⁵¹ IOR: R. R/15/2/1826.

I was born in Ghamid (Hijaz) of free parents. While I was four years of age, I was kidnapped by certain Bedouin slave traders whose names I do not know, taken to Bishah and sold to one Khabti bin Salman in whose service I remained for one month. He took me to Jubail and sold me to one of Qaseem named Bin Omar who, after one month, sold me to my present master Muhammad bin Ali al Khatir whom I have been serving until recently when I escaped from him. My master got me educated in a native school in Jubail and when I was fit for work he made me work as a launch, I started working as a clerk for my master. My master was neither providing me with enough food and clothing nor was giving me good treatment.⁵²

Slaves used to dispute with their masters and when they didn't like to stay with them they asked to be sold to someone else. However, in most cases they failed to convince their masters to fulfil their desires.⁵³ The system of slavery was very tough and well protected by tradition as well as by the religion. There were slaves who escaped from their masters and were working for themselves as labourers, divers or sailors. If they were found by their masters or recognized as slaves, they were arrested and sent back to their masters.⁵⁴ In some cases slaves lived separately from their masters, who used them periodically as a labour force.

Translation of a statement made by the slave Suwaid bin Marzooq, born at Mekalla, aged about 65 years. Recorded at Sharjah on 10th January 1941

About 20 years ago my master /.../ took to living in the desert with his family. I and my family remained at Dubai and at the approach of each diving season my master comes to Dubai and sends me and my sons for diving, and he himself receives the advance paid by our Nakhuda. He also comes at the close of the diving season and receives the balance of our earnings. A few days ago my master came to Dubai and I learnt that he intends to sell me and my sons therefore I ran away and came to Sharjah to take refuge at the Agency with the request that I may be granted a manumission certificate.⁵⁵

⁵² IOR: R/15/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

⁵³ 'Statement made by slave Faraj bin Nasib, on 23rd February 1929, born in Shehr, aged about 50 years', IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

⁵⁴ 'Statement of Gharib bin Sayeed, place of birth Sinas (Batineh district), aged about 38 years, name of master Sultan bin Zaid, chief of Abu Dhabi, Bandar Abbas, 11th December 1924', IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

⁵⁵ IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

Those people commonly felt an injustice and sometimes believed that they could live on their own, especially if they succeeded, as a man who worked at the oil company in 1938.

Statement of slave Bilal bin Rashid, aged about 40 years. Recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain on the 7th February 1938

I was born in Sawakin in Africa. I was a baby when my mother and myself were kidnapped by certain unknown slave dealers and taken to Jeddah. We stayed in Jeddah for a period of 15 days during which my mother died and I was later taken to Mecca and sold to one of the Sherifs of Mecca named Ali bin Labbas in whose service I remained 6 years. I was then sold to Muhammad bin Khalifa, my present master, who brought me with him to Hasa where I have been in his service since then. My master got me married to a female slave of his named Mubarakah who gave birth to three sons and one daughter who are still in my master's house in Hasa. My master is a Bedouin and owns camels and sheep. The chief work I used to do for him was grazing his camels and sheep. Last year he found me employment as a coolie with the Oil Company at al Khobar. I used to receive my wages and spend them on myself. Recently my master came to me and demanded my wages for the past 3 salaries. As I refused to give him the same, he beat me and took the money away by force. Finding that my master will make it a habit to take over my earnings in future, I resigned from the Company's service and came to Bahrain.⁵⁶

On 23rd June, 1939, a slave Juman bin Abdullah requested a manumission certificate at the Political Agency in Muscat. He was a diver and complained of the maltreatment he suffered from his master. The investigation made by the Agent showed that Juman was a slave of a master from Dubai and that he was living in a separate house. His master used to send him every year with one *nakhuda* for diving. At the beginning of a new diving season Juman took an advance of 25 rupees from his *nakhuda* and ran away without his master's knowledge. The reason of his absconding was that his master wanted to take half of the advance from him. Juman did not agree to give a part of the advance to his master and ran away in order to get his freedom. It was said that Juman was well treated by his master.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

⁵⁷ 'Statement of slave Jaman bin Abdullah, about 16 years old, recorded on 23rd June 1939', IOR: R/15/2/1828.

Another one escaped from his master and started to earn money for his family as a policeman.

Statement of slave Dahi bin Shahi aged about 30 years

I was born in Abu-Dhabi. My parents were free people of Bashkard in Persia. My mother was kidnapped by a certain Persian and was brought to Abu-Dhabi and sold to one Zayed bin Khalifah of Oman, and then to one Muhamad bin Eed in whose house I was born and brought up. As soon as I attained maturity, I began to go for diving and earn for my said master. He was not giving me sufficient food and clothing. He got me married with one of his slave women who gave birth to a son who is now 12 years old. She died in the same year she gave birth to the son. Minding it impossible to serve my master any longer owing to maltreatment I escaped from him and came to Bahrain. This is the 6th year I arrived at Bahrain and employed as a police-man for one year and six month. Afterwards I left this job and began working as a labourer. Two months ago I went to Abu Dhabi to see my son who was left there. As soon as I arrived there, my master caught hold of me and detained me for 6 days with my legs tied up but fortunately I again got a chance and absconded from there and came to Bahrain by a sailing craft about 16 days ago. Now I have come to the Agency to ask the favour of the High Government to kindly grant me a manumission certificate so that I may live a free life.⁵⁸

Slaves who were treated cruelly by their masters sought protection at the local rulers and found it often in Kuwait but on the Trucial Coast the shaikhs advised them to return to the masters and ask their pardon.⁵⁹ There were people whose relatives – wives or children – were kidnapped and they appealed to the shaikhs to liberate the kidnapped and return them. If they were slaves, their requests were rejected and they reported at the British Agency to ask for help.⁶⁰

Property of ex-slaves who died intestate reverted to their former owners or to the heirs of their former owners. Such orders were passed by the

⁵⁸ IOR: R/15/2/1825.

⁵⁹ ‘Statement of slave Jaman bin Abdullah, about 16 years old, recorded on 23rd June 1939’, IOR: R/15/2/1828.

⁶⁰ ‘Statement made by Sibil bin Balash of Khor Kalba, aged about 35 years. Recorded on the 21st April 1939’, IOR: R/15/2/1828.

Sunni Sharia courts, even in Bahrain where such a practice was not enforced by the state courts to avoid an impression that the Bahrain government accepted a law which in itself depended on the condition of slavery. The local *qadis* used to write to the shaikh asking that he should instruct his courts to recognize the Sharia rulings in this matter, but the Shaikh of Bahrain refused such petitions.⁶¹ Nevertheless, slaves were inherited and this practice was fully accepted by the local societies.

Although the British officials reported several times that manumission was not practised in the local societies, the statements prove something different. There were many slaves manumitted by the owners on different occasions, but the will was commonly neglected by the heirs.

Manumission was practised before the pilgrimage.

Statement made by Belal bin Khamis aged about 30 years. Recorded on 19th Rabi-al-Thani 1344 (6th November 1925) at Shargah

I and my mother were inherited by his daughter Muzah. My mother died about 10 years ago and I remained with the said woman. When she wanted to go on pilgrimage she called a priest and asked him to write a manumission certificate for me. He wrote the certificate on which the Qadhi of Debai and other people wrote their evidence.⁶²

Slaves born of their masters were often manumitted 'for the sake of God'.

Statement made by Khamis bin Johar in Debai aged about 21 years. Recorded on 14th Dhil-Qadeh 1345 (6th June 1925)

My mother Maryam, daughter of Mubarak, was purchased by my master Said bin Hazim resident in Debai from some Sudanese. My master had sexual intercourse with my mother and when it was found that she was pregnant he married her to his negro namely my father Johar. My mother gave birth to me in Said's house and when I was 12 years old Said bin Hazim freed me with my mother for the sake of God.⁶³

However, it was common that even when the fact of manumission was proved in a local Sharia Court, heirs of the late master neglected it and were trying to re-enslave these slaves.

⁶¹ 'No. 1473/9 of 1348, Office of the Adviser to the Government, Bahrain, 5th Shawwal 1348', IOR: R/15/2/1367.

⁶² IOR: R/15/1/208 5/168 IV.

⁶³ Ibidem.

Statement made by Almas of Suwahil, aged 38. Recorded at Sharjah on 27th Shaban 1343 (23rd March 1925)

When I was 8 years old a man of Suwahil kidnapped me and sold me to a man of Khazrah of Batinah named Said. I remained with him for 3 years then he sold me to a man of Umm-ul-Qaiwain named Matful. The man engaged me in diving and after some years my master Matful died and I was transferred to his son Khalifah. Two years after the death of his father Khalifah invited a party of men of Umm-ul-Qaiwain and asked them to give evidence to the fact that he has manumitted me for the sake of God and no one should molest me. Khalifah died and after his death his brother complained to Hamad bin Ibrahim, Chief of Umm-ul-Qaiwain that I was his slave. The Shaikh directed us to the Shara for a decision. My manumission was proved in Shara Court and Shaikh Hamad heard the witnesses himself and signed the decision of the Shara Court. Now my master's brother is always threatening me that he would re-enslave me. I am taking refuge with the High British Government and beg to be kind enough to favour me with a Government Manumission Certificate so that I may be safe from the threats and molestation.⁶⁴

Heirs sometimes used the fact that the manumitted slaves didn't have any certificate from the Sharia Court.

Statement made by Ismail bin Mubarak, aged about 22 years. Recorded at Sharjah on the 12th October 1939

My mother Tuffaha was originally from Suwahil (South East Africa) and was bought by Fatima bint Sharif of Ras al Khaimah. Fatima got my mother married and I was born. She then manumitted my mother who remained in her service as a free women and not a slave. When Fatima died my mother started serving Ali al Sharif, brother of Fatima. I was brought up in Ali's house and when my age was 15 he started sending me to diving with different people. He was taking my earnings. 3 months ago when I was at the diving bank Ali al Sharif died. On return my mother informed me of Ali's death and also told me that Ayshah, sister of Ali, intends to sell me and my mother on the ground that we were slaves of her brother. As my mother had no manumission certificates from Fatima I ran away from Ras al Khaimah to Sharjah in order to take refuge at the Government House and beg to be released from slavery.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ IOR: R/15/1/208 5/168 IV.

⁶⁵ IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

Sometimes, however, the promise to give a slave freedom was kept, as shown by a case from Kuwait at the beginning of the 1920s. An aunt of the ruler promised to manumit a slave of hers on her death, but she died without having the necessary document drawn up. The slave, assuming that everything was well, settled down and married, but in due course the heir, who had been absent from Kuwait, returned and claimed the slave with the rest of his inheritance as he was technically entitled to do. The Shaikh of Kuwait, who was known as a just man, ruled that as the aunt had undoubtedly intended to free the slave her wishes should be followed, and the slave was freed.⁶⁶

Quite often the decision of running away was provoked by the change of a master. Many slaves – both men and women – were simply turned out of the houses of their masters when they were getting older and unable to work. In December 1941, a case of Haman bin Mubarak, 55 years old, was recorded at the Residency Agency in Sharjah. He was a slave of an inhabitant of Abu Dhabi and was brought from Mecca to Qatar when he was a small boy. His master sent him for diving and treated him well and kindly. After his death the man became a slave of the sons of the master and when he got older and could not go to diving during summer the new masters started to treat him cruelly and finally turned him out of their house.⁶⁷ As a result, he remained without a shelter and any protection. Such cases became quite common in the late 1930s.

Statement of slave Salmeen bin Sabir, born at Mekran, aged about 40 years, recorded at Shargah on 18th February 1939

My name is Salmeen bin Sabir, born at Mekran, my age is about 40 years. I was kidnapped from my native place whilst very young. I do not know who kidnapped me and brought me to Henjam and sold me to Ahmed bin Buti, a native of Henjam. 20 years ago my master immigrated from Henjam to Dubai and I was with him in his service. About 10 years ago my master got me married to a slave girl of his named Lattoof of whom I had two daughters, Khaddoi aged 9 years and Salhoh aged 5 years. My master sends me each season for pearl-fishing and used to take my earnings. During last Ramdhan my master gave me 20 rupees as expenses for myself and family which was spent. About twenty days

⁶⁶ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Political Secretary to H.E. The High Commissioner, Kuwait, 13th May 1921', IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

⁶⁷ 'Statement made by slave Haman bin Mubarak, 55 years old, from Abu Dhabi. Recorded on the 1th December 1941', IOR: R/15/1/ 207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

ago I asked my master for expenses and he did not give me, therefore I complained against him before Sheikh Sa'id who summoned him and pressed him for payment but my master refused and told me 'you are free go to wherever you wish and support yourself, I am no longer responsible for you'. I therefore came to Shargah to take refuge at the Agency and pray that I may kindly be granted freedom from slavery.⁶⁸

Slaves manumitted by the British Agency were supporting themselves by pearling, a few of them were employed at the British loops as sweepers, or at the Naval Base at Hanjam. Generally, their situation was very poor. Sometimes, they came back to the Agency and asked for support. In 1939, a manumitted slave declared, 'I beg to say that I worked for five years in the hospital, after which I worked for one year in the Government hospital. As I was a slave who was manumitted by Government, and as I am a poor man with a family and children to support and without a means of livelihood I request you to kindly grant me some work to enable me to earn a living for me and my children'.⁶⁹

A few of recovered slave children were brought up by the American Arabian Mission headed by the Rev. Samuel Zwemer. In 1896, his brother, the Rev. Peter J. Zwemer received in his care 18 slave boys rescued from an Arab *dhow* by the British Consul in Muscat. There was also a group of girls in the same slave *dhow*. These were handed over to a Roman Catholic Institution in Bombay. The boys continued in care of the American Mission in Muscat, and afterwards some of them were taken care of in Bahrain. The oldest of the boys, Solomon, served during the War in the British Navy and after leaving the service settled in America.⁷⁰

The British Agents, in making enquiries about cases of cruel treatment in the late 1930s, attested that some owners became poor as a result of the slackness of the pearl trade and their debts to the Hindu and the Arab merchants accumulated and felt heavily on their shoulders. They, therefore, became unable to maintain their slaves and molested them.⁷¹

⁶⁸ IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

⁶⁹ 'Translation of a petition dated 12 Shaban 1358 (27.9.39) from Salmin bin Abdul Razzaq Al Balushi, a manumitted slave, Bahrain, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/2/1825.

⁷⁰ 'From S. Zwemer, the Theological Seminary, Princeton, to H.M. British Consul-General at Bushire', November 27, 1936, IOR: R/15/1/203 5/194 I, 195 I, 179 III, 169 II, 104 IV.

⁷¹ 'From the Acting Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, 20th October 1935', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

In January 1941, a whole family of slaves came to the Residency Agency in Sharjah. It was composed of six persons – the father Suwaid bin Marzooq, aged about 65 years, the mother Khamisa bint Nasib, aged about 56 years, and their four children – Marzooq, Sa'id, Mubarakah and Suwaid, aged between 40 and 21. They were Africans kidnapped from Mukallah 35 years before. Being sold to an inhabitant of Dubai, the men served as divers. The reason of their running away was the intention of their master to sell them. According to the father, they had been quite well-off for a long time but in the last years everything changed to worse.⁷² These people were running away from uncertainty rather than from slavery.

3. Female slaves

Women were a desirable good. They were sold, bought and mortgaged. They often could rely on no one but themselves.

'I am a free born woman and not a slave of anyone', stated a slave woman named Manyuh bint Khalfan from Dibah at the Residency Agency in Sharjah. Her fate encompasses many problems which enslaved women experienced. She was born in Dibah in the house of her master Abdullah bin Muhamad of Dibah and when she was young she was manumitted with her mother by their master. They stayed at Ras al-Khaimah but after some time her mother died and she went from Ras al-Khaimah to Dubai where she remained. Then she felt ill and became in need of money. She mortgaged herself for 200 rupees to an old woman who was originally a slave of the wife of a merchant from Dubai. When she recovered from her sickness the old woman mortgaged her to a certain Said bin Dhabī of Dubai who after a short period mortgaged her to Alluh and Salmin, sailors. 15 years later they mortgaged her to Said bin Muhammad al Mansuri of Manasir tribe who was residing in Dubai. Manuyh remained in the service of Said who died 10 days before her applying to the Agency. Alluh and Salmin came and alleged that they had not received anything from her late master Said on account of mortgaging her and that they had in their possession some papers in support of their claim. They intended to enslave her but she considered herself a free born woman. As she was afraid that she

⁷² 'Translation of a statement made by the slave Suwaid bin Marzooq, born at Mekalla, aged about 65 years. Recorded at Sharjah on 10th January 1941', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

would be sold, she came from Dubai to Sharjah in order to take refuge at the Agency and asked to be granted a manumission certificate so that no one would be able to interfere with her liberty.⁷³

Sometimes they were sold by the relatives who needed money and hoped that a sold girl would enjoy better life with a new master.

Statement of a slave women named Saeedah bint Sadam aged about forty, recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 28th day of September 1931

I was born at Ghaman in Yaman. I was very young when my elder brother sold me to one Yamani. This Yamani, my master after eight days sold me to Ibrahim bin Mekuni. I served him for a period of six years. After this period he sold me to another Yamani and I served him for a period of about ten days. I was sold again to one Rashid al-Qusaibi of Qatar where I remained about a week. He sold me to one Saleh bin Muhammad who brought me to Bahrain some seven years ago.⁷⁴

Slave women were commonly kept as concubines.

Statement made by Hilaweh bint Rashid, born in Za'ab Island, aged about 35 years. Recorded at Sharjah on 18th February 1942

I was born in the house of my master Abdullah al Ahshan of Za'ab Island. When I was 15 years old my master got me married to one of his slaves named al Nubi. I gave birth to a son whom I named Said and whose age is now about 15 years and to a daughter who is now about 5 years. My husband died 4 years ago. My master kept me as a concubine for 2 years...⁷⁵

They were kept as concubines and then sold.

Statement made by Amnah, daughter of Muhammad Baluchi, aged about 27 years, original place Bampur ruled by Dest Muhammad Khan, recorded at Shargah on the 26th February 1928

My parents are dead. I married one of my relatives named Muhammad with whom I lived two years; I was divorced by him after that period as I did not become pregnant. I was earning my livelihood by fetching

⁷³ 'Statement made by Manyuh bint Khalfan, born at Dibba, aged about 35 years, recorded at Shargah on the 24th October 1938', IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

⁷⁴ IOR: R/15/2/1828.

⁷⁵ IOR: R/15/1/207 5/168 IX.

firewood from the interior. My former husband intended to marry me again but I did not agree. He plotted a trick and at night time he accompanied by 5 Baluchis came to my house, took me out by force and carried me on camel to the village of Sadaich on the sea shore where they embarked me on a boat. They took me to Wudam where they sold me to Abdullah bin Muhammad Dawar who is living at Tharmad and the latter sold me to a man of Batinah whose name is not known to me. Abdullah bin Muhammad Baluchi came to Batinah and sold me to Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman Al Qufiadi. He kept me as a concubine for one year and then sold me to a Persian named Abdullah bin Jafar. When K.B. Isa bin Abdul Latif the Residency Agent came to Dubai I got an opportunity and escaped and took refuge with him. I am a free born women and am not a slave of anyone.⁷⁶

Or they were kept as concubines and then got married with slaves.

Statement made by Zainab bint Mubarak aged about 30 years. Place of birth Saibiyeh of Yemen. Recorded on the 27th Dhil Hejje 1345 (27th June 1927) at Shargah

My parents died when I was seven years old. I went to maternal uncle and was brought up by him. One day I went with the sheep to the desert where a few men whom I do not know came to me and arrested me by force. After a few days journey we reached Jiddeh and then Mecca. Muhammad bin Ali bin Kamil came there on pilgrimage and bought me for a certain amount. He took me to Shargah by a steamer when he wanted to return from pilgrimage. He had sexual intercourse with me for some time and then he married me to a slave named Salim. I gave birth to five children two of whom died and the other three named Jumua, Buhar and Zahran are alive. Buhar was kidnapped by the Bedouins from Shargah and the other two are with my master. One year ago I got myself divorced from my husband who was the father of my children. My present husband is named Abdulla bin Salih Baluch who is serving my master.⁷⁷

They were used sexually and molested when their slave-husbands were at the fishery banks. In May 1940, the Residency Agent sent the following letter to the Political Agent at Bahrain:

⁷⁶ IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

⁷⁷ IOR: R/15/1/217 5/190 III.

On the 20th of November 1939 the female slave Sa'adah bint Farhan from Abu Dhabi asked for manumission at the Political Agency in Muscat. She ran away from her master because he was ill-treating her. On enquiry it was found out that she ran away from her master after a quarrel between her and her master who reproached her for committing immoral acts. Her son Bilal whose age was about 18 was still serving his master whose treatment to him was very good. Bilal had no complaint against his master and does not want to change his condition.⁷⁸

Sexual intercourses with slave females were practised by the lower class and the nobility as well. In 7th June, 1936, a man reported at the Agency at Bahrain and stated that his mother was a slave and was sold to a Sharif of Medina named Idris bin Husain bin Hashimi, who had intercourse with her. After a short time he sold her to some Mutair Bedouins of Najd who took her to Samman desert and the man was born. He was brought up by his mother in that part of the desert but he claimed to be a son of the Sharif of Medina.⁷⁹

Slave women were married and divorced by their masters against their will.

Statement of Marhumah bint Saleh of Hudaidah, aged 27 years, recorded at Sharjah on the 19th June 1936

My name is Marhumah bint Saleh. I was born in Hudaidah and my age is 27 years. My father was killed in a quarrel with his cousin and I was at that time in my mother's womb. My mother, after that, married her cousin but I do not know his father's name as I left my country when I was small. I have no brother or sister except my mother who lives in Hudaidah. At the age of ten I went out with two girls named Ashur and Bakhuta, whose father's name I do not recollect, for grazing sheep. Suddenly 5 Bedouins fell on us. They kidnapped us and took me to Jordan which is at a distance of half day's journey on camel. They sold me to Muhammad whose father's name I do not know. After 15 days Muhammad sent me to Guera by land and sold me to Husain bin Humaid. I remained with him for one year after which he sold me to Muhammad bin Hasan who took me with two slave women to Wadam. After a stay of five days there I was sent to Dubai on the boat of Ali bin Muhammad and sold to Muhammad bin Juma son of a carpenter living in Dera in

⁷⁸ 'Translation of letter No. 329 dated 13th May 1940 from, the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/2/1828.

⁷⁹ 'Statement of slave Bashir bin Idris, aged about 41 years recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, 7th June 1936', IOR: R/15/2/1826.

Dubai. I remained in his service for five years after which I was married to Mubarak servant of Majed bin Ajil. After two years my master got me divorced from him as he beat me. Six months after this, I was given in marriage to Mitfah servant of Muhammad bin Ali of Dera in Dubai. After a year and a half my master got me divorced again. Six months after the divorce I married Nubi servant of Rashid bin Bashar. I was divorced again after six months in a state of pregnancy. I have a daughter from him who is five years old. Last year in the summer I married Mubarak bin Salemin servant of Salem bin Musabbah. My husband gave me 30 rupees which he received as *salaf* of *ghaus* [an advance] from his *nakhuda*. My master Muhammad bin Juma took 20 rupees out of the money. I quarrelled and refused to give them money. Up on this my master and his mother Maryam beat me and kept me in confinement for three days in a go down. On the 4th day at about noon I came out and ran away with my daughter. I hired a donkey for Sharjah and came to the High Government for shelter. I request for freedom from slavery. As for my husband I have not seen him. He is free. I do not know where is he at present but presume that he is in diving.⁸⁰

They were also divorced by their slave-husbands.

Statement made by Zahra bint Bashir, born in Dubai, aged about 30 years. Recorded at Sharjah on 29th December 1941

I was born in the house of my master Muhamad bin Ahmad bin Dalmuk. I entered the service of Hashar, my master's son, after his death and 3 years ago Hashar got me married to one of his brother's slaves named Kardam who divorced me about a year ago. As I heard a few days ago that he intends to sell me, I ran away from Dubai to Sharjah...⁸¹

And they were running away from their oppressive slave-husbands.

Statement of Fatimah bint Muhammad of Minab, Bandar Abbas, aged 30 years, recorded on the 31st August 1927

About twenty or twenty two years ago when playing with my sister Sakinah in a street a party of Arabs came up and kidnapped us both and carried us to their boat. My father and others came and saved my sister but I was taken in a boat to Hasa where I was sold to one Muhammad bin Namir: a pearl merchant. He married me and died ten years after.

⁸⁰ IOR: R/15/2/1826.

⁸¹ IOR: R/15/1/207 5/168 IX.

After his death I was sold by Muhammad's uncle to Sheikh Ali Khinaizi. This Sheikh married me and I was with him for three years. Afterwards his wives objected to my being his wife and he therefore gave me to his servant Belal bin Firooz. I remained with Belal for three years or more and gave birth to three children from him. Belal would never give me sufficient food or clothes and ill-treated me. I was always trying to find an opportunity to run away from slavery but could not get any until now i.e. until three days ago when I threw myself into the sea and Nakhuda had compassion upon me and brought me to Bahrain. I now request to grant me a Manumission Certificate and to repatriate me to Minab to live with my parents or other relatives.⁸²

Sometimes slave women ran away from the masters who did not allow them to get married.

Statement of slave women Salamah bint Musa aged 27 years recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, 6th February, 1935

I was born in slavery at Ras-el-Khaimah. My parents were slaves of Shaikh Ahmad Rajwani, Qadhi of Ras-el-Khaimah in whose house I was brought up. My father ran away from Ras-el-Khaimah twenty-five years ago; went to Linge and after getting a manumission certificate from the British Agent, he proceeded to Bahrain, his permanent residence. At that time I was only two years old. My mother and myself remained in the house of our master but my mother died nine years ago leaving me alone. All this time I have been serving my master as a domestic servant. Two years ago I escaped from my master, went to Sharjah and wrote a letter to my father from there informing him of my escape and requesting him to come over to Sharjah and take me away with him. He accordingly came to Sharjah and brought me to Bahrain where I have since been staying. I have been receiving good treatment at the hands of my master who, apart from giving me much work to do, was not providing me with sufficient food, clothing and other life necessities. He also did not get me married though I attained the matrimonial age. Under these circumstances, I request that I may be granted a manumission certificate so that I may live a free life.⁸³

The masters often separated them from their families in order to sell them. In March 1937, a woman named Maqbulah bint Barood, aged about 30, made

⁸² IOR: R/15/1/204 5/161 III.

⁸³ IOR: R/15/2/1826.

a statement at the Agency in Bahrain. She was born in Qatar in the house of Shaikh Thani who was the master of her parents too. He manumitted her parents, leaving her and her brother in slavery. He died and after his death she was owned by his son. He got her married to one of his slaves from whom she got 2 sons and 1 daughter. The 2 sons died but the daughter was still alive and the master sold her seven years before. When the woman fell sick and the master sent her to Bahrain for treatment at the hospital of the Arabian Mission, she decided not to come back but to apply for a manumission certificate and to search for her daughter and husband. She declared that she did not want to go back to her master as he had been very cruel to her by separating her daughter from her in spite of her request not to do so.⁸⁴

The practice of abducting children for the purpose of slavery was common. The boys were used as divers and the girls as servants. Some evidences show that they both were used sexually. In December 1927, the British Consular Agent at Lingah brought to the notice of the Governor of Lingah the fact of kidnapping a British Indian boy named Ramsingh son of Jagansingh. The boy was abducted 6 or 7 years before by one Shanbeh bin Hassan in Bombay and brought to Lingah to serve Shanbeh as a slave.⁸⁵ When he arrived at the British Consular Agency in Lingah, he made a statement in which he declared that had been maltreated, beaten and sexually abused by his master.

Statement of Ramsing son of Jagansingh now known as Abdullah born at Nandel. Date of birth not known. Now lives in Mat Hut near the Telegraph quarters with Shanbeh bin Hassan. Appearance an Indian. About 15. Recorded on the 13th December 1927

I was born at Nandel and when 7 years old I went to Bombay /.../ and worked /.../ in Bombay. One day I met Shanbeh in Bombay near the docks. Shanbeh asked me to go with him, I went with him and worked for him for one month in Bombay, then he took me by sailing vessel to a place Cochin, Malabar, there Shanbeh changed vessels and came by sailing vessel to Lingeh. I was with him all the time, since then I have lived with Shanbeh. I used to work and Shanbeh used to take all my money. He used to beat me. One night last year Shanbeh came to me

⁸⁴ 'Statement of slave women Maqbulah bint Barood, aged about 30 years recorded in the Political Agency, Bahrain, on the 6th of March 1937', IOR: R/15/2/1826.

⁸⁵ 'Copy of letter No. 640 dated the 14th December 1927 from the British Consular Agent, Lingeh to Governor', Lingah, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

and wanted to sleep with me, I complained to Shanbeh's mother and said I would report the matter to the police and she told me not to do so and that such thing would not happen again. /.../ I do not wish to stay here because Shanbeh is beating me every day. Night before last I did not go to Shanbeh's house and slept at the driver's place and at about 11 o'clock Shanbeh came for me and asked me why I had not come home. I said I was not going home, then he wanted to strike me with a hoop iron.⁸⁶

According to the Islamic law, a slave woman who gave a birth to a boy with her master became free. In October 1937, a man named Abdullah bin Muhammad made a statement at the Political Agency at Bahrain. His mother was an ex-slave of his father who also cohabited her. 'When she gave birth to my brother Majid she, according to Sharia Laws, became a free women as my father is a free man'⁸⁷, the man declared. This rule was often broken by the heirs of an owner who manumitted a slave before he died. The relatives still treated slaves as their property and shared them or sold them. On 17th May, 1931, Maryami bint Jumah from Ras al-Khaimah made the following statement at the Agency at Sharjah:

My master's name is Said bin Bilal of Ras al Khaimah. He bought my mother Saluhah and got her married to his slave Jumah. She became pregnant and gave birth to me. When I was 17 years old my master kept me as his concubine and I became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Jumah who is aged 7 years. My master Said and my mother died. My master's sons divided estate among themselves and I was given to his son Ali bin Said. As he (Ali) wanted to sell my son Jumah who is his father's son too I tried to get a chance to escape from his house.⁸⁸

Many women refugees who applied for the British certificates stated that the reason of their running away was the change of master. A slave woman named Salumah bint Mubarak, who lived at Ajman at her master's house with her husband and children stated at the Agency in Sharjah on 22nd April, 1939, that a year

⁸⁶ IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

⁸⁷ 'Statement of Abdullah bin Muhammad al Khatir of Jubail, recorded on the 30th October 1937, at the Political Agency, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/2/1827.

⁸⁸ 'Statement made by Maryami bint Jumah, Suwahili, aged about 30 years. Dated 17th May 1931', IOR: R/15/1/209 5/168 V.

before she and her children got in the service of a nephew of her former master. When it happened, her husband, who stayed with the former master, divorced her. That provoked a sequence of events disastrous for her. Firstly, her daughter ran away from the family of the new master. Then her two sons tried to escape but were caught and sent to the desert to be kept under protection of some tribesmen. The woman herself followed her sons but was detained by unknown Bedouins. She managed to escape from the kidnappers and reported at the Residency Agency. Being completely lonely, she wished to remain with her new master because she found him kind to her.⁸⁹ The story, however, was not over, as on 8th May, 1939, the ex-husband of the woman arrived at the Agency. He suspected the new master of an intention to sell his ex-wife and children. He asked for the certificate of manumission which would help him in protecting his family.⁹⁰

4. Slaves and labour

The principal industries in the Gulf were pearl diving, date growing and export of fried fish.

The diving community consisted of 3 categories: the share merchants who did the big buying and selling and who either owned or financed the boats, the *nakhudas* or boat captains, and the large mass of divers. The latter, being illiterate, were cheated and oppressed by their employers, or rather their owners, the boat captains. About 15,000 local divers went out from Bahrain every season and it was estimated that about 100,000 men from the whole Gulf were employed on the banks every year. The diving system was admirable in theory. Each boat's profit was shared proportionally between the captain, the divers and the pullers after the captain deducted the cost of food, general expenses, and the amount which he advanced to the divers at the beginning and the end of the season. In practice the system was abominable. Once a young man took a loan from a captain he could never pay it off, and as long as he was in debt he was forced to dive. The debts were increased by enormous interest being charged on every advance, food and diving materials were debited against the diver at extortionate prices, and as the diver was illiterate he could

⁸⁹ 'Statement made by Salumah bint Mubarak, born At Sur, aged about 35 years, recorded at Shargah on 22nd April 1939', IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

⁹⁰ 'Statement made by Wulaid bin Mubarak, born at Suwahil, aged about 60 years, recorded at Shargah on 8th May 1939', IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

never check his account. Most divers lived on the small bi-annual advances which were debited against them, with interest. Divers were handed from one captain to another, sometimes to captains from foreign ports and sometimes to private individuals in payment for debts. If a diver died his house and belongings were seized by his captain and if he had grown up sons they were compelled to incur their father's debts. If the sons were children they incurred the debts when they became old enough to work. Sales of pearls were conducted privately between captains and merchants and usually the prices obtained were higher than the amount announced to the divers. The captains pocketed the difference. Infirm old men and young boys were forced to dive and any insubordination was punished by floggings and various tortures. No questions were asked about deaths that occurred at the banks. During the off season the divers were made to work in the houses and gardens of their owners.

Attempts to improve the diving system met with difficulties. The divers were suspicious and apathetic, and the merchants and captains were violently opposed to changes which would loosen their hold over the men. In 1924, Shaikh Hamad of Bahrain in conjunction with Major Daly, who was then the Political Agent, and with the support of the Government of India, implemented new rules. Only a very few merchants, and the Shia and Sunni *qadis*, supported the movement, but the reforms were finally pushed through, mainly owing to the energy of Major Daly. The principal features were as follows: (a) the amount of the advances and the amount of interest permission was laid down by law; (b) no other charges were debited against a diver; (c) merchants and boat captains were compelled to keep regular accounts, which were made cut by a number of diving clerks who were authorized by the government; (d) every diver kept a small book issued by the government which showed his account with his captain; (e) boat captains were forbidden to sell the pearls privately, but had to do so in the presence of not less than three of the divers; (f) when a diver died his children were not made to take care over his debts and dive for his captain, and the debt became an ordinary one against the estate; (g) no person who did not own a diving boat could take over divers for debt.⁹¹

These rules greatly improved the diving conditions. The new generation of divers was no longer in the position of slaves. Previously a diver had no redress

⁹¹ 'From Lieut.-Colonel H.V. Biscoe, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi, No. 637 of 1930, Bushire, the 18th March 1930 'Slavery and the Bahrain Pearl Industry', IOR: R/15/5/311 9/1.

against his captain, a court existed, but it consisted of boat captains and its reputation was notorious. After the reforms were introduced, divers realized when they were cheated and appealed to the courts when they found that the diving rules were not carried out by their employers.

Slaves were a part of the community of divers. They were engaged mostly in the pearl diving and to a lesser extent in the date plantations. They dived about nine months in the year. During winter some slaves on the Trucial Coast were employed in plantations, fisheries and as camel-drivers and herdsmen of cattle. Slaves were not employed as porters or laborers in the towns. Many of them were, however, allowed to do any work that they could find in order to get clothes and pocket-money, but they were fed by their masters.

The industrial slaves received no wages but were given food and clothing and in theory it was in the master's interest to keep them fit. If the master possessed no garden, the slave was required to bring one load of firewood to his master weekly as the mark of servitude. With the approach of the pearling season on the Trucial Coast there was a great yearly migration north from Oman. Batinah produced the best divers, sending as many as 5,000 of them. Another 2,100 were said to go from Dhahirah and Sharqiyah. Of this total number not less than 1,000 were believed to be slaves, expert divers most of them, in contrast to the Arab Bedouins who did the 'hauling' up and general hard work. The free man got money for his labours while the slave's earnings went to his master. In May, when the exodus from Batinah took place, all the local Bedouins' and other sea crafts were requisitioned and there was a heavy run on the camels of the Bedouins of Hajar and Samailiyah. Slaves were usually taken by the camel route. With each tribal contingent, slaves and free men mixed, it was a common practice to send a tribal agent. Almost invariably he went to the *nakhuda* with whom he had had previous dealings and contracted his men for the ensuing season and perhaps for others to come. The *nakhuda*, financed by the pearl merchant, advanced to him money and rice, perhaps about 100 rupees and a half bag of rice against each slave's earnings. The free men who drew their own advance probably got less as they were at liberty to consult their own inclinations next season, whereas the slaves might had had a lien effected on their future services by the *nakhuda* in advance: the free men paid 10 rupees from their advances to the tribal agent under whose auspices they had come. In September, when the season ended

these tribal agents went north again to collect their contingents and the balance of the earnings of the slaves.⁹²

B. S. Thomas, a British Official at the court of the Sultan of Muscat, admitted in 1928 that a general feeling of discontent with Trucial pearling condition prevailed in Batinah, in contrast with approval for the equity of treatment they received in Qatar and Bahrain. At the end of the diving season the practice in latter places seemed to be that the harvest was assessed and the divers given the balance of their dues. On the Trucial Coast, however, they were dismissed with a meagre nominal payment on the grounds that the pearls must first be sent to India and sold there, and they were told to return in the winter for the proper sharing. Results, when winter came, caused much disappointment and resentment. The divers were woefully cheated and felt that their proper share should be seven or eight hundred rupees while they received perhaps a quarter of that sum. Oman depended more and more on the pearl industry, and neither the shaikhs of Batinah nor their followers could afford to fall out with the Trucial elements which supplied this source of income.⁹³

Slaves as labourers operated within a network of social bonds and norms. Whoever broke those norms was exposed to ostracism and was put out of the economic system which meant death for him and his family.

The pearling industry in the Gulf was based on the system of debts and the debts were generated by the tradition of paying advance money. A *towash* or a merchant who was a creditor gave advance money on diving business to a *nakhuda*, or a captain of a boat. In consequence, a *nakhuda* was generally required to bring his 'take' of pearls to the *towash* to whom he was indebted. If they could not agree on the price to be paid to him, he was at liberty to sell the pearls elsewhere for a better price, but on the condition that he liquidated his debts to the *towash* from the proceeds. It was common that at the end of the season a *nakhuda* was unable to satisfy a *towash's* claim in full. There were several options in solving such a problem. A *towash* could be merciful

⁹² 'From Lieut.-Colonel H. V. Biscoe, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi, No. 637 of 1930', Bushire, the 18th March 1930 'Domestic Slavery in the Persian Gulf', IOR: R/15/5/311 9/1; 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Resident, Bushire, No. C/78-20/, Bahrain, 16th February 1936', IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38); 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to British Consul, Bushire, C/28, 11th February, 1936', IOR: R/15/6/414 13/1.

⁹³ 'Notes on Slave Trade by B. S. Thomas, Finance Minister, Muscat State, August 1929', IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

and advance more money to a *nakhuda* to enable him to continue business, and meet his obligations to him in installments. A *nakhuda* could, with the intervention, if necessary, of the Salifah Court, obtain an advance from another creditor to enable him to settle with the first one. In Lingah, a creditor was entitled to recover his claim from a *nakhuda*'s indebted divers and haulers, if the debtor could not pay himself. A creditor was also entitled to seize his debtor's books and took over his claims against his sailors, which were the debtor's assets. These sailors and divers thus were becoming bound to the creditor. A creditor was entitled to seize his debtor's boat as well. In Sharjah it was accepted that a *towash* could recover his claim by seizing vessels and local indebted sailors as well as foreign indebted sailors and divers.

In most cases a *towash* kept paying advances to a *nakhuda* for several years and the *nakhuda* became this *towash*'s debtor. If they agreed that the debt would be paid by installments and it happened that the *nakhuda* obtained advance money from another *towash* the situation varied. It could be recorded in the bond that anyone wishing to engage the *nakhuda* was at liberty to do so on undertaking to pay his installments, the new creditor was bound to pay the first one the installments agreed upon the bond. On the other hand, if in a such case it was recorded in the bond that the *nakhuda* would have to pay the installment himself, the new creditor was not responsible, and the *nakhuda* had to take his own measures to recover from his creditor by distraint of the boat or the crew, or by installments until the *towash*'s claims were settled. A *nakhuda* before leaving a town for good had to pay his own debts.

Some rules regulated the relations between merchants. If a *towash* advanced money to a *nakhuda* on pearling business, this *nakhuda* was obliged to sell his 'take' to the merchant concerned. Yet, the *nakhuda* could write a bond for the balance of the *towash*'s claim against him and afterwards go to a second *towash*, to whom he sold his next 'take'. If this second merchant had made an advance to the captain then the claim of the first merchant was against him and he had to pay up the claim in full. If the advance was not paid, the claim was on the *nakhuda*. If the first merchant informed the second one before the *nakhuda*'s second 'take' that he had a claim against the *nakhuda*, then (if the sale took place) the claim was on the second *towash*, whose action was illegal. When the 'take' in question was sold to the second merchant before he was told of the first merchant's claim, the claim was against the *nakhuda*, and the first merchant could claim the sale of the second 'take'. If

the second merchant alleged that he had been unaware of the *nakhuda*'s dealing with the first merchant, the burden of proving the opposite lied with the first merchant, and the second one had to take an oath. Once he did so, he was not answerable and the claim of the first merchant was against the *nakhuda*. The first *towash* could proceed to distraint the *nakhuda*'s boat and crew.

A *nakhuda* himself had to arrange for the subsistence of his sailors and divers by giving them advance money called *tisqam* or *salaf*. *Tisqam* was an advance given to a diver in the off season about November or December, when the divers had already spent all their money and were getting hard-up. *Salaf* was an advance given to sailors about ten days before the commencement of the pearling season. If the advances were given, the sailors and divers were bound to embark on the captain's vessels at the commencement of the pearling season and to dive as usual according to the terms of their original agreement with him. Such an agreement was made in a written form on stamped local government paper and it was called *barwah*. At the time of starting for the pearl banks, when the *nakhuda* was adjusting his accounts with the sailors and divers, he usually obtained a *barwah* from them duly attested by witnesses, especially when there was any dispute about *tisqam*. In Bahrain the *barwah* was only signed by the *nakhuda* and sometimes, but not necessarily, before the Salifah Judge. In Kuwait it was not customary for *nakhudas* to give *barwahs* to sailors unless the latter wanted to leave him, in which case they got *barwahs* which they then hawked round till they could induce some other *nakhudas* to pay its amount to the original *nakhuda*. When this was done, the new *nakhudas* retained the *barwahs* themselves as documentary proof that they had legally engaged the sailors or divers. In Kuwait and more and more commonly elsewhere too a dispute between a diver and a *nakhuda* was generally decided by production of the *nakhuda*'s books, in which the diver's accounts were kept. In Sharjah, additionally to the books, a *barwah* for the total was produced and signed by both sides.

Provided that a sailor was free from debt, which was very rare, and wished to leave his *nakhuda*, he was his own master at the end of a diving season and could get *barwah* and employment with another *nakhuda*. But the receipt of *tisqam* by a sailor during the off season bound him to serve with the *nakhuda* who had paid him during the coming season. Sometimes a sailor owed money to other persons, not *nakhudas*. These creditors, when the pearling season came, could detain the sailor unless he paid his *nakhuda* claim, which had

priority and prevented him from proceeding to work. The *nakhuda*, however, could guarantee that the creditors would be paid at the end of the season from the sailor's earnings if such an agreement had previously been made. In some ports, if a sailor or a diver had many creditors, the ruler of the town was eligible to take a portion of the debtor's income and make a proportionate distribution of it to his creditors. Thus, a sailor's income consisted of the *salaf* and *khatm*, or a balance of wages due to him at the end of the pearling season.

Obviously, the whole fabric of the pearling industry would collapse if any diver when he got badly into debt could run away and escape his liabilities by the simple process of saying that he was a slave.⁹⁴

Some rules regulated the scale of responsibility of *nakhudas* for the debts of their sailors. The general rule was that a diver who was indebted to one *nakhuda* could not be engaged by another one unless the latter arranged with the former to pay up the debts at once or by installments. A diver had to produce a *barwah*, which in the case when he had no debt was called a *barwah khalawi*. It happened, however, that a *nakhuda* engaged a diver without informing any other *nakhuda* about this fact and without asking the diver for any *barwah*. If it turned out that a diver had drawn advances from another *nakhuda*, the *nakhuda* who employed him had to prove that he was not aware that the diver was previously indebted. Otherwise he was responsible for the diver's debts. A diver who took two advances, one from *nakhuda A* and one from *nakhuda B*, with neither of them being aware of this, committed a fraud. On discovery of the fraud either *nakhuda* might retain the diver by paying up the other's claim. If, however, a *barwah* was issued, which the diver did not produce, the *nakhuda* who had issued the *barwah* took the diver and paid up the other *nakhuda*'s claim on him. In Bahrain in the late 1930s there was a law that accounts of all transactions were kept. No person who did not own a diving boat was eligible to take over divers for debt, and make them work for him. He was eligible, however, to take them over in settlement of diving debts and release them on a *barwah* to dive for any *nakhuda* and he received from the divers' employers one quarter of their earnings. If the diver on *barwah* obtained employment on shore during the diving season he was obliged to pay so-called *fasl al-bar* which was 25 rupees

⁹⁴ 'Copy of a memorandum No. 1185 dated 11th June 1917 from the Deputy Political Resident, Persian Gulf, to the Political Agent, Muscat', IOR: R/15/1/202 5/104 II, III.

per diver and 20 rupees per puller to the *nakhuda* from whom he obtained the *barwah*. These payments had to be completed before the commencement of the next diving season. If the diver obtained continuous employment with the Oil Company he paid the *nakhuda* or the merchant 5 rupees a month until the debt was discharged. He was not required to leave his employment for the pearling season. Bahrain government issued seasonally proclamations with elaborate rules which governed minor points but the general mechanism was as described above. It was the result of gradual reform initiated 12 years before. The situation on the Trucial Coast was very different and the books were not kept or were not true and accurate.⁹⁵

There were some rules restricting movement from one town to another of indebted *nakhudas* and divers. The obligations were on both sides, and in the case of divers they applied both to freemen and slaves. The latter, however, were more restricted in moving than their free colleagues. If a *nakhuda* had a claim against a sailor who had sailed with another *nakhuda* from some other town, the first *nakhuda* lodged a claim against the sailor and his new *nakhuda* in the latter's town. The first *nakhuda* had to take an oath before the Sharia Court or produce his books before the Salifah Court in support of his claim against the sailor. The sailor's denial was not accepted and he was called on to settle with the *nakhuda*. The new *nakhuda* was also involved and provided advance funds to enable the sailor to settle with his former *nakhuda*.

The cases of divers drawing advances from several creditors and being indebted to several *nakhudas* were common. Creditors and debtors often lived in different towns and divers indebted to *nakhudas* were dispersed in different towns, which made the situation more complicated. In many cases debts were as old as 20 years. In consequence, *nakhuda* A might engage a sailor or a diver who previously worked for *nakhuda* B and claim dues from this sailor or diver, while alleging a counterclaim against B by asserting that the *barwah* produced by B was false. If a sailor denied a claim of a *nakhuda*, the latter had to prove it by his account books, supported by witnesses, or by oath before the Sharia Court or by the production of witnesses who were present when the *nakhuda* settled the matter with the sailor. If this claim was so proved *nakhuda* A had to pay up *nakhuda* B's claim. Usually

⁹⁵ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Political Resident, Bushire, 2nd June 1936 From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Political Resident', Bushire, 25th May 1936, IOR: R/15/1/206 5/161 V.

the sailor was not believed and if the matter could not be settled it went before the Sharia Court and was settled, after production of account books, on oath.

It was common that a *nakhuda* had sailors indebted to him dispersed in different towns and debts were as old as 20 years, and the sailors were no longer coming to him for advances. These sailors embarked with another *nakhuda* and if they happened to meet the first one no claims could be made on the sea as it might lead to disputes and fighting. The *nakhuda* who claimed his dues from the sailor had to lay his claims on shore for settlement on their merits before the Salifah Court.

It was usually arranged to pay a claim by installments. In such cases an indebted diver got a certificate to that effect from his creditor. If he embarked with a new *nakhuda* and died or became unable to work or gave up the pearl diving, the creditor recovered his claim from the debtor's heirs. But if it was stated in the certificate that he was at liberty to go pearling, then his new *nakhuda* was bound to pay the creditor's claim. The heirs of a deceased diver were answerable for his debts. In Bahrain the claims against divers or sailors who died were decided on their merits by the Sharia Court and generally property of deceased debtors was distrained in satisfaction of creditors.

There also were rules regarding work by divers during the off season. Many of divers went to the Red Sea fisheries on the termination of the Gulf pearling season. Generally, freemen divers were at liberty to proceed there or elsewhere after the diving season in the Persian Gulf was over, even if their *nakhudas* had claims against them and other *nakhudas* desired to employ them in the off season on the Red Sea pearl-banks or otherwise. However, if a diver was paid *tisqam* by a *nakhuda* he could not go with another one without a consent of the first *nakhuda*. In Bahrain, this first *nakhuda* asked the second one to guarantee the diver's debts before consenting. In Kuwait, the *nakhuda* who desired to hire a diver had to pay his debts. Moreover, permission to an indebted diver to go on a deep sea voyage was only given on condition that the diver would return in time to take services to his creditor. This creditor was not answerable in Sharjah to a new *nakhuda* for a diver's debts once he missed the Gulf fisheries and went to the Red Sea or elsewhere. Similarly, the new *nakhuda* was not answerable for a diver's debts to the initial creditor with the moment of hiring an indebted diver. A *nakhuda* who employed a diver during the off season could not detain this diver when the pearling season in the Gulf came, even if the diver was in his debt, unless he paid another *nakhuda*'s claim against this diver. If

a diver received *tisqam* from a *nakhuda* he was obliged to go for pearling with him and another *nakhuda*, who employed him for the off season, could not release him by paying claims of the first *nakhuda* against this diver. At the same time, his own claims against the diver had to stand over till the next off season, when he could call the diver to pay up his debt and serve him for that off season.⁹⁶

If a merchant advanced money to a *nakhuda* who could not repay it in satisfaction of a decree the *nakhuda* transferred some of his divers who were in debt to him to the merchant. These divers were bound to work for him during diving seasons only until the amount of debt owed by them on their transfer was settled. If they were employed for work other than diving, the merchant received a quarter of their earnings (*ruba makadda*). That was the common practice on the Trucial Coast and worked as slavery.⁹⁷

Slaves were as indebted to *nakhudas* as free divers. In October 1937, a slave named Mas'ud bin Gundan came to the Political Agency and asked for a manumission certificate. He was a Baluchi, aged about 40 years, and stated that he had run away from his master because of his cruelty and intention to sell him to others. The Agent made the note that the slave did not show any marks of ill-treatment. The case was sent for further investigation to Sharjah, as the slave came from Dubai.⁹⁸ On enquiry it was found out that Mas'ud bin Gundan was a slave of Hasan bin Muhammad of Abu Dhabi who alleged that the slave was a diver and indebted on account of diving according to the account book of Muhammad bin Banduq of Abu Dhabi. The statement of account sent showed a sum of 640 rupees to be due from the slave.

Statement of Accounts

Due from Masood who is with Muhammad bin Banduq ... Rs. 245/-.

Given to the diver two bags rice, two baskets dates, 1/2 maud coffee, 2 maunds flour and Rs. 5.

Advances in summer: 1 bag rice, 1/2 md. coffee and Rs. 17/-.

Advances in summer: 1 bag rice, 1 1/2 mds. coffee, 1 md. ghee, 1 basket dates Rs. 35/- and also Rs. 5/-.

⁹⁶ 'Abstract of Customary Rules in use at Bahrain, Kuwait, Lingeh and the Trucial Coast for the settlement of cases arising out of the Pearling Industry'. IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202.

⁹⁷ From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Political Resident', Bushire, 25th May 1936, IOR: R/15/1/206 5/161 V.

⁹⁸ 'Statement of the slave Mas'ud bin Gundan, aged about 40 years, recorded on the 15th October 1937', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

Summer earnings Rs. 15/- and Rs. 42/8/-.

Advance given at the commencement of diving season: 1/2 bag rice, Rs 5/-, 1 basket dates, a lungi for Re. 1/, a long shirt for Rs. 1/ and a mat for Rs. 2/4-.

Advances in summer: 1 bag rice, Rs 15/-, 1 basket dates for Rs. 4/-, Rs. 2/-, lungis for Rs. 1/12/-. Also 2 bags rice, 1 maund coffee, 1 basket dates for Rs. 5/-, 1 md. ghee for Rs. 5 and Rs. 38.

Earnings Rs. 21/- and Rs. 40/12/-.

New advances: 1 bag rice, 1 basket dates, Rs. 2/-, 2 kias coffee, 2 maunds flour, 1 lungi and mat for Rs. 4/4/-.

For marriage: 3 bags rice, 2 maunds ghee, 8 maunds flour, 2 maunds sugar, 2 baskets dates, quilt and bed sheet for Rs. 3/4.

Other provision taken from the shop for Rs. 42/-, 2 sheep for Rs. 7/, cash Rs. 65 and i bisht for Rs. 12/-.

Summer advance: 1 bag rice, Rs. 10/- by shop-keeper Rs. 8 and 1 maund coffee.

Advances: 2 bags rice, Rs. 20/-, 1 maund coffee, 1 maund sugar, 1 maund ghee, by shop-keeper Rs. 5/-, cash Rs. 1/- and one rafter for 1/4.

Earnings: Rs. 35/- and Rs. 62/-.

New advances: 1 bag rice, Rs. 5/-, 1/2 maund coffee, 1 basket dates, 2 kias ghee, 1 maund flour and Rs. 2/.

Summer advances: 1 bag rice, Rs. 1/8, 1 maund ghee, 2 maunds flour, 1/2 maund sugar, 1 bag rice, 1 maund coffee, 1 basket dates, 1 maund ghee, 2 maunds flour, 1 maund sugar and Rs. 25/-.

Earnings: Rs. 35/- and Rs. 21/8/-.

Total Rs. 913/-.

Earnings Rs. 273/-.

Balance Rs. 640/-.⁹⁹

Another slave named Bilal bin Wulaid, who was 45 years old and requested the certificate in April 1938, declared that he owned his *nakhuda* a sum of 2,792 rupees. He also declared to work in diving against this claim. There was no doubt that this sum of money would never be paid. The amount of the bond at the end of the 1937 diving season was higher than at the beginning.

Total amount of the bond at the beginning of the season Rs. 2,787

Paid to him Rs. 10/- coast of one bag of rice, as advance Rs. 10

Paid one bag of Basrah dates..... Rs. 3

Paid in cash Rs. 2

⁹⁹ 'Translation of letter No. 307 dated 21st April 1938 from the Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

Total	Rs. 2,802
Minus his income	Rs. 10
Balance due	Rs. 2,732
Paid Rs. 50/- as advance and one bag of rice worth Rs. 10/-	Rs. 60
Total amount of the bond at the end of the season	Rs. 2,792 ¹⁰⁰

When the whole system of pearl industry found itself in deep crisis, the masters reduced advances paid to their slave divers. They gave them 20, 10 or even 5 rupees as an advance which was not enough to maintain the family.¹⁰¹ Many slaves refused to get such small sums and ran away. Sometimes, the masters refused to give the slaves any advance.

Statement made by Hasan bin Ali, born in Boshakard, Mekran, aged about 60 years. Recorded at Sharjah on the 11th November 1939

My master got me married to a free women Sallumah who gave birth to two sons /.../. My master used to send me every year to the diving banks for diving. He was taking my earnings. I and my family were living in his house. At the end of this diving season I asked my master to give me something out of my earnings but he refused to do so and turned me out of his house. I have therefore came from Dubai to Sharjah in order to take refuge at the Government House and beg to be released from slavery.¹⁰²

The majority of *nakhudas* could not stand the costs of carrying on the pearl business and started to sell their boats. Initially they sent their slaves to the diving banks with some other people but then started to sell slaves to reduce the costs. The slaves lost the sense of social stability and the cases of running away from the masters increased. The British Agency and certificates of manumission seemed to be the only possible remedy in the situation.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ 'Translation. Statement showing the amount due from Bilal bin Wulaid, 1938', IOR: R/15/1/219 5/190 V.

¹⁰¹ 'Statement of slave Bashir bin Farajullah aged about 80 years recorded in the Political Agency', Bahrain on the 11th of March 1934, IOR: R/15/1/209 5/168 V.

¹⁰² IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

¹⁰³ 'Statement made by Almas bin Husain, aged about 35 years. Recorded at Sharjah on the 28th October 1939', IOR: R/15/1/212 5/168 VIII.

Chapter III: The British

1. The policy and instructions

The British consular officers in the Gulf used to stress the difference between the European conception of slavery and the situation of slaves in the Persian Gulf region. ‘An important point about domestic slavery on the Arab Coast was that no one needed remain a slave unless he wanted to. There was no question of keeping the slaves as prisoners or working them in gang under overseers: the conventional ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ picture which was called up in some people’s minds by the word ‘slavery’’, we read in the report of the Political Resident of 1935.¹

The conditions of slavery in the coastal area from Aden to Kuwait also differed somewhat from those on the Red Sea coast of Arabia, because of the existence of the date-growing and pearl-fishing industries. The conditions of life of slaves working in the date plantations of Oman or employed in the pearl-fishing industry of the Persian Gulf approximated the European conception of slavery existing in the American and West Indian plantations of the 18th century. The lot of the domestic slave compared very favourably with that of the average free man of tribal Arabia. The status of slavery was recognized in the *Qur’an*, and slavery had existed in Arabia for centuries; the slave population was maintained not so much by the importation of fresh slaves from abroad, as by the practice of slave-owners providing wives for their slaves. As a result, their offspring were brought up to know no condition other than slavery. In consequence, the abandoning of slavery in Arabia could

¹ ‘The Residency, Bushire, to the India Office, Bushire, 20th July 1935’, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

only be a result of a very gradual process of education. In the opinion of some consular officers, to attempt to secure the abolition of slavery by wide measures of coercion was useless. Thus, to stop the further importation of slaves into Arabia was one thing, but the elimination of the existing slavery throughout Arabia was another. Domestic slavery was considered a purely internal matter of the shaikdoms² and it was decided not to interfere drastically with the long-established custom in the internal affairs of independent or quasi-independent states.³

In 1898, the Government of India decided to continue the policy of not disturbing the local rulers, so long as they continued to act on advice of the British Agents.⁴ However, an important notice was made at the same time: ‘The Government of India recognizes that the matter is one in which it is clearly desirable to proceed gradually, while making it generally known that slavery under any times, is contrary to British law and custom and will receive no support or encouragement from British authorities’.⁵

It was also believed that a radical change in public opinion was necessary to end slavery. A proposal to press the Sultan of Muscat and the shaikhs of Bahrain and Trucial Oman to adopt a measure similar to the decree of the Sultan of Zanzibar of 1890 by which various classes of domestic slaves were liberated immediately was found to be impracticable, because of the dissimilarity of the internal conditions of these various states. Therefore, the Government of India eventually declared that it was their object ‘now, as always, to discourage slavery under any terms, and to move steadily in the direction of its opposition’, but thought that a mistake would be made if, by precipitate or sentimental action, a slavery question was gratuitously raised in the Persian Gulf. In a special report prepared for the League of Nations in 1936 a view was expressed that, ‘Immediate prohibition of slavery would not only have disorganized the social and economic system of the country, but would, as experience in many other countries had proved, have caused real hardship to

² ‘Political Agency, Kuwait, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Kuwait’, 26th July 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

³ ‘Memorandum concerning the existence of Slavery and Slave Trading along the Eastern and South-Eastern Coasts of Arabia’, IOR: R/15/1/226.

⁴ ‘From the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf’, Simla, 16th August 1899, IOR: R/15/2/1826.

⁵ ‘From the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf’, Simla, 13th October 1898, IOR: R/15/2/1826.

the slaves themselves. /.../ The position of many poor Arabs and poor freed slaves was worse than that of slaves'.⁶

The British authorities perfectly realized that the religious *mutawwa* were still the chief repository of learning and power in the land, and they regarded the anti-slave bias as alien, if not Western, Christian and subversive. Sharia law was considered by them as perhaps the most sacred and powerful institution in tribal Arabia and it was obvious that no authority could defy its ordinances without becoming discredited, or even incurring odium. By Sharia law the slave was a property and on a master's death the slave formed part of the estate and his value was subjected to the usual rigid law of Muslim inheritance.⁷

On 11th May, 1938, the Council of the League of Nations adopted a resolution relating to slavery, in which it expressed the hope that the Slavery Convention of 25th September, 1926, would be ratified without further delay. The Council also appealed to the governments of those states which had already ratified the Convention to supply the League with the information on slavery as accurate as possible in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention.⁸

In connection with the discussion in Geneva, the British Government prepared the communication dated 25th February, 1938, to the Secretary-General of the League on the subject of slavery in the Persian Gulf. The communication contained an analysis of the manumission policy and the contention that the slave trade, as such, no longer existed in the Persian Gulf. Referring to this contention, the Secretary of India formulated a kind of strategy for the future and stated, in particular, that in addition to the prohibition of importation and sale, a gradual emancipation of born slaves should be considered in some parts of the Persian Gulf. At that moment, the rulers of the Arabian Coast were doubtless aware of the Slavery Regulations promulgated by the Saudi Government in 1936. The India Office insisted on issuing a new proclamation which would make the possession of a captured slave a punishable offence.⁹

⁶ 'The Aspect of Slavery in Muhammadan Law', *League of Nations, Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery, Note by the Secretariat, C.C.E.E./70*, Geneva, 15th February 1936, IOR, R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

⁷ 'Notes on Slave Trade by B. S. Thomas, Finance Minister, Muscat State', August 1929, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

⁸ 'League of Nations. Slavery, Geneva', 1st June 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

⁹ 'The Under Secretary of State for India', 19th May 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

The British officers in the Persian Gulf were, however, of a different opinion on the general emancipation of born slaves. J. B. Howes, the Political Agent in Bahrain, thought that the proclamation of 11th August, 1937, against slavery, the Shaikh of Bahrain had been forced to issue was no more than a formality. The slave trade had ceased to exist in that country long time before and there were no cases of enslaving anyone. In the Trucial Coast and Qatar the situation was quite different. The only possible way to make a proclamation here was its announcement by the shaikh in open *majlis* (a council of the elders). The Political Agent was of the opinion that any shaikh could be talked or even shouted down by the local notables when mentioning the idea of the born slaves' emancipation. The shaikhs and the notables were perfectly aware that the anti-slavery treaties only dealt with the importation of slaves, and the majority of slave-owners on the Trucial Coast were interested in domestic slaves. Therefore, it would be useless for a shaikh to issue a mere enunciation of a policy which in any case he did not really support. It would merely weaken his personal authority and not enforce it. And this would be entirely contrary to the system by which the order on the Trucial Coast was maintained.

The issue was therefore not between a slavery-hating slave and a slave-owning people, but between the British authorities and the whole tribe of local population, concluded the Political Agent. Were the shaikhs of the Trucial Coast and Qatar required to issue a proclamation to the public like that in Bahrain, the matter would be treated not as a question of an external treaty but as one of internal law. External treaties could be brought about by pressure, but the law of a country had to follow its public opinion, or it would be flouted. Besides, Howes did not see any value in the issue of a proclamation making the possession of a captured slave a punishable offence, unless someone was going to make real efforts to detect and punish offenders. He did not believe that any shaikh would do so. In his view, as regards the gradual emancipation of born slaves, the existing system of issuing manumission certificates operated in desirable direction. No one needed remain a slave if he did not want to. The question was merely the economic one of the local demand for free labour. It was useless to emancipate a man and let him starve.¹⁰

¹⁰ These proclamation referred to the Section 367, 370, and 371 of the Indian Penal Code, and said in the name of the Governor General of India in Council that, 'Whoever imports, exports, removes, buys, sells or disposes of any person as a Slave, or accepts, receives or detains against his will any person as a Slave, shall be punished with

The Political Agent suggested, therefore, to pursue the existing system of manumission with all possible energy, but he did not think it possible or advisable to introduce any advance on it until the development and education on the Trucial Coast brought a more favourable economic situation, and a change of public opinion among the inhabitants.¹¹

A similar opinion was expressed by the Agent in Kuwait. He found the ruler of this town naturally kindly disposed towards slaves, and willing and ready to either free a slave, if one could put up a reasonable case on the ground of his nationality, or at any rate to prevent his being ill treated. Yet if he were forced to agree to a slave treaty, it would make him most unpopular with his subjects, concluded the Agent.¹²

The Agency in Sharjah dealt with the whole Trucial Coast. Judging by the number of applications for manumission made here it was the busiest place in the Gulf. People from the Saudi territory, Qatar and Burami reported to Sharjah along with slaves from all towns and villages from Abu Dhabi to Ras al-Khaimah. The Agency was headed by a native, who was trustful enough and who knew the local rulers and social relations. The position of the native agent was occupied by a man named Abdul Latif and then by his son Isa.

In January 1928, a man named Thani bin Mitrah arrived to the Political Agency in Muscat from Khan on the Trucial Coast and asked for a certificate of manumission. He explained that he could not accept any longer the situation of not being paid by his master and that he wanted to work on his own as a free man. When asked why he had not gone to the Residency Agent in Sharjah on the Trucial Coast he answered that that Agency had bad reputation among slaves because whenever a slave took refuge with the Residency Agent he took money from the master and returned the slave to him. The man failed, however, to prove this.¹³ In 1931 (March or April), 4 slaves from Sharjah arrived at Bahrain and requested manumission certificates from the Political

imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine'. See: 'The Political Agency, Bahrajn, to the Adviser, Bahrain Government', Bahrain, the 15th January 1930, IOR: R/15/2/1365.

¹¹ 'The Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf', 14th August 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

¹² 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to The Political Secretary to H.E. The High Commissioner', Kuwait, 13th May 1921, IOR: R/15/1/207 5/161 VI, 168 IX, 179 II.

¹³ 'Copy of statement dated 18-1-1928 of Thani bin Mitrah born in Shargah aged about 55 years', IOR: R/15/1/216 5/190 II.

Agency. When asked why they had not reported to the Residency Agent in Sharjah, they replied that they had been told that the Residency Agent always returned slaves at once to their masters. One of them stated that he had made 8 appeals before the Residency Agent in Sharjah but had been turned away each time.¹⁴

There were more such complaints against the Residency Agent. Symptomatically, no action was taken against him. He was himself a part of the local system and as long as there was no intention in the British policy to destroy this system, the position of the Residency Agent was secured.

2. Relations with local rulers

The main difficulty the British authorities were facing when dealing with the local rulers was how to combine the policy of manumission with the maintenance of peace and social stability in the region.

In Muscat, slaves were treated under the Treaty of 1873 and manumission certificates were only granted with the acquiescence of the Sultan of Muscat after joint investigation of the ruler and the British representatives. On the Trucial Coast, the certificates were granted by the Political Resident in Bushire on report by the Native Agent after local investigation at which the shaikh concerned was represented and he acquiesced or protested. In Persia, Bandar Abbas, Lingah, Bushire, and Muhammarah where the British acted under the Convention of 1882 the case was sent to the local official who was asked to issue a certificate. He made his own enquiry in the presence of the British representative and granted or objected to grant a certificate. When a Persian certificate had been granted, it was filled in the British representative's office and a British certificate was given on the strength of it. In the case of Negroes arriving by sea from territories outside Persia, the British authorities were not obliged to refer to the local governor, unless he had cognizance of the case and satisfied the British officials that he had grounds for being consulted.

The case of Kuwait went under a special category. Although the shaikh did not enter into a slavery agreement he was nevertheless in close relations with the British and the principle of consulting him was observed. The practice was established that if a slave escaped from the area of the Agency in Kuwait

¹⁴ 'Summaries of declarations of refugee slaves', IOR: R/15/1/209 5/168 V.

and took refuge in an Agency situated in another area, the British Agent did not in any circumstances force the slave back, and the Residency in Bushire readily issued the manumission certificate. If a slave did not escape, and the Agent at Kuwait heard from a third party – even a relative – of his or her being wrongly in captivity, he proceeded with great caution until he was sure that getting the slave away would not endanger or reduce him or her to worse circumstances.¹⁵

As regards slaves imported to Bahrain from Kuwait, it was recognized by the ruler of Bahrain that the Treaty Engagement of 1856 granting freedom to all slaves brought ‘from any quarter whatsoever’ into Bahrain territory applied not only slaves but to all those imported from the neighbouring ports on both sides of the Gulf who decided to claim it. Under this rule a number of slave-refugees from Persia, Qatar, Hasa, Oman and Kuwait had been manumitted before 1907 at different times.¹⁶

The African population, mainly slaves, was engaged chiefly in the pearl diving industry and was indebted. There had been an agreement in force since 1879, concluded by the shaikhs of the Trucial Oman, in regard to the treatment of indebted divers absconding from one principality to another to evade debt. This agreement was a valuable instrument for the preservation of peace both on the Arab Coast itself and on the pearl banks. It was regarded by the shaikhs as a very important safeguard of their interests. The British consistently upheld this agreement. In consequence, when indebted divers, and especially slaves, ran away to Bandar Abbas and Lingah and obtained manumission certificates there on the bare statements or after inadequate verification, the shaikhs protested stressing that they evaded the Agreement of 1879. As a result, the Resident instructed in 1908 all Agents to continue to give such slaves sanctuary as heretofore but to postpone the issuing of manumission certificates until they communicated with the Resident and ascertained the history of the case.¹⁷

The main point was to determine whether a refugee Negro was really a slave or only a fugitive from justice or debt. This had to be properly done before

¹⁵ ‘From Political Agent, Kuwait, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, 25th May 1925’, IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

¹⁶ ‘From Captain F. B. Prideaux, Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Political Agent, Kuwait, Bahrain, 29th November 1907’, IOR: R/15/1/213 5/183 (D 31).

¹⁷ ‘The Political Resident to the Senior Naval Officer, Bushire, 2nd June 1909’, IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

any certificate was granted and not afterwards. It was one of the argument against issuing the certificates on board of ships after a superficial enquiry which as a rule was all that was possible on the part of a naval commander who did not know well the situation on the coast.¹⁸

No subsidy was paid to any ruler in the Persian Gulf for the specific purpose of the suppression of the slave trade. The only subsidy, besides war subsidies and grants, and Telegraph Subsidies, was paid to the Sultan of Muscat but it was paid by the Government of India on behalf of the Sultan of Zanzibar partly on account of the assistance given by Sultan Saiyid Majid of Zanzibar in the suppression of the slave trade. It was thus connected with the slave trade question, but only in respect of Zanzibar.¹⁹

Cases of refugee slaves claiming the protection on the ships were regulated by the article XXVIII of the General Act of Brussels Conference which provided that, within the zone defined in Article XXI (Atlantic and Indian Oceans), any slave who took refuge on board of a ship of war flying the flag of one of the signatory powers was immediately and definitely freed.²⁰ Consequently, it was laid down on page 92 of Volume one of the 1892 Slave Instructions, that the right of freedom of a slave who took refuge on board of a ship of war was henceforth absolute. According to the above-mentioned Slave Instruction (Arts: 99, 100, 101, 102), the report of the reception of a fugitive slave was always to contain fullest particulars of the circumstances under which he was received on board, stating whether the locality in which he was received was within or beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the country on the coast of which the ship was cruising, and to specify whether it was on the ground of being kept in slavery contrary to treaties, or as a domestic slave alleged to receive ill-treatment from the owner. In spite of these general rules, the position of the British Residency in Bushire was that it was not desirable that commanding officers granted freedom papers to slaves taking refuge on board of the British ships of war within the Persian Gulf and Muscat waters without reference to

¹⁸ 'The Political Resident to the Senior Naval Officer, Bushire, 12th June 1909', IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

¹⁹ 'The Deputy Political Resident to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India at Simla, Bushire, 20th April 1920', IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

²⁰ 'Convention portant revision de l'Acte Général de Berlin du 26 février 1885 et de l'Acte Général et de la Déclaration de Bruxelles du 2 juillet 1890 signée à Saint-Germain-en-Laye', IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

the Resident in Bushire and Consul in Muscat, or the Sultan of Muscat. The proper course was to send such slaves to the British Agencies and Consulates.²¹

The shaikhs of Bedouin tribes were not under British control and generally refused to co-operate with the British representatives in suppressing slavery. On 7th December, 1927, Shaikh Sultan bin Salim, chief of Ras al-Khaimah, informed Isa bin Abdul Latif, the Residency Agent, about the case of two Baluchis who left Ras al-Khaimah with the intention of going to Kalbah and were arrested by the Bedouins at a wadi called Bathnah which was a dependency of the chief of al-Fujairah. The Residency Agent sent a letter to the Shaikh of Ras al-Khaimah expecting him to recover the kidnapped Baluchis. The shaikh replied, however, that the Bedouins got a large number of followers and that it would be advisable not to be in a hurry and to proceed in a polite manner with them. It was obvious that the shaikh was not going to undertake any action. In the meantime, the Baluchis were sent to Buraimi for sale. The Residency Agent asked the shaikhs of Hamriyyah and Umm al-Qaiwain to come to Ras al-Khaimah in order to help him in pressing Shaikh Sultan bin Salim to recover the Baluchis. The two shaikhs came and declared that they were prepared to join the ruler of Ras al-Khaimah in fighting the kidnappers. Besides, the Shaikh of Umm al-Qaiwain sent a messenger to the Bedouins advising them to send the Baluchis back if they did not want him to break his treaty with them. It was a decisive moment and the Baluchis returned to Ras al-Khaimah soon. Finally, the Residency Agent wrote letters to the rulers of Umm al-Qaiwain and Hamriyyah thanking them for their assistance. On the other hand, the carelessness of the Shaikh of Ras al-Khaimah was not approved and he was warned that an action would be made against him if such instances took place in future within his jurisdiction.²² He was also blamed for accepting 'the sale of God's creatures' since it was 'against the teaching of the Koran also that Muslims should sell a Muslim into slavery'.²³

In January 1937, a Persian woman Shirin bint Firooz from Muhammadi on the Persian coast reported to the Political Residency in Bushire and asked

²¹ 'Extract from East Indies Station Orders 1907. Article 179. Freedom papers of Fugitive Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/199 5/6 I.

²² 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire', Sharjah, 28th December 1927, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

²³ 'British Residency and Consulate-General, Bushire, to the Chief of Ras al-Khaimah', 27th February 1928, IOR: R15/1/223 5/191 III.

for a manumission certificate. She complained that her master set free her sister and brother but not her. He beat her and turned out of his house. The Residency refused her request because under the Persian law of 1929 slavery was forbidden in Iran and remedy of anyone treated as a slave was no longer manumission either by the Persian Government or by the British Resident but application to Persian authorities to enforce the law.²⁴ In the case of abduction of slaves on the Persian coast, the British Consular officers brought such incidents to the notice of local Persian authorities and requested that the persons found guilty should be punished.²⁵

Persia was a party to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and the Article No. XVIII of the General Act gave the British authorities permission to communicate with the Persian officials about the slave question but they couldn't act as they did before.²⁶ However, slaves in Persia were not manumitted in accordance with the Brussels Act, but with a special agreement that had existed between Great Britain and Persia since 1882. Thus, in the case of slaves taking refuge in the British Consulate, the case was sent to the Persian authorities, who were to grant manumission certificates. It was expected that the persons holding the certificates issued by the British Consul in Muscat would certainly obtain the good offices of British Consular authorities in Persia and also in Bahrain.²⁷

The relations with the Persian Government were complicated as the Persian authorities were powerless to act against local trade brokers. Persian authority throughout Makran was shadowy, and it was difficult for Teheran to enforce unpalatable measures on the Baluchi chiefs. As an example of the powerlessness of the Persian Government the British Resident mentioned a report from the India European Telegraph Department that on 17th September 1929, two slaves took refuge with the Persian officer commanding troops at Jask, and they were returned by him to their masters, as a result of threats or bribes from the latter. It was the magnet of the pearl fisheries which attracted the slave dealers but the supply area which once used to be centred in Africa shifted to Persian

²⁴ 'From Political Resident, Bushire, to H.M's Minister at Teheran', 17th January 1937, IOR: R/15/1/203 5/194 I, 195 I, 179 III, 169 II, 104 IV.

²⁵ 'Copy of letter No. 640 dated the 14th December 1927 from the British Consular Agent, Lingeh to Governor', Lingah, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

²⁶ See: IOR: R/15/1/202 5/104 II, III.

²⁷ 'From the Political Resident, Bushire, to Political Agent, Muscat', Bushire, 5th May 1900, IOR: R/15/2/1826.

Makran. However, the number of newly made slaves imported by sea was very small. As a very rough estimate the figure of 100 annually was given. The British ships were always on the look out for slave *dhow*s, and redoubled their efforts at the end of 1920s, but effective action on sea alone was very difficult. It was usually impossible to differentiate slaves who were afraid to declare themselves from the ordinary crew of a *dhow*.²⁸

In July 1928, Persia expressed the wish to be released from the Anglo-Persian Convention of 1882 for the Suppression of the Slave Traffic, which was considered to be derogatory to Persian dignity. The Persian government denied the rights of the British ships under that convention to detain and search Persian merchant vessels. Once the Political Resident in Bushire reported that a small but regular traffic in Baluchi slave from Persian Baluchistan to the coasts of Oman was carried on by regular dealers on Persian soil, London was of the opinion that a relaxation in the preventive measures enforced at that moment by the British authorities would merely result in the revival of the trade on a considerable scale. Therefore, the first position of the British government was that, in given circumstances, it was impossible to agree to the cancellation of their rights under the 1882 convention. The Foreign Office suggested that some articles of the Convention should be cancelled instead of the whole text.²⁹

Thus, the Foreign Office approved the views of the India Office expressed in the memorandum of 8th September, in which the Secretary of State for India suggested that the British Government should aim, in the forthcoming negotiations, at maintaining for vessels flying the British flag their existing immunity from search on the high seas by Persian vessels, and further, at securing that no substantial relaxation of preventive measures would take place. The India Office insisted that preventive action in the Gulf should remain in the hands of the British Government, and that the establishment in the Gulf of an effective Persian preventive service or naval force would probably be a threat to the British position in the region. Another argument raised was that Persia did not formally accede to or ratify the League of Nations Slavery Convention of 1926.³⁰

²⁸ 'British Residency and Consulate-General, Bushire, to the British Minister at the Court of Persia', Bushire, 15th October 1929, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

²⁹ 'Lord Cushendun to Sir R. Clive (Tehran)', Foreign Office, 21st November 1928, IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

³⁰ 'India Office to Foreign Office', 8th September 1928, IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

The situation changed when on 7th February, 1929, the Persian Government presented to the Persian Parliament, asking for its immediate ratification, a bill dealing with the manumission of slaves arriving in Persian territory and making slave-dealing an offence punishable with imprisonment of from one to three years. During the debate on the bill, it was admitted that there were places in South Persia where the slave traffic was being carried on and the Persian government stressed the determination to eradicate slavery from the Persian dominions.³¹ The project said that, ‘In the Kingdom of Persia no one is recognized as a slave and every slave that comes to Persia or to Persian coastal waters will be *ipso facto* free. Any persons buying or selling a human being as a slave or exercising any other proprietary right over a human being or acting as an intermediary and/or being concerned in the traffic of slaves will be punished by imprisonment for a period of from one to three years. Law forbidding the Purchase and Sale of Slaves on Persian Territory and according them Freedom on their Arrival in Persia passed by the Majlis on 18th Bahman, 1307 (February 7, 1929)’.³²

Eventually, the Foreign Office agreed on 27th September, 1929, to abrogation of the 1882 Convention and recommended that a single article in the general treaty with a protocol annexed to it was the best solution. The treaty article said that the both parties, recognizing that the 1882 Convention was out of date ‘owing to the progress made by Persia’ and recognizing the wish of Persia henceforth to assume her share of the responsibility for the suppression of the slave traffic in the Gulf agreed to afford other full co-operation in anti-slavery measures. The protocol provided that the Persian government should be responsible for searching Persian vessels on the high seas for slaves, and that the British Government should be responsible for searching British and Arab vessels.³³

Domestic slavery was considered a purely internal matter of the shaikdoms. In 1944, the Political Officer at the Agency in Sharjah was asking the Residency whether he was eligible to grant a manumission certificate to a man who was a born slave and he received the following response:

³¹ ‘Sir R. Clive to Sir Austen Chamberlain’, Tehran, 23rd February 1929, IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

³² IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

³³ ‘P. 6293. Memorandum Anglo-Persian Slavery Convention of 1882’, Foreign Office, 27th September 1929, IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

This is case of domestic slavery and I doubt if we should interfere. It appears that the slave had not been with his master for years. All our treaties with Trucial Shaikhs regarding slavery are aimed at Slavery Trading, and in particular maritime slaving. We cannot stop domestic slavery by treaty, but we have done so on the grounds of sale or cruel treatment. This case falls under neither category and I would not recommend issue of a certificate. It is perfectly true that our treaties do not permit us to interfere in domestic slavery unless there is good reason to suppose that the slaves are being treated harshly. In fact we can only interfere on these grounds in the Qatar Peninsula and not on the Trucial Coast. The fact that we do not interfere in domestic slavery in Qatar or on the Trucial Coast does not mean that we recognize slavery. If we refuse to grant a manumission certificate to a man on the ground that he is a domestic slave it amounts to our condoning the practice. Every case that arises should be carefully enquired into to make quite sure that the individual concerned was in fact a slave and has not previously been issued with a manumission certificate or that he has not now applied for a manumission certificate for some nefarious purpose. If the enquiries are satisfactory then he is entitled to receive a certificate.³⁴

The duty of the Agent was to insist on a shaikh's observing the agreement. In September 1910, several slaves were imported from Kuwait to Dubai for sale. They were secured by the Residency Agent in Sharjah and the names of the importers came to his knowledge. The Resident made the tour to the Arab coast and spoke to the ruler of Dubai about this matter. He also wrote a letter to the Shaikh of Kuwait complaining about his offending subjects. He expected that the importers would be punished by the ruler and in consequence stringent orders were given against these people.³⁵

In 1924, the Political Agent in Kuwait reported on 2 Armenian girls imported to this town. There was a rumour that one of them was given or bought by Shaikh Ahmad, the ruler. The fact that the British had no slave treaty with the ruler of Kuwait made it difficult to deal with such cases. The Agent, however, sent a strongly worded warning to the shaikh, informing him

³⁴ 'Extract of a Note made in this office regarding Domestic Slaves', Letter No. 991 of 14-6-44 from P.O.T.C., Sharjah, IOR: R/15/2/1843.

³⁵ 'Translation of a letter No. 275, dated the 6th September 1910, from the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to Sheikh Mubarak, Chief of Koweit', IOR: I.O.R.R/15/5/85 29/2.

that the British Government looked with extreme disfavour on the import and export of slaves, and advising him to put a stop to it.³⁶

On 11th December, 1928, a slave *dhow* and slaves were seized in Dubai. The Political Resident requested the senior naval officer to take action and the sloop *Lupin* was sent to Dubai. It turned out that the *dhow* together with the crew and four slaves (2 women and 2 boys) was in the custody of the Residency Agent in Sharjah. The *nakhuda*, however, escaped with six slaves. The Shaikh of Dubai disclaimed all responsibility for the landing of the slaves on the ground that the *dhow* was owned in Wudam and the owner and crew were subjects of the Sultan of Muscat. The shaikh insisted that the British should contact the Sultan of Muscat and refused to put the crew in the custody. As a result the *dhow* was confiscated but no action was taken against the crew.³⁷

If the Residency Agent came to know about the importation of slaves, he asked the shaikh of the town where slaves were imported to recover them and he assisted the shaikh's men in arresting kidnappers and handing the slaves over. If the shaikh refused to assist the Agency, the matter was submitted to the Political Resident and he communicated the shaikh to remind him his obligation under of the treaty. The general attitude of the shaikhs of Trucial Oman towards slavery was rather favourable and their co-operation in granting manumission was considered rather poor. Nevertheless, if a slave took refuge at the British Agency, his statement was taken and submitted to the Political Residency in Bushire in order that a manumission certificate be granted to him. The shaikhs co-operated not quite wholeheartedly but did not permit sale of the slaves in their territories. The business, however, was carried on privately between the inhabitants and not openly. If the Residency Agency in Sharjah arrested anyone who brought slaves for sale with the help of the shaikh, it asked the shaikh to punish the guilty. If the ruler avoided to take action, the Agency submitted a report to the Political Residency in Bushire.³⁸

In some cases the Agent threatened to use force. In 1938, information was received that slave trading from Makran to Saudi Arabia was carried on in

³⁶ 'Political Agency, Kuwait, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf', Kuwait, 28th July 1924, IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

³⁷ 'From the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, to the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station', 19th December 1928, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

³⁸ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident', Bushire, 22nd August 1928, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

and through Abu Dhabi territory. The shaikh was acquainted with this information and asked to put an end to this traffic. His answer, however, was ambiguous and the Political Resident considered a navy action to be taken against Abu Dhabi pearling fleet. The discussion with the senior naval officer and the Resident Agent in Sharjah proved that the size of the fleet and the distances rendered an idea of British sloops towing *dhow*s from the pearling banks to Abu Dhabi out of question.³⁹ Eventually, the idea of a military operation was given up and the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi was reminded once again that the good offices of the British government might be withdrawn if the slave trade continued to be carried on in and through his territory, even though this time the shaikh adopted a friendly and conciliatory attitude.⁴⁰ The Political Resident decided that as a security against the continuance of the trading the shaikh had to pay to the British Government the sum of 8,000 rupees, which would be returned to him by annual installments of 2,000 rupees if the British authorities were satisfied that the slave trading had ceased.⁴¹

In August 1939, the Political Resident reported to London on new cases of slave trading on the Trucial Coast in the last six months. The scale of the trade was small as in Ajman a boy and a girl were involved and in Ras al-Khaimah a woman was trafficked in. The children were not traced but the woman was recovered. The Resident was of the opinion that in spite of the fact that the number of the slaves involved in these cases was small, some action should be taken in order to enforce the slave treaties with the Trucial Coast shaikhs. The possible sanctions were three: (a) the stoppage of the British Government's good offices, including the refusal of travel papers, (b) the seizure of the pearling fleet of the offending shaikhdoms, (c) the bombardment of the house of the offending shaikh. Politically, the most practical seemed the last sanction and the senior naval officer was requested to make an investigation.⁴²

It turned out, however, that bombardment of the fort of the Shaikh of Ajman was not practical from the military point of view as it would damage the

³⁹ 'Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Residency Agent', Shargah, 11th April 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

⁴⁰ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Political Resident', Bushire, 2nd June 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

⁴¹ 'From Political Resident, Bushire, to the Secretary of State for Indian', London, 19th June 1938, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

⁴² 'Office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the India Office', Shiraz, 13th August 1939, IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

surrounding property.⁴³ Finally, it was decided to demand from the Shaikh of Ajman the expulsion of the slaver and paying a fine.⁴⁴

3. Manumission and debts

As indebtedness of divers was common, the question whether an indebted person should get a manumission certificate or not was of principal importance for preservation of the whole social and economic system. At first the position of the British authorities was that all accounts should be settled before a certificate was granted. On 5th June, 1917, a man named Mansoor bin Farhan forwarded in Muscat a petition for a manumission certificate. He took refuge a year before in the British Vice-Consulate in Bandar Abbas from where he absconded before orders for his dispatch to Sharjah reached the Consul. He was indebted as a pearl diver and was required in Sharjah for the settlement of his account. The Residency considered that he had to be send forthwith to the Residency Agent in Sharjah to receive his manumission certificate there, which could be delivered when his account was settled. In dealing with cases of Negroes from the Trucial Coast who were taking refuge at the Agency in Muscat and claiming to be slaves, the Political Agent in Muscat was instructed to act according to the rules of the liberation of slaves of 6th April, 1913. Part III and Part IV of the General Notes said that such cases had to be disposed of by a Salifah Court when possible and that all cases had to be referred to the Residency in Bushire.⁴⁵

In the 1920s there were cases when the Residency Agency in Sharjah, headed by a native agent, refused to accept statements submitted by kidnapped slaves if their kidnappers were subjects of the shaikhs others than the Shaikh of Sharjah. Such slaves were told to bring a letter from British consuls from Bahrain or Muscat or other places concerned. Usually, the slaves tried to reach the mentioned places and applied for manumission instead of asking for required letters.⁴⁶

⁴³ 'Office of the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf', Abadan, 5th July 1939, IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168 VII.

⁴⁴ 'Office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the India Office', Shiraz, 13th August 1939, IOR: R/15/1/211 5/168.

⁴⁵ 'Copy of a memorandum No. 1185 dated 11th June 1917 from the Deputy Political Resident, Persian Gulf, to the Political Agent, Muscat', IOR: R/15/1/202 5/104 II, III.

⁴⁶ Copy of statement made by one Farajullah son of Mubarak, born in Dhofar, aged about 25 years, dated 1st April 1929', IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

Soon afterwards, a new position was approved that nothing could prevent a slave from receiving freedom. In December 1922, a slave named Mabrook bin Jomah came to the British Residency in Bushire and made the statement. He applied for a manumission certificate because he had been ill-treated by his master who forced him to go to diving and was taking all his earning, not giving him sufficient food and clothing.⁴⁷ The enquiries made by the Residency Agent in Sharjah showed that Mabrook was a diver in Ras al-Khaimah and owed a large sum of 1,600 rupees to a *nakhuda* who complained against him to the shaikh. The Shaikh of Ras al-Khaimah, in his turn, complained against the diver to the Residency Agent. The shaikh requested the British authorities to send Mabrook to Sharjah where the Salifah Court would settle the matter between him and his *nakhuda*. The Agent was of the opinion that a manumission certificate might be issued for the applicant and sent along with him to the Agency in Sharjah. He proposed that as soon as a settlement between the *nakhuda* and the diver was effected he would hand the manumission certificate to the latter. The Political Resident did not share this opinion and stressed that a manumission certificate could not be issued on any condition.⁴⁸

In November 1937, the Residency Agent in Sharjah reported to the Political Agent in Bahrain required facts about a slave named Mubarak bin Ismai'l as several people were asking about him. On enquiry, the Residency Agent found out that the slave who had been manumitted many years ago was going to diving as a free man and owed a big sum of money to his *nakhuda*. This sum of 1,954 rupees was recorded in the *nakhuda* book but the slave argued it. The Shaikh of Sharjah ordered to catch him and he was transported to the British Agency where he admitted in the presence of the Residency Agent and two witnesses that he owed the above-mentioned sum of money to the *nakhuda*. His statement on this matter was sent to Bahrain.⁴⁹

Slave-owners were in the habit of obtaining bonds from their slaves for heavy sums of money in order to pass them for divers and to retain them in

⁴⁷ 'Statement made by Mabrook bin Jomah of Zanzibar, aged about 45. Recorded on 13th December 1922', IOR: R/15/1/203 5/194 I, 195 I, 179 III, 169 II, 104 IV.

⁴⁸ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident in Persian Gulf, 31st December 1922', IOR: R/15/1/203 5/194 I, 195 I, 179 III, 169 II, 104 IV.

⁴⁹ 'Translation of a letter No. 205 dated 9th March 1938 from the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent', Bahrain, IOR: R/15/1/127 vol. 173.

slavery indefinitely. In fact, it was not necessary to enquire from a master to find out whether his slave was a bonded slave or not as the master enumerated a dozen excuses that the man was a bonded slave and that he owed a heavy sum of money to his master or to a *nakhuda*.⁵⁰ The men who were slaves, not free men, could not be indebted to their masters if the latter did not pay them. When a slave escaped with a view to obtaining manumission, the owners frequently alleged debts in the hope that this would enable them to recover the slaves. It was the custom, if it was obvious that they were slaves, to decline to accept claims for money. It was known that the owners declared that the runaway slaves were not slaves at all, but free men indebted to them and in some cases it was found that they were in fact slaves, but the owner, knowing that as slaves they could not be indebted, endeavoured to prove a money claim and to support it he had to allege they were free. If it was known that they were slaves, they were treated as people escaping from slavery. If they were free men and indebted to their *nakhudas* it was open to the *nakhudas*, in accordance with the diving rules existing all over the Gulf, to file a suit against any *nakhuda* who employed them and who on the claim proved, became liable to the previous *nakhuda* for the sum due. This practice was invariably followed and claims against Bahrain *nakhudas* were often proved and vice versa, Bahrain *nakhudas* frequently went to Qatar and Najd to recover their claims from *nakhudas* who had engaged their divers without a *barwah*, or a certificate on indebtedness.⁵¹

In 1932, the Residency Agent in Sharjah reported to the Resident in Bushire the case of a slave named Khamis bin Ambar. We read in the letter:

I beg to state that this slave named Khamis /.../ stole certain pearls last year and was caught red handed. /.../ He was put in irons for a month and was then released. Khamis then ran away to Mekran and then to Bahrain. In my opinion the slave may be granted a Manumission Certificate to become free and if you would deem it advisable he may be ordered to proceed to Sharqah to arrange his diving debts. His Nakhuda claims to have a claim against him. If the debt be proved against him

⁵⁰ IOR: R/15/1/205 5/161 IV.

⁵¹ 'Political Agency, Bahrain, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire', Bahrain, 23rd January 1926, IOR: R/15/1/208 5/168 IV.

according to Diving Rules he may then arrange payment thereof and if not he could then go on diving with anybody he may like. As soon as any settlement has been arrived at I shall report to you on the subject.⁵²

The Resident approved the position of the Residency Agent.

4. Prevention of slavery and recovery of slaves

There was no general convention in force providing with the right of search for slaves but the Convention of 10th September, 1919, revising the General Acts of Berlin (1885) and of Brussels (1890). This Convention stated that the signatories (USA, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Japan, Italy, Portugal) would endeavour to secure the complete suppression of slavery in all its force, and of the slave trade by land and sea. It wasn't clear whether the obligations of the General Act of 1890 applied to the countries who were parties to it but not to the 1919 Convention. That was the case of Turkey and the states who succeeded it. The British authorities desired that the obligations applied to Turkey but the latter didn't admit this. A legal basis for such admission was provided by the Anglo-Turkish Treaty of 1881 for the suppression of the African slave trade, but a more definite basis of a similar kind in respect of Hijazi, Asiri and Najdi vessels was found in Article 7 of the Treaty of Jeddah of 1927. Ibn Saud undertook in it 'to co-operate by all means at his disposal with His Britannic Majesty in the suppression of the slave trade'.

Great Britain concluded treaties with several countries, and among them Borneo, Egypt, Italy, Liberia, Muscat, Persia, Spain, Bahrain and the Trucial shaikhdoms, by which the British cruisers were allowed to search the vessels of these countries for slaves. In particular, Article 1 of the Anglo-Persian Slavery Convention of 1882 stated that the object of the possible visit and detention of Persian merchants' vessels was 'to prevent the chance of Negro slaves, male and female, being imported into Persia'. At the end of the 1920s, there was no traffic in Negro slaves and the Persian government maintained that the convention was out of date, but that was not admitted by the British authorities. Because of these controversies, the Persian vessels were still searched in the

⁵² 'Copy of a letter No. 56, dated the 28th February 1932 from the Residency Agent, Sharqah, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire', IOR: R/15/2/1825.

neighbourhood of the slave route between Makran and the Arabian shore and such actions were justified under the 1882 Slave Convention and by the right which was exercised to search vessels in Arab territorial waters in this area. In the north-western portion of the Persian Gulf the search was continued with a greater caution. The Persian vessels were examined only when definite information or very strong suspicion existed and the British sloops in no case searched Persian vessels in Persian territorial waters.

By custom, native vessels within the Persian Gulf were searched by the British sloops, whatever flag they were flying, but the British commanders were instructed to carry on the search in a particular manner. Iraqi vessels were searched on the high seas, although the legal grounds for it were doubtful. In Iraqi territorial waters, however, no action was taken except in special cases and then as far as possible in consultation with the Port of Basrah authorities. The same rule was applied to Najdi *dhow*s within Najdi territorial waters.⁵³

Bahrain, the Trucial shaikhdoms and Muscat had formal engagements with the British government bidding them to abstain from and to suppress slave trading within their territories. These arrangements empowered the British authorities to search the vessels of Bahrain, the Trucial shaikhdoms and Muscat not only on the high seas but in their own territorial waters. The problem, however, was that the rulers of these territories were not always really desirous to respond to their treaty obligations. The worst delinquents were, perhaps, the shaikh of Dubai and the Sultan of Muscat.

There were two traditional sources of supply of slaves: (a) Zanzibar and the east coast of Africa; (b) the coastal region of Persian Baluchistan known as Makran. Another one was interior Oman, but it played more a role of an entrepôt than of a natural source of supply. There was also some kidnapping in the Arab villages of free-born Baluchis. In the early 1930s, the African and Zanzibar trade dwindled not only because of the effect of punitive measures against slave carriers, but also because the birth-rate among slaves imported into Arabia in earlier times sufficed to maintain the supply in a market which tended to diminish.⁵⁴

⁵³ 'Instruction to the Senior Officer, Red Sea Sloops and Persian Gulf, consulted in the Foreign Office, Colonial Office and India Office', No. 9009/123/124 of the 29th December 1930, IOR: R/15/1/226.

⁵⁴ 'The Secretary, Political Department, India Office, for the information of the Political Resident, Bushire', received, Bushire, 1st September 1932, IOR: R/15/5/311 9/1.

The rulers of the emirates on the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf were bound by the special treaty engagements to the British authorities to suppress and to abstain from the slave traffic and trade. They were also bound to permit the British vessels to search their vessels on their behalf not only on the high seas, but in their waters as well. In the case of Kuwait there was no formal engagement on the slavery, but the degree of control and influence exercised by the British in that emirate was in practice sufficient to impose an effective search on slave traffic within the territory under the Kuwaiti ruler. In Muscat, Bahrain, and Kuwait the British Government was represented by British Agents, and on the Trucial Coast by an Arab Agent. The British officers had the power to manumit slaves.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the treaty engagements of the local rulers and the vigilance of the British sloops, as well as the pressure exercised locally by the British representatives, resulted in reducing the trade in slaves to insignificant dimensions. A steady trickle still continued, but it was relatively unimportant. It was due to a large extent to the special local social conditions, which made it impossible to entirely eliminate slavery. Therefore, the British authorities put all efforts on the extinction of the slave traffic, but not on the slavery as such.

The slave trade in Kuwait was regarded for practical purposes as non-existing, although a number of domestic slaves was still kept by the Kuwaitis. In Bahrain the slave trade ceased to exist as a result of the measures taken by the local ruler. In particular, the Bahraini courts refused to recognize any longer the status of slavery in legal procedures. The status of slavery was not recognized in testamentary disputes. In 1930, the Political Resident in Bushire considered slavery in Bahrain almost non-existing. Slaves were still kept at houses for domestic needs, but slave traffic was not recorded and the number of domestic slaves was limited. In 1929, 27 slaves were manumitted and in 1930 the number was 13.⁵⁵

The situation in certain regions of Oman and on the Trucial Coast was different and not satisfactory for the British authorities. While the Sultan of the Muscat and Oman was well disposed towards the policy of slave traffic suppression, the problem was that large areas of his dominions, especially of the sea coasts, and

⁵⁵ 'Memorandum concerning the existence of Slavery and Slave Trading along the Eastern and South-Eastern Coasts of Arabia', E 1658/1054/91, Foreign Office, 27th March 1930, IOR: R/15/1/226 5/193 II (B 38).

in particular in the Batinah region, were half-independent and populated by warlike and unfriendly tribes, on whom it was impossible to bring any effective pressure. It was hoped that a road which was driven by the sultan's administration along the coast would facilitate re-establishing the control by the local authorities but the chances for that were slim. As a result, the suppression of slave trade and slavery itself was seriously hampered. In consequence, the British vessels paid special attention to the Batinah area with a view to intercept slaves. In the domains of the sultan the system of house slaves was widespread and it was associated with general economic conditions.⁵⁶

The slave traffic in Oman was in the hand of tribes. The largest and the most influential tribe was the Yal Saad. They occupied a territory about 25 miles in length in Batinah at a point where the date belt was at its greatest depth varying from 4 to 7 miles inland. This tract had for a long time formed a state independent of the Imams of Oman. The Yal Saad had a predilection for the Azzan branch of the ruling family in Oman perhaps because Rustaq adjoined their territory. At the time when the African slave trade flourished, the slaves used to be shipped in Badans from Sur to the Yal Saad country whence they were distributed along the Batinah and to the Trucial Coast. Thus, the Yal Saad territory was for a considerable period an entrepôt for the slave trade and the question of dealing with it was by no means new to the British authorities. The problems was that surveillance along the tract merely resulted in transferring the trade elsewhere and did not put an effective stoppage to it. In 1852, when the question of the African trade was being dealt with, it soon became evident that surveillance would be more effective if instituted on the African coast and no doubt surveillance on the Persian coast would in the same way be more effective. The Muscat state was not strong enough to deal effectively with this tribe. In 1922, the Sultan of Muscat called upon the British authorities to assist him in a campaign against the tribe, but the operation was not effective. Commenting on these operations, the Political Resident wrote: 'It will be seen that these operations dragged on from 18th October until 2nd November. This was most unexpected as the Muscat government confidently hoped that the Yal Saad would submit as soon as one of H.M. Ships appeared upon the scene. The Political Agent and I both consider there were good grounds for such a hope as the last time when the Yal Saad were rebellious the

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

mere threat of bombardment by then Wazir made them submit and pay their fine at once. I have noticed, however, recently on the Trucial Coast that bombardments are not regarded with as much dread as formerly'.⁵⁷

Commenting this operation, the Political Agent expressed a general view on the possibility of the extinction of slavery: 'Although I do not think that the immediate use of force would have commensurate results, I have every hope that the construction of a road along Batinah which is already under way and which will no doubt be carried out within the next couple of years; the consequent advent of motor cars and the formation of closer relations with Muscat will end towards making this tract, too conspicuous venue as an entrepôt for the slave trade. The trade will then cease automatically'.⁵⁸

The Shaikh of Qatar gave firm evidences of his willingness to comply with his treaty engagement. In particular, the shaikh's officials intervened several times to rescue people kidnapped in Persia and sold in Qatar. Thanks to these efforts the slaves were handed over to the Political Agent in Bahrain for manumission and repatriation to Persia. In this respect, the position of the Trucial shaikhs was less satisfactory. The inhabitants of the shaikhdoms were very sensitive and suspicious of any European interference, which they perceived as a threat to their liberties. The shaikhdoms were ruled by their individual shaikhs who did not greatly differ from the ordinary inhabitants. The difficulty of completely eradicating the age-old practice of slavery in such conditions was great. The British authorities had for practical purpose put a stop to the trade by sea, and inflicted severe punishments on any would-be slaver who was intercepted. *Dhows*, which were convicted of complicity, were confiscated and publicly burnt in Dubai and other ports as a warning to would-be traffickers. Such demonstrations of power impressed on the local rulers that connivance in the traffic, or slackness on their part to suppress it, will cause serious consequences.⁵⁹

Slave trading with Makran was especially difficult to control. There were several slave-traders in Makran known to the British authorities, but the Persian Government was unable or unready to take effective action against them. On 12th July, 1928, a senior naval officer, interpreter, assuming the role

⁵⁷ 'Political Agency and Consulate at Muscat, to the Political Residence at Bushire,' Muscat, 6th September 1929, IOR: R/15/1/229 5/196 I.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

of a well-to-do Arab stranger, asked the master of a *dhow* where he could buy a concubine. From subsequent conversation it emerged that a certain Birkhat Khan exported slaves from Makran, shipping them one or two at a time to the Arab Coast, and that he always had a few available. The *nakhuda* offered to arrange all the details of the transaction. In July 1928, the Political Residency in the Persian Gulf received information that a *dhow* was carrying slaves from Bunji to the Oman Coast, but the British sloop failed to intercept it. In December 1928, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf informed the senior naval officer in the Persian Gulf that a slave *dhow* and slaves were seized in Dubai. The sloop *Lupin* proceeded to Dubai, where the three local shaikhs were invited aboard, and their responsibility for assisting the British authorities to suppress the slave trade was impressed upon them. Subsequently, the *dhow* was burnt. At the time of capture it carried 10 slaves, but 6 of them, with the owner of the *dhow*, escaped into interior. When in Sharjah, in July 1929, the senior naval officer was stopped by a Baluchi woman, who complained of the kidnapping of her 3 sons, and later on the same day he saw at the house of the Residency Agent 3 Baluchi men who had been kidnapped on the Makran coast and had been liberated by the Residency Agent. They were subsequently repatriated to Bandar Abbas.⁶⁰

In the late 1920s, Persian Baluchistan and the Makran coast were the principal sources of supply of slaves imported to the north-east parts of Arabia. In Persia, slavery was abolished by the Majlis throughout the country by ordinance. However, in Baluchistan and Makran the Shah writ was not run, and the ordinance was disregarded with impunity. The tribal shaikhs in these regions obtained their supplies of slaves partly by kidnapping, partly by accepting the children of their debtors in part payment of their debts, and partly by working on the credulity of the Baluchis, by telling them that they could go as 'free men' to Arabia, where they would earn high wages. The slaves from the Makran coast were landed mainly in the territory of the Sultan of Muscat or in the territories of the Trucial shaikhs. The sultan and the shaikhs were bound by anti-slavery treaties, but they themselves all owned slaves, and were afraid of being deposed or even murdered as the result of an attempt on their part to enforce on their subjects the anti-slavery engagements. The Residency Agent in Sharjah, Khan Bahadur Isa Latif, managed to release a few

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

slaves each year, but any really active interference on his part would most likely result in his being murdered. Owing to the strict watch kept by the British navy, the trade was no longer carried on as it used to be with big *dhow*s bringing large number of slaves from Africa, but was confined to small *dhow*s which carried, among other passengers, two or three slaves. These persons sometimes didn't realize their condition, or, realizing it, didn't admit it for fear of punishment when being enslaved again.⁶¹

In May 1926, the Residency Agent in Sharjah reported to Bushire that during February and March 1926, 23 slaves were brought to the Trucial Coast from Najd. All of them were Negroes, mostly Abyssinians, and spoke African dialects only. They were brought by returning pilgrims from Mecca in order to be sold for the diving industry. At the same time, the Consular Agent in Lingah, on the Persian coast, reported that a pure-blooded Arab from Medina appealed to him for refuge. He was a Hijazi soldier who was captured in the war between Ibn Saud and the Sharif of Mecca. He was captured by the Bedouins of Ibn Saud and sold to Qatar, from where he was imported to Persia.⁶²

The question of the importation of slaves from Najd and the involvement of a number of Najd subjects in this business was discussed by Norman Mayers, the British Consul in Jeddah, with Ibn Saud in September 1928. The British Consul asked the king whether, if he could not see his way to stopping the slave traffic in his own dominions, he could at least prevent the movement of slaves eastward into the territories of rulers who were under treaty obligations with the British government to put an end to the traffic. Ibn Saud replied that he could not control all the ways of the wide desert, and restated his attitude towards the slavery question. Later the same day the British Consul discussed the matter with Shaikh Youssef Yassin, Acting Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia. Yassin argued that slavery was permitted by the *Qur'an* in the case of prisoners taken in the holy war. The tradition sanctioned slavery, while it laid down that slaves were to be properly clothed and fed and considerately treated, he added.⁶³

In the Hijaz and Najd slaves, male and female, were the most desirable. Comfort, enjoyment, respect and dignity depended on them. They represented

⁶¹ Ibidem.

⁶² 'British Residency and Consulate-General, Bushire, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Colonial Office, Bushire, 29th May 1926', IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

⁶³ 'Acting Consul Mayers to Sir Austen Chamberlain, Jeddah, September 28 1926', IOR: R/15/1/225 5/193 I (B 23).

the most paying form of investment. The desire to possess them was a ruling passion. Among rich townsmen and the Bedouins it was a question of respect to give a female slave as dowry at a daughter's marriage. The dignity and reputation of a ruler was dependent on the number and quality of his slaves. Slaves were the mainstays of the middle class. They were the most trusted servants in Arab townsmen's households. In the case of poorer people the slaves often earned their owners livelihood and commonly acted like devoted members of the family. Accordingly, they were treated as such. They served as water carriers, labourers, clerks, camelman, cashiers, managers, fisherman, masons, housekeepers and everything else. They were employed inside and outside the house. When they were skilled, they were hired out and brought their earnings to their owners. Female slaves were at once wives and servants to masters who often were not able to afford a regular wife. As a result, public opinion in Hijaz and Najd was strongly in favour of slavery.⁶⁴

The British authorities tried to influence Ibn Saud to take steps to suppress the slavery but they failed as the matter touched in a high degree the king's own comfort, prestige and influence. Consul Bond, privately, doubted whether the king himself favoured the abolition of slavery. The private practices of Ibn Saud were in contradiction with his official declarations. He was not sufficiently strong to attack the deep-rooted social system of the country, and believed that any attempt to make such policy would have no other result than a loss of his authority. In the interviews on the subject the British officials had with Ibn Saud, the king stated that, whilst recognizing in principle the necessity of abolishing the slavery, he could not at that time go beyond his declaration because of the fear of causing much trouble and possibly a revolution in the country. Ibn Saud hoped that eventually slavery, on account of the stoppage of importation, would die out and the necessity for more drastic measures be avoided. In one of such interviews with Consul Jordan in 1926, Ibn Saud offered to back his *irade* (royal decree) with a religious *fatwa* (opinion) obtained from the *ulama* of Mecca to stop the importation of slaves. He asserted many times that he was in principle opposed to slavery and would do all in his power to eradicate these practices from his domains, but he stressed

⁶⁴ 'Memorandum on Slavery and the Slave Traffic in the Kingdom of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies', 'Enclosure in No. 1 "Mr. W. L. Bond to Mr. A. Henderson", Jeddah, 6th March 1930', IOR: R/15/1/226.

that it was necessary to go slowly and explore every possible channel in order to satisfy the people whilst assuring liberty of all slaves. Ibn Saud used to promise to consult his religious men and obtain from them religious arguments against the practice. The British representatives' argument was that if the king wished his country to be acknowledged as a civilized power he must be prepared to make any sacrifices and modifications in the established customs.

Consul Jordan, acting on the instructions of Foreign Office, made several representations to the king before the Jeddah Treaty was signed. In particular, in April 1926 he informed Ibn Saud that the Secretary of State recognized that abolition of slavery in Hijaz and Najd must be carried out by stages, and the first stage should be the abolition of the slave trade and the prohibition of the importation of slaves into the country where the king had a traditional hold. At the same time Ibn Saud was informed that the British government could not give up the right of manumission as he had requested. The king replied that it was not easy to abolish the slave trade for trilling reasons, that he could not accomplish this unless the right of manumission were given up and he were thus provided with good grounds for introducing measures of compulsion. He stated that such measures, however, would have to be taken gradually.

In the course of the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Jeddah, Ibn Saud made it clear that he would not agree to the inclusion in the treaty of a provision recognizing the right of manumission by British consular officers. In article 7 of the Treaty of Jeddah the king undertook to co-operate by all the means at his disposal with the British government in the suppression of the slave trade, but, as whole, this article again reflected the king's attitude to the subject. There was no active co-operation. No action, legislative or administrative, was taken; no moral pressure was exercised; nothing was done by the king to suppress or discourage the slave trade. No steps, for instance, were taken to abolish the custom duty of 20 per cent, payable *ad valorem* or in kind, at the ports of disembarkation. The only visible effect of the Treaty of Jeddah in this matter was that the importation of slaves as a cargo through the port of Jeddah ceased. The British officers supposed that the slave traders had received a hint from the authorities that this might be embarrassing to them. But the trade went through other Hijaz ports with the connivance or even with the support of local rulers. Owing to the Treaty of Jeddah, no facilities were officially given to the slave trade, but slave dealing was carried on undisguised in the houses of the brokers in the towns, and by retail dealers in the interior. Slaves were not being sold in public market.

The declaration of King Ibn Saud embodied in the treaty of Jeddah was considered a great step forward. The very fact that he was committed to suppress slavery introduced an element of insecurity into the ownership of slaves and made it a doubtful investment to buy them. Besides, as the British consular officers did exercise the right of manumission so far as the big centers of slavery – Jeddah, Mecca, al-Ta'if, and even Medina – were concerned, the possibility that a slave can at any time achieve manumission at the British legation made potential purchasers hesitate to pay the price demanded. Thus, the political considerations militated against the practice of keeping slaves.

The position of the right of manumission, however, was in one respect weaker after the conclusion of the Treaty of Jeddah. The letters on this subject were exchanged between Sir Gilbert Clayton and the king; it was regarded as a consecration of the exercised right, but, in Article 1 of the Treaty the complete and absolute independence of the king's dominions was recognized. In view of this stipulation, it appeared to be more than doubtful whether, if the occasion arose, jurisdiction could be claimed by the British Legation over refugee slaves, even such as British-protected Sudanese or Takruni. This article left the door open for trouble if the local authorities chose to be obstructive. The common practice was that the owners of the slaves seeking refuge and manumission at the British Legation in Jeddah accused these slaves of crime and demanded their trial and punishment. Before the signing of the Treaty such accusations were easily disproved. In 1927, a slave accused of theft was temporarily and as a private arrangement handed over to the Hijaz authorities for trial under guarantees, and matters were so arranged that the case was dismissed and the slave was brought back to the British Agency. The Treaty meant that in certain circumstances to insist on guarantees and to protect a slave, if handed back to the Hijaz authorities for trial, would be difficult.⁶⁵

The retail traffic was more difficult to suppress than the wholesale one. It was estimated that in the second half of 1920s from 300 or 400 to over 1,000 slaves, principally children and adolescent girls, were imported into Western Arabia annually. In the opinion of the British Legation in Jeddah, the measures taken in French Somaliland were ineffective in checking the trade. The Italian land patrol in Eritrea was more earnestly carried out, and slave-traders found it more difficult to transport slaves to the coast through Eritrean territory than

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

through French Somaliland. All things considered, the only effective way to reduce the retail traffic was the further improvement of the patrols on sea.

The patrolling of the Red Sea was, in theory, the duty of the French, Italian and the British governments. The French were supposed to patrol a small portion of the coastline opposite Perim and the French Somali coast outside. The Italians patrolled, according to this theory, the Eritrean coast, while the duty of patrolling all other coasts, as well as the Red Sea proper, devolved upon the British authorities. In practice, the French and Italian patrols were very few. There was no French ship patrolling the Red Sea or stationed at French Somaliland ports. Twice a year a French sloop attached to a Mediterranean base was dispatched on a cruise in the Red Sea. The Italians maintained a sloop at Massowah, but it was used more for surveying work than for patrolling. The British patrol was carried out by two sloops and the whole of the Red Sea from Akaba to Perim was patrolled. Occasionally, a cruise was undertaken to Aden and further east along the southern coast of Arabia. Such measures were not sufficient to prevent small scale traffic and it was still easy to ship small numbers of slaves across the sea. These slaves were carried with other cargos and figured as part of the crew. Children were declared as part of the family of the dhowman or as apprentices. As their presence on board was not itself a cause for suspicion, it was difficult to prove whether these declarations were genuine or not. If the children carried were black there was rather more ground for suspicions, but that was all. *Dhows* usually carried 40 men and up to 30 apprentices, and there was nothing to prevent *dhows* from carrying passengers even outside the pilgrimage season. *Dhows* papers were notoriously loosely drawn up, and captains of the British sloops were not able to obtain evidence, particularly from children, which would justify the seizure and detention of a *dhow*, or would warrant its being towed long distances to the port of adjudication, which was Aden.⁶⁶

In March 1937, the United Kingdom Government renounced, as from 2nd October, 1936, the right of manumission hitherto exercised in Jeddah by the British representative. The renunciation of the right of manumission was a consequence of the promulgation by the government of Saudi Arabia, on 2nd October, 1936, of Slavery Regulations. Under these regulations it was absolutely prohibited:

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

- (1) to import slaves from any country by sea;
- (2) to import slaves by any land route, unless the importer proved by the government document that the slave was recognized as such in the country from which he came;
- (3) to enslave any free person;
- (4) to buy, to obtain possession of, any slave who was imported or enslaved in contravention of the regulations.

Direct importation of slaves across the Red Sea thus became illegal. At Yemen and Saudi Arabia frontier-station a slave was only allowed to enter Saudi Arabia if the government documents showed that he was recognized as a slave in Yemen.⁶⁷

In Saudi Arabia, the Regulations of 2nd October, 1936, conferred upon every slave the following rights against his owner or possessors:

Article 2. –

- (1) the right to be fed, clothed, and housed;
- (2) the right to be well treated and to be employed with kindness and consideration and without harshness;
- (3) the right to free medical attention;
- (4) in general, all the rights enjoyed by the members of a man's household or dependants, as laid down in the provisions of the Islamic law.

Any slave who was ill treated could have his case investigated and could obtain relief (Article 3). The prohibition of the separation of husband and wife and of mother and children was contained in Articles 5 and 6. Any slave could demand from his master a written agreement enabling him to purchase his freedom, and, in case of any dispute, the competent authorities decided on the amount to be paid and the dates for the payments (Article 7). Articles 9 to 11 provided for the registration of slaves; Article 12 provided for the official licenses to approved agents or brokers. The appointment of an Inspector of Slave Affairs was provided for in Article 13.⁶⁸

As a result of these measures, the number of refugees and applications for manumission submitted to the British Legation in Jeddah decreased.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ 'League of Nations. Slavery. Report of the Advisory Committee of Experts. Fourth Session of the Committee. Held in Geneva, April 5th to 10th, 1937' [in] 'From Political Agent, Muscat, to British Consul, Bushire', C/28, 11th February 1936, IOR: R/15/6/414 13/1.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

⁶⁹ 'Summary of Communications from the Government of the United Kingdom to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations', IOR: R/15/6/414 13/1.

In the following years, there was, however, evidence that the Saudi authorities ignored the regulations of October 1936. In 1939, a considerable number of slaves, particularly young girls, reached Hasa from the eastern side of the Persian Gulf. The best were bought up for Riyadh, where there was a constant demand, especially for *amirs*. Most of these slaves came from British Baluchistan. It was believed that the victims were stolen by raiders who made a profession of this practice. The informant of the British Legation saw several children in Hijaz, vaguely described as 'Persians', who had been kidnapped quite recently in this way. The common route used was from Gwadar into Buraimi via Matinah in Muscat territory. These slaves were re-sold in Buraimi for importation into Saudi Arabia. The flow of slaves from Baluchistan began to increase from insignificant proportions, about two and a half years before, to nearly 350 slaves, mostly young girls, imported into Riyadh. When the supply from Abyssinia was mainly or wholly cut off by the Italian conquest, a source of supply was speedily found on the other side of the Persian Gulf.⁷⁰

The recovery of the slaves kidnapped by the Bedouins required mediation and patience. The Bedouin kidnappers did not, as a rule, visit the scene of their kidnapping but after a long time, that is after some tribe intervened between them and the shaikhs concerned and made a new understanding between them which arranged that bygones should be bygones. This had been a long standing practice between the rulers of the Trucial Coast and the Bedouins.⁷¹

In 1934, some of the Awamir Bedouin robbers kidnapped a female with a child (her master's son) on her way on the sea shore between Sharjah and Dubai. They carried away the female slave and left the boy on the road. A party of travellers met him and took him to Hirah. As regards the female slave nobody went to restore her.⁷² Those who used to kidnap people were from Awamir and Manasir tribes and did not have any connection with any of the shaikhs of the Trucial Coast. The shaikhs of the Trucial Coast had no control over those

⁷⁰ 'British Legation', Jeddah, March 9th, 1939, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55); 'From Political Resident, Bushire, to Political Agent, Bahrain, and Political Agent', Muscat, 27th April 1939, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

⁷¹ 'From Residency Agent, Sharjah, to Colonel Loch, Political Agent', Bahrain, 16th January 1936, IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

⁷² 'Extract from Sharjah Diary No 19 for the period from 1st October to the 15th 1934', IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

Bedouins. When they took away any person and the people of shaikhs followed them and found them in the land, the kidnapped person was recovered by paying some money to them.⁷³

On 17th May, 1934, some of the Awamir Bedouins kidnapped a slave belonging to a citizen of Sharjah at a spot near the water wells outside the town. The next day the Manasir Bedouins kidnapped a Baluchi while he was cutting firewood in the desert within the limits of Sharjah. Shaikh Muhammad bin Saqar, a brother of the ruler of Sharjah went out to pursue the kidnappers and hunted for them for six hours but could not get at them so he came back to Sharjah. On 19th May, 1934, a man from Batinah accompanied by his son were coming towards Dubai by the coast. The Awamir Bedouins upon meeting them midway Sharjah and Dubai kidnapped the boy and left his father. On same day some of the Manasir Bedouins kidnapped a man, servant of the ruler of Sharjah, while traveling between Sharjah and Dubai. The shaikh sent his brother to pursue the kidnappers and release the man but Shaikh Muhammad did not succeed. On 21st May, 1934, a Baluchi going from Sharjah to Dubai was kidnapped by the Awamir Bedouins while midway to Dubai. The news reached Sharjah 3 days later and nobody went in the pursuit of the Awamir Bedouins.⁷⁴

On 2nd January, 1935, the Shaikh of Hamriyyah went in pursuit of the Awamirs and overtook them in Bani Katab quarters of the wilderness. There were two Awamirs: one of them returned his share of the kidnapped women after they had been divided between him and his comrade, while the other did not agree to do so but asked Humaid bin Abdur Rahman, the Shaikh of Hamriyyah, to let him go on his camel as far as he was out of sight and then to pursue him; if the shaikh was successful in overtaking him he should take away whatever of the booty he had but if the shaikh was not able to do so the Amiri was entitled to retain the booty. And so they did. After the Amiri went as far as he was out of sight Shaikh Humaid rode in his wake, overtook him and fired at him. The man was severely wounded and whatever he had plundered was recovered.⁷⁵

⁷³ 'From the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf', Bushire, 13th August 1934, IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

⁷⁴ 'The Bedouin's Marauding in the Suburbs of the Oman Coast Towns', IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

⁷⁵ 'Extract from Sharjah Diary No. 1 for period for 1st to 15th January 1935', IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

On 1st August, 1935, a caravan left Sharjah for Dhanj and when they nearly reached their destination the night fell. There was in the caravan a woman, the wife of one of the notables of Sharjah who was also the foster sister of Muhammad bin Sultan al-Naimi, the shaikh of the town Dhanj. This lady accompanied by a servant and a child (a boy 7 years old) went ahead of the caravan to go into the town. There on the road to Dhanj, 5 Amiri Bedouins were lurking to waylay travellers and upon seeing the woman, her servant and child seized them of a sudden; they took away the slave and two camels and left the woman and her child alone. She therefore returned to the caravan and informed them of what had happened to her. Her fellow travellers at once began pursuing the kidnappers and when they reached them rifle shots were exchanged and the son of Ahmad bin Rakkadh, the shaikh of the Awamir tribe, was wounded. He was with the robbers. After this incident they separated but the kidnapped were not restored.⁷⁶

On 25th March, 1935, 5 Bedouins of the Awamir tribe kidnapped 2 Baluchi boys at the sea-shore between Dubai and Sharjah. The people of Dubai having come to know of this went by the sea route in their pursuit. The Bedouin kidnappers left the boys alone immediately they knew of this action. The ruler of Dubai arrested the kidnappers and imprisoned them for two days and set them free afterwards.⁷⁷ The Shaikh of Dubai explained to the Residency Agent that he continued to use great effort to suppress and up-root kidnapping, but sometimes such cases took place. Whenever he caught such Bedouins he would not release them from imprisonment until one of their influential chiefs interceded with him and provided him with satisfactory safeguards. The kidnapper had to promise that he would not resume his evil deeds and then he was released from prison. There was, however, a great number of Bedouins scattered through the Oman region. They committed such deeds and marched for inside the hinterland – an inconvenient affair to put up with.⁷⁸

The Resident did not encourage the shaikhs to pay ransom for kidnapped people but the payment of money was what pacified the kidnappers and reduced

⁷⁶ 'Extract from Sharjah Diary No. 15 for 1st August to the 15th 1935', IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

⁷⁷ 'Extract from Sharjah Diary No 6 for period for the 15th March 1935 to the 31st ', IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I.

⁷⁸ 'From Sheikh Said bin Maktum, Dubai, to Captain A. C. Galloway, Under Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire', 17th June 1934, IOR: R/15/1/232 5/198 I File 198-I.

the troubles of the shaikh. In December 1928, 2 Omanis were kidnapped and sold in Dubai. The Residency Agent in Sharjah received a letter from Political Agent in Muscat and therefore immediately wrote a letter to Shaikh Shahbut, the ruler of Abu Dhabi.⁷⁹ He requested from the shaikh to deliver to his messenger the two kidnapped persons without any delay or procrastination so that no responsibility be experienced.⁸⁰ In consequence, one of the kidnapped men was recovered and sent to Sharjah, but the second one was still kept by his master who was demanding a ransom for him.⁸¹ The Residency Agent regretted for delay in recovering the second man and blamed the shaikh for this failure. He stressed that kidnapping and selling a free-born person was unlawful and paying ransom was unacceptable.⁸² In response, the shaikh summoned the man who paid the Bedouins and redeemed the second man. The shaikh paid 160 rupees. The ruler of Abu Dhabi expected the Sultan of Muscat to reimburse him the above-mentioned sum of money as the recovered man was his subject.⁸³

This case revealed the mechanism of slave trade between Oman and the Trucial Coast. On enquiry, it was found out that the Bedouins of the south of Oman plundered the camels and children of the subjects of the governor of the area and took them away to the southern towns and sold them there. The Bedouins also kidnapped the Omanis from the south and sold them to their own relatives in Buraimi. Further investigation showed that the Omanis from the south often came to the Trucial Coast in search for their friends or relatives who had been kidnapped. It was known that they took away their kidnapped friends on payment of ransom for them. After coming back home they asked their ruler to reimburse them the paid sums.⁸⁴ The latter, however, rejected

⁷⁹ 'From Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 21st January 1929, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸⁰ 'Translation of a letter of the 16th December 1928 from the Residency Agent, Shargah to Shaikh Shahbut bin Sultan ruler of Abu Dhabi', IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸¹ 'Translation of a letter of 3rd January 1929 from Shaikh Shahbut bin Sultan, ruler of Abu Dhabi to the Residency Agent, Shargah', IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸² 'Letter of the 20th January 1929 from the Residency Agent, Shargah to Shaikh Shahbut bin Sultan ruler of Abu Dhabi', IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸³ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 5th March 1929, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸⁴ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Under Secretary to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 15th April 1929, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

their requests as he thought that his subjects played tricks against him and against one another. They used to leave their towns in Oman saying that they went on diving in the Oman coast while they could not perform diving work in the sea; afterwards they asked the inhabitants of their country to release them from the hands of those who took them to Oman coast and the inhabitants of the coast, prompted by their zeal, paid money and got them released. It was also common among the people of Oman, who were freeborn persons, but suffered starvation, to play mean tricks on one another. One man took another and sent him on diving with diving *nakhudas* or treated him so badly that the victim was compelled to implore the local people to release him by paying money for his redemption and then the man claimed to have been kidnapped and sold. It proved that the slave trade was in vogue on the Trucial Coast and the Bedouins practised it by entangling their own brethren in slavery.⁸⁵ The case was settled down by the Political Resident who raised the general objection to the payment of redemption money for kidnapped persons on the basis that such practice encouraged slave trade.⁸⁶

People from Makran sometimes tried to recover their kidnapped relatives by themselves, which was risky or even dangerous for their lives. In 1933, a certain Qanbar of Bashakard complained to the governor of his town that his son had been kidnapped 8 years before and that after 2-year search in the Trucial Coast the boy was traced at Abu Dhabi. It was found out that the boy was with a woman called Aisha. When a father approached her and asked why she had kept his son in her house she stated that she had bought him for 50 rupees. As a result of this the boy was concealed and the woman threatened to kill his father if he kept insisting on the boy's release. Qanbar ran away from Abu Dhabi and asked the British Residency via the governor to recover his son.⁸⁷

Statements produced in the late 1930s proved that there were free Baluchi people living on the Trucial Coast who remained in service and earned money for their livelihood. Sometimes these free Baluchis recognized their relatives from Makran already enslaved and brought to Sharjah or Dubai to be sold.

⁸⁵ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 8th January 1929, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸⁶ 'From the Secretary to the Political Resident, to the Residency Agent at Shargah', Bushire, 18th January 1929, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

⁸⁷ 'British Residency and Consulate General, Bushire', 19th September 1933 IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

Some of them tried to recover these slaves and sought help at the British Residency Agency in Sharjah.

My name is Bilal bin Bashoo, born at Mekran, aged about 45. I came to Ajman last year from Mekran and remained in service. During the month of Ramadhan last three Baluchis /.../ came from Mekran to Ajman accompanied by the wife of my brother Shanbeh, her name is Sangi Muluk, and her son Machoo and her daughter Kaneczak. When I met my brother's wife I asked her as why did she come from Mekran with the above mentioned persons and she replied that she came by her own wish to live in Ajman, and that she was living in the hut of Sahib Dad at Ajman. Five days ago I was told that Sahib Dad sold my brother's daughter, Kaneczak, and her brother Machoo to a Persian named Hajeeh, who lives at Ajman, and that Sahib Dad and my brother's wife had left Ajman for a place which I did not know. I then went to Sheikh Rashid and informed him about what I had been informed and he told me to go to Shargah to the Agency.⁸⁸

If a kidnapped person was found after many years it was necessary to identify him. One Hassan Sharawee who had lodged a complaint in Karachi about 6 years before stated that his son had been kidnapped by his servant named Yusuf. He arrived at the Agency in Sharjah saying he discovered his servant in Dubai about two days before. The man was accordingly brought to the Agency and charged with the complaint. The servant stated that he was not Yusuf but Abdulla bin Ramazan and that he did not know the complainant. Hassan Sharawee was convinced that that man was actually his servant Yusuf and begged his case was passed on to Karachi for hearing.⁸⁹

Sometimes the owners followed their escaped slaves to an Agency and made statements that they had paid their slaves money and they had run away with these sums. Slaves always rejected this. Other times the owners tried to recover their slaves who ran away from them by using armed people. On 1st August, 1927, a runaway slave woman from Jagin from Bashakard came into the British Telegraph Station asking for protection on the ground of having been ill-treated by her owner. The owner arrived with ten armed men whom

⁸⁸ 'Translation of a statement of Belal bin Bashoo, born at Mekran, aged about 45, recorded at Sharjah on 21st January 1939', IOR: R/15/1/ 211 5/168 VII.

⁸⁹ 'From the Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', 20th August 1933, IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

he left outside the village. He was asked to obtain a written guarantee from an authorized person that the slave woman would not be ill-treated if surrendered and in the meantime the slave woman was handed over to Persian authorities for safe custody. The owner returned with the guarantee but the *mudir* refused to deliver up the slave and wanted to interview the owner personally. The latter declined to do so and left with a threat that he would capture any Jaskis he saw outside the town during the night. On 2nd August, in the evening, while a native employee of the Station and his family were on their way to old Jask they were captured by the Baluchis and carried off towards the hills with a herd of about 80 goats which also were captured. On having received the news the Persian troops were dispatched to release the Jaskis and several hours later the kidnapped persons were released.⁹⁰

The runaway slaves were sometimes dangerous, especially when they were indebted. On 6th June, 1938, a slave named Salmin bin Farhan told the story of his escape from Sharjah with 9 other slaves. He was a diver and complained that his master used to take all his earnings, but never gave him sufficient money to support himself and his wife. Moreover, he wanted to sell him. When his master came to know of his flight, he and two other masters picked their rifles and followed the refugees in a small *shahuf* (local craft). They overtook the slaves opposite to Khasab and their *shahuf* came alongside the slaves' *dhow*. The master ordered all the slaves to leave the *dhow* and embark on his *shahuf* at once. When nobody complied he himself fired two shots at the slaves, but fortunately nobody was hurt. At the same moment Shaikh Said bin Maktum's launch was coming from the direction of Bakha. The masters also fired 2 shots in the air towards the launch which came alongside. When the slaves saw this they could not but submit. They got in the launch and were taken to Dubai. In Dubai Shaikh Said bin Maktum ordered some of the slaves to be returned in his launch to Ras al-Khaimah. But Salmin bin Farhan and a female slave who had been among the fugitives were kept back. Salim was imprisoned with fetters on his feet at a dark room in Shaikh Saed's fort. After 12 days Shaikh Said bin Maktum asked him whether he preferred to remain with him or to go back to his master. He replied that he preferred to approach the British Agency.⁹¹

⁹⁰ 'From C.G. Sub-division, Jask, to Director, Karachi', 3rd August 1927, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

⁹¹ 'Statement of the slave Salmin bin Farhan, aged about 35. Recorded on the 6th June 1938', IOR: R/15/1/220 5/190 VI.

5. Repatriation

When slaves arrived at the Residency Agency, they were given shelter and the Agency was spending money for their maintenance. The refugees sometimes spent several months at the Agency until the certificate was granted to them. If a refugee had been kidnapped from outside the Gulf, he or she expected the Agency to help him/her in getting back home.

The Instructions of the Foreign Department of the Government of India of 1892 provided that emancipated African slaves were sent to Zanzibar by native crafts sailing under the British flag. If, however, native sailing crafts were not available, emancipated slaves were sent to Zanzibar *via* Bombay by steamer, and the cost should not exceed about 50 rupees. This procedure was applied to all ports under the Persian Gulf Residency. Emancipated slaves who could work as field labourers, porters, etc. but not those of the domestic class, were to be sent to Zanzibar in direct communication with the British Agent and Consul-General at the place. In such cases all charges should not exceed 50 rupees. The funds required had to be drawn on separate bills and submitted with the monthly account to the audit officer concerned. When a slave was restored to his owner either because he was not entitled to manumission or as the result of a reconciliation effected between him and his master, the expenses of returning him (including the cost of his feed and keep) should be notified directly to the Consular Officer concerned with a view to its recovery from the owner. In the case of refugees from the Trucial Coast the cost would be treated as a first charge on the man's earning and will be recovered and refunded directly by the Residency Agent in due course.⁹²

On 23rd March, 1927, the Political Agency at Bahrain issued the certificate of manumission to a slave named Sulaiman bin Yusuf, who proved to be from Nigeria and as such was eligible to be treated as a British subject. 8 years before he left Kano, Northern Nigeria, with his father on a pilgrimage to Mecca but whilst in Arabia they were attacked by robbers who murdered his father and took him prisoner. He was kept as a slave for several years but eventually escaped and made his way to Bahrain. From there he was sent to Bombay and afterwards placed on board of a steamer sailing to Liverpool. The captain

⁹² 'Manumission of Slaves', IOR: R/15/1/234 5/202; 'Manumission procedure in Kuwait', IOR: R/15/5/85 29/2.

was instructed by the Bombay Police to hand him over to the police at Gibraltar for transshipment to Lagos but on arrival to Gibraltar Yusuf was not allowed to land as there were no sailings from Gibraltar to Lagos. Eventually, the captain brought him to Liverpool where he was lodged at the African Hostel and his departure for Lagos was arranged at the special cost of 10 pounds.⁹³

In February 1929, the Residency arranged that an African slave named Mubarak bin Faraj was repatriated from Bahrain to Aden via Bushire and Bombay and afterward forwarded a remittance transfer receipt for 163 rupees in refund of the expenditures. They combined a deck ticket from Bushire to Bombay for 40 rupees, the cost of dieting and advance for buying shirt and cigarettes for 13,5 rupees, a deck ticket from Bombay to Aden for 105 rupees and subsistence allowance for 5 rupees while in Bombay.⁹⁴

However, the majority of African slaves preferred to stay in the Gulf after the manumission. Many of them were afraid of being re-enslaved in Africa, the route was long and dangerous, and, generally, they didn't have homes in the country of their origin. On 9th October, 1925, the Residency Agent in Sharjah received a communication from his informant that a few individuals of Qatar had brought in a sailing boat a few Abyssinian slaves to Dubai. Shaikh Said ibn Maktum was informed on this and, as a result, 5 slaves were taken. On 11th November, 1925, the Residency Agent went over to Dubai to express his gratitude to the shaikh. It turned out that the boat with the slaves anchored outside the creek of Dubai and the slaves were landed at night. When they entered the town, they were arrested by the shaikh's guardsmen but the people of Qatar, the kidnappers, ran away into the interior. The slaves submitted statements and one of them, named Jamileh, alleged that she was from Najd and that she had a few daughters in Bahrain and therefore requested to be sent to the Political Agent in Bahrain in order to get her children. The 4 other slaves said in their statements that they did not want to go back to their country as they feared that some slave traders might take and sell them again.⁹⁵

Baluchi people captured at Makran and recovered by the Agency in Sharjah were sent by sailing boats to the British Agency and Consulate in Bandar

⁹³ 'Immigration Officer's Report. Port of Liverpool', IOR: R/15/1/204 5/161 III.

⁹⁴ 'British Residency and Consulate General, Bushire, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay', Political Department 11th April 1929, IOR: R/15/1/204 5/161 III.

⁹⁵ 'The Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', 19th November 1925, IOR: R/15/1/208 5/168 IV.

Abbas and handed over to the Persian authorities with a request that they be safely returned to their homes. The British authorities also suggested that the Persian authorities in Minab and other places be instructed to exercise vigilance with a view to prevent the wholesale kidnapping of men, women and children which was reported to be rife in the Minab and Biyaban districts.⁹⁶

In November 1931, a man named Sa'ad bin Abdulla, who had lived in Bahrain since his manumission and worked as a diver, applied for repatriation to Syria as he stated that he could no longer find work in Bahrain. It was the period when the diving was off and divers were out of job facing difficult time. The applicant claimed to be an inhabitant of 'Sham' which meant Syria or Damascus. He stressed that he had once lived in Salahiyah, a suburb of Damascus and as a child had been taken away and brought to the Gulf. The Political Agent did not believe this story and failed to find any proof for this. His problem, however, was to find funds. In his letter to the Residency he highlighted that his funds did not permit him to repatriate the applicant to so distant a place, even if the French authorities would accept the statement as genuine. The Agent was asking the Resident to make a decision and in the meantime he arranged for the applicant to be given some temporary employment which could not last long and it was clear that the applicant would soon be left without funds until the next diving.⁹⁷ As born in Damascus, the applicant was a French-protected subject. The Residency stressed that according to the manumission rules repatriation was not recommended in all cases. It was recommended in the case of African slaves only and it was made to Zanzibar, by sailing boats, and if sailing boats were not available, by steamer, the cost of which should not exceed 50 rupees. The Residency did not find any necessity or justification to pay for the repatriation of this French-protected person to Syria unless the French Commissioner in Syria undertook to refund the amount. The Residency also suggested finding a job for the applicant in Bahrain or funding his way to Syria by himself.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ 'The British Agency and Consulate, Bandar Abbas, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire', Bandar Abbas, 26th April 1928, IOR: R/15/1/223 5/191 III.

⁹⁷ 'The Political Agency, Bahrain, to the Secretary to the Political Resident in Persian Gulf', Bushire, Bahrain, 28th November 1931, IOR: R/15/1/205 5/161 IV.

⁹⁸ 'Memorandum No. 1307 of 28th November 1931 from the Residency', Bushire, 28th November 1931, IOR: R/15/1/205 5/161 IV.

The inhabitants of India, when kidnapped and recovered, were sent back home as well. The procedure was that they were sent from the Trucial Coast to Bushire where statements were taken from them and afterwards they were sent to India.⁹⁹

6. Agitation against emancipation

In March 1938, the Political Agent in Bahrain reported to Bushire that the question of emancipation of domestic slaves caused much agitation on the whole Trucial Coast and in particular in Dubai where people threatened to attack the Agency unless the British government changed its policy about slaves. The Shaikh of Dubai found it difficult to deal the problem and asked the British Political Agent to convey facts to the British Residency for consideration. The Political Agent was of the opinion that the situation was serious and breach of peace could take place any moment, which would lead to disturbance unless some action was taken immediately. A serious agitation against the manumission of slaves began, as in the previous 4 months the figures of applications had much increased. There was a rush for manumission and this provoked some fear that manumission on a large scale, amounting to a general emancipation of slaves, was intended by the British authorities. In the previous years it was only captured slaves who used to be manumitted. Gradually, manumission by the British was extended to all slaves, whether captured or domestic. The extended manumission was current for several years and the British authorities considered it not practicable to limit it to captured slaves only. In the communication to the Slavery Committee of the League of Nations the British government stressed that thanks to the existing system of manumission nobody needed to remain a slave unless he/she wanted to. The giving up of the existing practice or the returning of those slave who had been already manumitted to the state of a slavery, as asked by the Dubai *majlis*, were out of the question.¹⁰⁰

The first action made by the British authorities was demonstration of power. The sloop *Bideford* which was due to leave Bahrain for refit at Bombay on March 16th was sailing immediately for Dubai and when it arrived to this port

⁹⁹ 'Letter No. 310, dated 11th October 1932 from the Residency Agent, Shargah, to the Secretary to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf', IOR: R/15/1/224 5/191 IV.

¹⁰⁰ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to the Political Resident, Bushire', received 15th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

at dawn March 16th it stayed there till evening March 18th. Another sloop, the *Shoreham*, was due to the Gulf about March 24th and it was supposed to replace the *Bideford* at Dubai if this demonstration was not sufficient. The captain of the *Bideford* was responsible for ensuring that in no circumstances life and property of British subjects were endangered and the Residency Agent in Sharjah was instructed to telegraph a daily report. In the meantime, the Residency Agent in Sharjah produced a report which shed light on the developments. He stressed that the people of the Trucial Coast had used to depend entirely on earnings of their large number of slaves and they viewed their emancipation as a great and serious loss. Recently the economic conditions had improved and the emancipation of slaves increased. The slaves hoped for better life as free labourers, concluded the Residency Agent. On the other hand, the situation was considered by the masters of slaves as a threat to their economic position. People considered this a new policy for which the British Government had no right and started to trouble their shaikh.¹⁰¹

The Residency Agent thought there was no immediate danger of incidents or disturbance. He stated that proposed deportations could be used as an excuse to raise the question of emancipation of slaves on the Trucial Coast. The shaikh claimed, in the meantime, that a progressive increase in the number of slaves manumitted last years alarmed his followers who feared that wholesale manumission of slaves would seriously affect the pearling season. That feeling was so strong that the shaikh was afraid of being deposed. He also was afraid that his followers would leave Dubai unless the slave question was settled. The shaikh was evidently powerless on the slavery question but the British Residency Agent was sure that he could enforce deportation if pressed.¹⁰²

The Political Agent in Bahrain was authorized to instruct the Residency Agent to inform the Shaikh of Dubai and other shaikhs of the Trucial Coast that the rumours were false and there was no intention of wholesale manumission of slaves and to confirm that the British policy would be as it had been in the past to manumit only those slaves who applied for manumission. He should also stress that the majority of the slaves manumitted in Dubai were not born in Dubai but were brought

¹⁰¹ 'From Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', received 15th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

¹⁰² 'From Officer Commanding, H.M.S. Bideford, at Debai, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', 16th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

from outside.¹⁰³ At the same time the commanding officer was authorized to notify the Shaikh of Dubai that the Political Resident had been informed about the unrest in Dubai and to warn all inhabitants of the town that in the event of loss of life or property of British subjects in the town resulting from any disturbance those responsible for causing such a disturbance would be held to account.¹⁰⁴

The note of the Political Resident helped to calm down the inhabitants who adopted a more friendly attitude. The Political Resident attended the *majlis* summoned by the shaikh on 25th March and the leading shaikhs of the ruling family were present. They explained to the British Resident that the inhabitants of Dubai incurred lot of money on their slaves in order that they got their earnings from the diving. The masters of the slaves took loans which they paid from the earning of their slaves. The people of the Trucial Coast had no other income besides diving. The masters of the slaves were given money on credit because they had slaves who brought them some money from the diving. Once they were manumitted, their masters became bankrupts. A man who lost his slaves also lost his credit and people would not give him a loan. One of the shaikhs complained that in the past no manumission certificates were being given from Sharjah, but either in Muscat or Bahrain, the fact which gave the masters the chance of arranging matters with their slaves and getting them back before they could reach those places. For the last two years, slaves had been getting certificates from the British Agency in Sharjah, which encouraged the slaves to run away from their masters and apply for manumission.

The Resident rejected such an argumentation and explained that during the last 10 years there was no change in the British policy and that certificates were only given to those who applied for them. The Resident believed that if a slave was properly treated he would not run away from his master. He was of the opinion that the diving could not suffer if free persons were employed in it like in Bahrain. The Resident referred to the responsibility of the British Government before other nations who held conferences about slaves and stressed that the only place where slavery existed was the Trucial Coast and demanded the abolishing of slavery. He added that the fact that slaves from the Trucial Coast who were applying for the certification were getting them, was the only possible

¹⁰³ 'From Political Resident, Bushire, to Political Agent', Bahrain, 17th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

¹⁰⁴ 'From Political Agent, Bahrain, to Officer Commanding, H.S.M. Bideford', 18th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

excuse to prevent the nations from demanding the general emancipation. According to his information, during the last two years only 8 slaves of those manumitted were born in Dubai whereas the rest came from different places.

The shaikh stressed that as the masters of the slaves incurred debts on account of feeding and clothing their slaves, they took their earnings in return so as to enable them to pay back the debts which they incurred jointly with their slaves. The members of the *majlis* were prepared to give all their slaves their freedom, provided they bear part of the debt due from their masters against the money paid to them. The problem, however, was that a slave did not own a property and thus he could not be held liable for debts incurred by his master who naturally got the earning of the slave. To this the shaikh replied that the slaves also got advances like free persons and thus were responsible for part of the debt. The Resident suggested that in such a case an entirely private arrangement between the master and the slave could be a good solution; if a slave contracted any debt and was being freed by his master, he would no doubt be liable for the payment of debt incurred by him as a free person.

In order to avoid complications about slaves, the shaikh decided to not allow slaves who already had manumission certificates to remain in Dubai and proposed to do the same with ex-slaves in Sharjah in order to avoid encouraging other slaves to run away.¹⁰⁵

The *majlis* passed two resolutions: (a) as domestic slaves were of vital importance to the inhabitants, the Shaikh of Dubai requested the Political Resident to give consideration to this matter and arrange for the return of their domestic slaves on whom they depended for their living; (b) as the shaikh had already agreed to deport two arms smugglers without consulting his people the only open matter was to request the Political Resident to pardon these two individuals on this occasion, failing which they would be deported but in that case the shaikh should not in the future grant any facility or renew a commercial agreement without consulting his people first.¹⁰⁶ The Resident, however, didn't pardon the two gun-runners considering such an act a sign of weakness.

¹⁰⁵ 'Office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Camp Bahrain, to the Secretary of the Government of India', New Delhi, 22nd March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46); 'From Political Resident, Bushire, at Bahrain, to Secretary of State for India', London, Bahrain, 27th March, 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

¹⁰⁶ 'From Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain', 20th March 1938, IOR: R/15/1/227 5/193 III (B 46).

Conclusions

In the year 1938 the total number of slaves manumitted by the British authorities was 158. Out of this number only 13 were captured slaves, a fact which further confirmed the view expressed in earlier reports that the traffic in slaves in the Persian Gulf was negligible.¹ The anti-slavery policy pursued by Great Britain in the Persian Gulf in the early 20th century was highly effective. The importation of slaves by sea, whether from abroad or from one country of the Gulf into another, was greatly restricted. Slaves were still smuggled but with difficulty and in small numbers instead of being, as formerly, conveyed in large cargoes. Domestic slavery was greatly mitigated in the Oman Sultanate and in Bahrain by arrangements for the manumission of domestic slaves by the British Political Agents. In the Oman Sultanate the manumission was carried on with the concurrence of the sultan. The decisive were the years 1927–1937. 10 years after P. E. Percival, Judicial Commissioner of Sind, informed, in 1927, the Secretary to Government at Bombay that the traffic of slaves was still common in the Persian Gulf, the British Government reported to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations that the slave trade, as such, no longer existed in the Persian Gulf. The authorities in London kept distinguishing ‘captured slaves’ and ‘born slaves’ and were convinced that the slavery in the Persian Gulf existed in a domicile form and covered practically born slaves only.²

The emancipation of slaves was another factor in the restriction in slave trade, and still another was natural mortality which permanently drained the slave population after the end of large-scale slave trade at the turn of the 20th

¹ ‘Slavery in the Persian Gulf, 15th February 1939’, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

² ‘The Under Secretary of State for India’, 19th May 1938’, IOR: R/15/1/228 5/193 IV (B 55).

century. It had, however, serious repercussions. The prohibition of slave trade put constraints to the reproduction of the African community. It also reduced the slave labour employment in pearl fisheries. The shaikhs of the Trucial Coast started to complain that the British policy was going to disrupt the pearl business and the social system as such. In consequence, the owners of domestic slaves began to use them, sometimes forcibly, in pearl diving. The new situation also provoked re-enslavement of freed Africans and kidnapping children of manumitted slaves. Besides Africans, other people were subject to enslavement. In the 1930s there were cases of Yemeni Arabs, both adult and kids, being kidnapped by Bedouin tribes and sold into slavery. Sometimes a sister was sold by a brother and children were sold by the parents. Such cases became common in the 1930s in Baluchistan, the main reasons being the famine, indebtedness and extreme poverty at the time in this part of the region. Enslavement of orphans of low-class Baluchis was also common.

Slaves who were seeking manumission certificates did it for various reasons. 5 main argumentations can be traced in the statements: (a) ill-treatment which meant that they were not feed and clothed by their masters; (b) fear of being sold and separated from their families; (c) not getting money for their job; (d) unwillingness of their masters to get them married, and (e) simply a desire to be free. The argument (d) is worth noting as it sheds light on the problem of the reproduction of the community of African slaves in the region. The slaves concerned stressed the obligation of their masters to get them married and complained that they were not married despite the fact that their earnings were sufficient to maintain a family. The common practice was to formalize a marriage of a male slave with a slave girl belonging to the same owner. In this case the master took possession of the offspring. The other option was to marry a male slave with a girl who belonged to another master. Both practices became more and more difficult because of the scarcity of fresh slave girls.

A common opinion of the soft nature of slavery in the Muslim world can hardly be shared after reading the statements. Besides the fact that, as W. G. Clarence-Smith mentions, ‘the institution of slavery /.../ depended on brutal raids, pathetic sales of destitute people, traumatic forced marches, dangerous journeys, and the demeaning routines of the slave market’³, the slaves were beaten, kept in chains, separated from their families, forced to work, sexually

³ W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, op. cit., p. 5.

used, turned out the houses when getting old, threatened to be sold, and in fact sold without their consent. It should, however, be remembered, that the slaves who asked for manumission represented only a small segment of slave population. The majority of them, especially those who were born in slavery, used to accept their status and were relatively well off when compared with the slaves who were turned out by their masters of the houses in the critical years of the economic crisis. Slavery was part of a particular society which functioned in a harsh environment and was anxious about itself as a whole. That was a poor society where free people fared worse than slaves, with free divers permanently tied with their captains by debts. Abdul Sheriff is right when stressing paternal rather than racial bonds of the Persian Gulf communities. Secondary marriages with slave girls were not instances of leisure, but created relations whose consequences were acknowledged. Offspring of those marriages were integrated legally and socially as sons and daughters with equal rights as those born of free mothers.⁴ Social practice was often far from prescribed norms. Some statements prove the existence of all kinds of racial prejudice and show that sometimes the desire of possession was stronger than the religious consideration to free a slave. The norm that the *umm walad* could not be sold and the offspring of a free father and a slave mother were free was broken down pretty often.

For some of the slaves, however, especially those who were kidnapped, the status of a slave was unacceptable and they were trying to get an opportunity to run away. Being formally freed, they had a long way to go to achieve social emancipation.

⁴ Abdul Sheriff, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

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- 215 5/188 I, 189 I *Expenses incurred as a result of slaves taking refuge in consulates and agencies; manumission of slaves and general treatment of slave trade cases, 31 Mar 1910–23 Jun 1939*
- 216 5/190 II *Manumission of slaves at Muscat: individual cases, 7 Sept 1921–12 May 1929*
- 217 5/190 III *Manumission of slaves at Muscat: individual cases, 11 Mar 1929–28 Mar 1933*
- 218 5/190 IV *Manumission of slaves at Muscat: individual cases, 16 Jan 1933–30 Nov 1935*
- 219 5/190 V *Manumission of slaves at Muscat: individual cases, 10 Sep 1935–24 Nov 1938*
- 220 5/190 VI *Manumission of slaves at Muscat: individual cases, 15 Jun 1938–7 May 1942*
- 221 5/191 *Measures taken to prevent kidnapping of Baluchis on Mekran Coast for sale in Oman and Trucial Coast; individual slavery cases, 28 Jan 1921–22 Jul 1922*
- 222 5/191 II *Kidnapping of Baluchis on the Mekran Coast and exporting them for sale on Oman and Trucial Coast: Measures taken to prevent this, August 1922–December 1926*
- 223 5/191 III *Individual slavery cases, 11 Feb 1927–21 Jul 1929, Kidnapping of Beluchis and Indians in the Mekran Coast and exporting them for sale to the Trucial Coast*
- 224 5/191 IV *Individual slavery cases, 2 Apr 1929–3 Jul 1934*
- 225 5/193 I (B 23) *Slavery in the Gulf, 28 Apr 1924–12 Nov 1929*

- 226 5/193 II (B 38) *Slavery in the Gulf, 1 Jan 1930–18 Sep 1936*
- 227 5/193 III (B 46) *Slavery in the Gulf, 1 Oct 1931–4 Apr 1938*
- 228 5/193 IV (B 55) *Slavery in the Gulf, 3 Apr 1938–31 Jul 1939*
- 229 5/196 I *Slave Traffic in the Persian Gulf, 6 Jan 1927–25 Nov 1929*
- 230 5/196 II *Slave traffic in the Gulf, 25 Nov 1929–22 Jun 1937*
- 232 5/198 I *Kidnapping on the Trucial Coast, 29 May 1934–17 May 1939*
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- 234 5/202 *Manumission of slaves and rules relating to cases arising out of the pearling industry, 28 Oct 1918–1 Nov 1918*

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- IOR R/15/2 5 A/1 *Slave trade jurisdiction: draft of treaty with Bahrain, 28 Jan 1914–8 March 1914*
- 1824 *Correspondence of the Adviser to the Bahrain Government and the Indian Assistant to the Political Agent about Bahrain Court business, 6 Apr 1935–31 Dec 1945*
- 1825 *Slavery: manumission certificates and applications forwarded by the Political Agent to the Resident, Bushire, 18 Jan 1932–27 Sept 1939*
- 1826 *Political Agency, Bahrain, Slavery: manumission certificates, 20 Dec 1934–27 Sept 1939*
- 1827 *Political Agency, Bahrain, Slavery: manumission certificates, 30 Jun 1937–3 Jun 1939*
- 1828 *Political Agency, Bahrain, Slavery: manumission certificates, 20 Mar 1939–21 Feb 1940*
- 1843 *Political Agency, Bahrain, Rules governing manumission of slaves, 22 May 1926–12 April 1950*
- 1365 11/1 *Individual cases; proclamations, 20 Apr 1926–13 Feb 1938*
- 1367 *Applications for the grant of manumission certificates, 6 March 1930–11 Nov 1931*

IOR R/15/5 Political Agency Kuwait 1904–1947

- IOR R/15/5 22 *Deportation of Jewish Merchant, Salih Sasoon Nahlab, to Basra, 17 Aug 1918– Sept 1918*
- 60 22/4 *Relations with Bahrain: reported expulsion of Jews from Bahrain; Bahraini political exiles; Shaikh Mubarak's visit to Bahrain, 1911, 7 Mar 1906–14 May 1920*
- 85 29/2 *Manumission procedure in Kuwait, 2 Nov 1907–27 Sep 1929*
- 311 9/1 *Slavery in the Gulf and in Kuwait, 28 Apr 1929–27 Dec 1949*

IOR R/15/6 Political Agency Muscat 1800–1947

- IOR R/15/6 20 *Slave Correspondence, 1847–1872*
- 414 13/1 *Slavery in the Gulf, 11 Dec 1934–30 Jan 1939*
- 415 13/1 II *Slavery in the Gulf, 20 Jan 1939–10 Aug 1944*
- 416 13/1 *Applications for manumission in Muscat, 10 Jan 1949–30 Nov 1949*
- 418 13/2 II *Slave traffic on the Batina Coast; searching of Persian dhows in Persian territorial waters, 11 Apr 1941–9 Aug 1948*
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Annex: The list of slaves whose statements were recorded at the British Agencies*

Statements recorded at the Political Agency in Bahrain

Abaid bin Sangur, born in Karakan (Persian Makran), Baluchi, aged about 45 years, statement recorded on the 27th of July 1936, ill-treated, a pearl diver⁺

Abdullah Al Utaibi, from Qatar, born in Khartum, African, about 40, 12th July 1933, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Abdullah bin Makdish, born in Anis (Yemen), African, about 22, 5 October 1928, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, from Qatar, born in Mecca, Sudanese, about 35, 19th January 1928, ill-treated and beaten, threatened to be sold, diver

Abdullah bin Ahmad, from Qatar, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 60, 9th August 1937, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin 'Ali, from Qatar, born near Mecca in Hijaz, African, about 30, 4th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Hasan, from Damman, born in Nasbah (Hijaz), African, about 30, 30th May 1936, ex-soldier captured at the Turabah fighting, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Majid, from Qatar, born in Najran, African, about 50, 5th April 1937, ill-treated, diver

* The list of the slaves is not complete. Some documents say about particular numbers of slaves applying for manumission or manumitted already, but their statements are not to be found in the files. It concerns, especially, the Kuwaiti files. This list does not cover the cases of people who were kidnapped and then either recovered or not found. There were also petitions of the relatives of kidnapped people forwarded to the British authorities in Karachi and Muscat in case of the Makran region. In some cases the petitioners asked for the certificates of manumission for their relatives to make their return home safe.

Eleven statements from the Bahrain files have also been found in the Muscat files and, similarly, one statement from the Bahrain files has been found in the Sharjah files. These statements are marked in the text with ⁺ as repeated and have not been included into the total number of statements, which is 949.

The reasons of escape correspond with the official statements of the slaves. Ethnical affiliation is indicated according to the notices of an agent on the documents attached to statements (when made). In some cases this indicator was omitted.

Abdullah bin Mohamed, from Qatar, born in Mukallah, African, about 25, 17th July 1927, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Muhammad, from Qatar, birth place unknown, African, about 30, 23rd August 1933, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Saed, from Dammam (Hasa), born in Najd, African, about 30, 20th October 1931, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Said, from Qatar, born in Yemen, Nubian, about 30, 3rd March 1928, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Said, from Dammam, born in Shaqrah (Najd), African, about 35, 19th February 1936, ill-treated, diver

Abdullah bin Salem, birth-place unknown, half-Arab, half-African, about 45, 25th January 1929, ill-treated, diver

Ahmad bin Abdullah al Mubarak, from Dohah, born in Qatar, African, about 30, 19th September 1934, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Ahmad bin Jami, from from Buraimi, born in Mukallah, Yemeni, about 22, 9th November 1933, ill-treated, diver

Ali bin Ahmad, from Qatar, born in Baryul Gunfuda (Yemen), African, about 35, 3rd October 1931, ill-treated, diver

Ali bin Wulaid, born in Mugam (Persia), African, about 23, 4th September 1940, ill-treated, diver

Almas bin Haiji, born in Swahil, from Bahrain, African, about 25, 2nd April 1908, could not bear a condition of slavery, sailor

Almas bin Marzook, born in Zanzibar, about 45, 23rd July 1932, ill-treated, diver

Almas bin Mohamed, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 17th September 1944, afraid of being sold, diver

Aman (father's name unknown), born in Jeddah, half-Arab, half-African, about 28, 26th November 1929, ill-treated, diver

Aman bin Jasem, born in Hodeidah, Abyssinian, about 35, 26th January 1929, ill-treated, diver

Amman (father's name and place of birth unknown), Abyssinian, about 13, 3rd September 1928, ill-treated, diver

Amoon bint Jasim, born in Nubia, Abyssinian, about 30, 21st February 1932, ill-treated, servant

Atij (father's name unknown), born in Dalmah, about 20, 9th January 1930, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Atiyah bin Bakhit, from Dohah (Qatar), born in Tihama, African, about 30, 3rd July 1935, ill-treated, diver

Atiyah bint Mubarak, from Qatar, about 30, 24th June 1944

Baashi bin Farajullah, from Hasa, born in Qatar, African, about 80, 11th March 1934, freed by his master, gardener

Bacha bin Ibrahim, from Abu Dhabi, born in Jask, Baluchi, about 30, 9th January 1937, ill-treated, diver

Bakhit bin Jabir, born in Yemen, 35, 21st February 1932

Bakhit bin Mubarak, from Bahrain (originally from Qatar), born in Bisha (Hijaz), African, about 28, 6th November 1937, ill-treated, diver

Bakhit bin Muhammad, from Dammam, born in Iraq, African, about 23, 5th August 1929, taken as a prisoner because of the War of Jeddah, ill-treated, diver

Bakhit bin Salim, from Darin, born in Yemen, African, about 22, 24th January 1938, well-treated but desired to be free, coolie in the oil fields

Bakhita bint Abdul-Khair, from Kuwait, born in the Sudan, African, about 50, 11th June 1929, turned out of her master's house and afraid of being re-enslaved, servant

Balal bin Ahmad, from Qatar, born in Fashar near Mecca, African, 29, 13th December, 1926, ill-treated, diver

Balul (father's name unknown), from Sharjah, born in Makran, father African, mother Baluchi, about 20, March-April 1931, ill-treated, diver

Balul bin Nubi, from Sharjah, born in Ras Khaiman (Makran), half-Baluchi, half-African, about 20, 30th May 1931, ill-treated, diver

Barkoh bint Marzook, born in Budaiya (Bahrain), African, 30, 19th February 1936, ill-treated, servant

Bashir bin Farajullah, from Qatar, born in Qatar, African, about 80, 11th March 1934, set free by his master when unable to work, diver

Bashir bin Idris, from Dohah (Qatar), born in Samman desert (Najd), African, about 41, 7th June 1936, ill-treated, diver

Bashir bin Marzooq, from Darin, born in Abyssinia, African, about 30, 10th June 1937, ill-treated, diver

Bashir bin Turki, from Bahrain, born in Gala (Abyssinia), African, about 25, 6th April, 1936, a slave of the Saudi royal family sent to Bahrain for medical treatment, not paid and forced to work hard, labourer

Bilal bin Faray, born in Dubai, 27, 1st November 1944

Bilal bin Jinjal, from Jumairah near Dubai, born in Bint (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 13th April 1931, ill-treated and beaten, diver⁺

Bilal bin Marzooq, born in the Sudan, African, about 30, 9th January 1930, ill-treated diver

Bilal bin Rashid, from Hasa, born in Sawakin in Africa, African, about 40, 13th January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, coolie with the oil company

Bilal bin Salim, from Qatar, born in Qatar, African, about 30, 28th October 1936, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Salim, from Qatar, born in Makran, African, about 40, 12th July 1933, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Walid, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 45, 29th January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver⁺

Bokhait bin Faraj, from Dubai, born in Sur, African, about 16, 15th May 1929, absconded through the help of his father

Charsham Bey (father's name unknown), from Sharjah, born in Lash (Makran), Baluchi "but very negroid", about 20, March-April 1931, ill-treated, diver

Charshi bin Hashim, from Sharjah, born in Desht (Makran), half-Baluchi, half-African, about 20, 30th May 1931, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Charsham bin Siyaoook, from Sharjah, born in Balak (Makran), half-Baluchi, half-African, about 20, 30th May 1931, ill-treated, diver

Dahi bin Shahi, born in Abu Dhabi of Persian origin, about 30, 31st May 1932, ill-treated, police man and labourer

Faihan bin Obaid, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 28, June 1931 (the day not indicated), ill-treated, diver

Falih bin Thunayyan, from Dohah, born in Mecca, African, about 35, 15th November 1932, ill-treated, diver

Faraj (father's name unknown), from Kuwait, born in Hijaz, African, about 14, 8th August 1929, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Faraj (father's name unknown), from Qatar, born in Mecca, African, about 30, 22nd March 1930, ill-treated, diver

Faraj (father's name unknown), from Kuwait, granted the certificate in 1929 but lost it, asking for a copy, 18th August 1937

Faraj bin Bakri, from Dohah, born in Zabid (Yemen), African, about 35, 1st November 1933, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Firooz, born in Yemen, African, about 30, 29th June 1937, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Hadi, from Qatar, born in Abs (Yemen), African, 35, 18th March 1936, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Ibrahim, from Qatar, born in Damascus, Arab, 30, 25th November 1937, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Marzook, born in Qatar, about 22 years, 23rd April 1932

Faraj bin Marzuk, from Darin, born in Hijaz, African, about 16, 16th September 1931, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Mohammad, from Dammam, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian (Walamo), about 22, 17th April 1929, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Faraj bin Mubarak, from Jubail, born in Bahrain, Africa, about 33, 1st April 1930, troubled by the master, diver

Faraj bin Muhammad, from Ain Dar (Hasa), born in Zabid (Yemen), Yemeni, about 25, 12th July 1933, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Muhammad, from Dammam, born in Ghulawa (Habash), African, about 20, 23rd May 1931, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Musa'id, born in Jeddah, about 35, 12th March 1940

Faraj bin Nasib, from Hamriyyah (Trucial Oman), born in Shahr, near Mukallah, African, about 50, 4th October 1929, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Faraj bin Razi, from Darin, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 50, 31st May 1927, ill-treated, diver, escaped with his wife Ruqiah bint Sultan (40), her mother Sarah bint Jouhar (55), her sister Amanah bint Sultan (30) and seven children: Abudllah (20), Abdul Karim (18), Salim (10), Idris (1), Lammuch (18), Assum (16) and Sultana (6)

Faraj bin Saeed, from Jubail, born in al-Ta'if (Hijaz), African, about 60, 2nd December 1933, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Said, born in Abyssinia, from Bahrain, Abyssinian, about 25, 16th May 1907, not paid and not given a wife, servant

Faraj bin Saif, born in Khartum, African, about 50, 9th January 1930, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Salman, born in Mecca, African, about 60, 9th August 1931, ill-treated, servant

Faraj bin Saroor, born in Shahr, near Mukallah, African, about 40, 24th August 1936, ill-treated, diver⁺

Faraj bin Saud, from Hasa, born in the Sudan, African, about 28, 23rd October 1929

Faraj bin Sayed, from Qatar, born in Medina, African, about 27, 4th January 1931, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Sulaiman, born in East Africa, African, about 34, 10th October 1939

Faraj bin Yusof, from Jubail, born in Medina, African, about 30, 1st December 1932, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Isa, born in Kirawan (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 15th August 1936, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Mubarak, from Jubail, born in Jubail, African, about 25, 28th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 45, 6th June 1931, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Saleh, born in Yemen, African, about 25 years, 7th November 1929

Fatah bin Mahboob al Thafari, from Thafar near Muscat, born in Thafar, about 30, 24th September 1931, ill-treated, servant

Fatih bin Mahboob, from Thafar near Muscat, African, about 30, 28th September 1931, ill-treated, diver

Fatimah bint Muhammad, from Hasa, born in Minab (Bandar Abbas), Baluchi, about 30, 31st August 1927, ill-treated by her husband (a slave), servant

Firuz bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in British Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 24th August 1929, ill-treated and forced to work, diver

Hamdan bin Mubarak, from Qatar, born in Saya (near Mecca), African, about 20, 20th May 1934, turned out by his mistress, diver

Harib bin Mubarak, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 18, 3rd February 1942

Hilal bin Faray, from Qatar, 25, 1st November 1944

Hubaish bin Rashid, from Dubai, born in Hadhramaut, African, about 30, 15th October 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Id bin Miyalli, from Qatar, 14, 12th September 1946

Id bin Walaid, from Jubail in Saudi Arabia, born in Jubail, Abyssinian, about 24, 14th March 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Id bin Walaid, born in Abyssinia, African, about 30, 10th March 1938

Idoh bin Mohammed (alias Sa'id bin Mohammed), from Qatar, about 30, 22nd August 1944

Ismail bin Farhan, from Murghwail near Dubai, African, about 40, 16th July 1937, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver

Ismail bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 30th May 1931, ill-treated, diver

Ismail bin Muhammad, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Bashakard (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 26th June 1937, ill-treated, diver

Ismail bin Owad, from Sharjah, born in Mkokotoni (Zanzibar), African, about 40, March-April 1931, ill-treated, diver

Jabari bin Omar, from Qatar, born in Arach near Abha, African, about 30, 28th August 1926, ill-treated, diver

Jamileh bint Mubarak, Najdi, about 35, manumitted 15th December 1925

Johar bin Regget, from Qatar, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 3rd December 1936, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Johar bin Said, from Qatar, 35, 8th August 1946

Johar bin Sultan, born in Abyssinia, about 3, 23rd of April, 1932

Johara bint Firooz, from Qatar, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 28th October 1936, ill-treated, followed her husband

Juma (father's name unknown), from Sharjah, born in Mufenesini (Zanzibar), African, about 26, March-April 1931, ill-treated, diver

Juma bin Faraj, from Mareed near Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 28, 24th August 1936, ill-treated, diver⁺

Juma bin Sangur, from Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 40, 24th August 1936, ill-treated, diver

Juma bin Winay, from Katur, born in Habi (Oman), African, about 25, 15th June 1931, desired to be free, gardener

Juma'ah bin Ismail, born in Persia, about 20, 4th September 1940

Juma'ah bin Marzook, from Qatar, born in Qatar, African, about 27, 13th December 1932, ill-treated, diver

Jumai'h bint Fahran, born in Jau (Bahrain), African, about 35, 7th January 1936, ill-treated, not allowed to get married

Karush bint Noobi, from Hirah, about 32, 27th December 1930, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Khaddooi bint Jum'ah, born in Sharjah, African, about 13, 20th November 1939, kidnapped, buttermilk seller

Khadia bint Mabrook, born in East Africa, African, about 35, 11th January 1929

Khamas bin Bilal, from Qatar, born in Ruwais (Qatar), African, about 20, 14th September 1929, ill-treated and forced to work, diver

Khamis bin Anbar, born in Sharjah, 18th January 1932

Khamis bin Abdur Rahman, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 18th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Bilal, from Hamriyyah, born in Burka (Batinah), African, about 30, 29th September 1937, a hauler forced to be a diver⁺

Khamis bin Ibrahim, from Sharjah, born in Sadaich (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 10th December 1927, diver, kidnapped at Ras al-Khaimah but recovered

Khamis bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 30, 24th August 1929, ill-treated and forced to work, diver

Khamis bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Sirich (Makran), Baluchi, about 45, 6th August 1937, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Zayed, from Sur, born in Sur, African, about 18, 26th May 1934, ill-treated, diver

Khamiss bin Anbar, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 20, 8th January 1932, ill-treated, diver

Mabrook (father's name not known), from Bahrain, born in Sailiyah (Najd), African, about 25, 16th December 1934, ill-treated, labourer

Mabrook bin Ahmad, from Jinnah Island, born in Yemen, about 25, 9th July 1932, ill-treated, diver

Mabrook bin Faraj, from Hasa, born in Yemen, African, about 27, 25th January 1929, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Mabrook bin Muhammad, from Jubail, born in Salhiyah (Syria), Arab, about 25, 5th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Mabrook bin Saeed, from Jubail, born in Mecca, African, about 20, 12th July 1933, ill-treated, diver

Mabruk (father's name unknown), born in Jeddah, African, about 28, 26th November 1929

Mabruk bin Ali, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 30, 29th October 1928

Mahboob bin Aman, birth-place unknown, African, about 18, 10th November 1928

Mahboob bin Sa'id, from Qatar, 25, 10th August 1946

Mahbub bin Mubarak, from Darain (Qatif), born in Qunfida (Tihama, Yemen), African, about 35, 9th December 1927, ill-treated, diver, escaped with his wife Zamzam

Majid bin Muhammad, from Jubail, born in Al Abi, near Jubail, about 15, 30th October 1937, diver, beaten

Majid bin Sultan, from Darin, born in Darin, African, about 35, 6th August 1933, ill-treated, used for purchasing pearls

Mallalah bin Nubi, from Kalat (Persia), born in Kalat, African, about 23, 13th February 1935, ill-treated, sailor

Maqbulah bint Abdullah, born in Budaiya (Bahrain), African, about 30, 19th February 1936, fearing of being sold, servant

Maqbulah bint Barood, born in Qatar in the house of Shaikh Thani, African, about 30, 6th March 1937, ill-treated, separated from her daughter, servant

Maryam bint Omar, Abyssinian, about 15, manumitted on 15th December 1925

Marzook bin Abdallah, born in Yemen, 35, 7th February 1932

Marzook bin Abdallah, from Dohah, born in Tihama (Yemen), African, about 35, 6th February 1932, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Marzooq bin Said, from Dubai, born in Marindi (Zanzibar), Abyssinian, about 35, 3rd May 1927, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Marzook bin Sulaiman, from Makran, about 35, 30th June 1937

Marzook bin Walaid, from Jubail, born in Saihat (Oman), African about 30, 9th July 1932, ill-treated, diver

Marzooq bin Ali, from Jubail, born in Sabiyah (Yemen), African, about 30, 8th August 1934, ill-treated, diver

Marzooq bin Belal, from Qatar, born in the Sudan, about 30, 28th August 1926, ill-treated, diver

Marzooq bin Farhan, from Jubail, born in Najd, African, 30, 9th January 1937, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Marzooq bin Hassan, from Jubail, born in Sabiyah (Yemen), Arab, about 27, 22nd October 1927, ill-treated, diver

Marzooq bin Said, from Qatar, 35, 6th April 1946

Marzuq bin Kumbo, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, about 50, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Marzuq bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, Zanzibari, about 20, 20th July 1928, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Marzuq bin Sulaiman, from Qatar, born in Geh (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 30th June 1937, ill-treated, diver

Masood bin Mubarak, born in Hijaz, African, about 26, 22nd December 1934

Masood bin Said, from Hasa, born in Tihama, African, about 38, 21st September 1932, freed by his master but afraid of being re-enslaved

Masud bin Ahmad, from Qatar, born in Hodeidah, African, 18, 18th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Masud bin Ali, from Wakrah (Qatar), born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 35, 3rd 1932, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Masud bin Husain, from Qatar, born in Sana (Yemen), Yemeni, about 40, 11th March 1934, afraid of being sold and separated from his two small daughters, diver

Masud bin Said, from Qatar, born in Tihama, African, about 20, 9th September 1930, ill-treated, diver

Mas'ud bin Gundan, from Abu Dhabi, born in Kirawan (Persian Makran), about 40, 15th October 1937, ill-treated, diver⁺

Masu'd bin Husain, from Qatar, born in Sana (Yemen), African, about 40, April 1934 (the day unknown), ill-treated, afraid of being sold, diver

Mijalli bin Aman, from Dohah (Qatar), born in Dohah, African, about 35, 13th January 1934, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Mobarak bin Ahmed, from Qatar, 40, 2nd December 1945

Mobarak bin Masood, from Qatar, 25 years, 9th February 1944

Mobarak bin Musad, from Dalmah, born in al-Qarar (Yemen), African, about 25, 17th October 1936, ill-treated, diver

Mobarak bin Rozah, from Qatar, about 35, 28th September, 1944

Mohamed bin Farigi, from Qatar, born in Berbera, Somali, 20, 28th May 1927, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak (father's name unknown), from Qatar, 1st April 1946

Mubarak bin Abdallah, from Qatar, born in Maldi (Asir), African, 40, 8th Febr. 1936, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Mubarak bin Abdullah, from Muscat, born in Muscat, African, about 40, 13th June 1934, sailor and goldsmith, afraid of being enslaved again

Mubarak bin Fairouz, from Dammam, born in Budaiya (Bahrain), African, about 35, 19th February 1936, afraid that his wife will be sold, diver

Mubarak bin Gul Mohamed, born in Dehmir (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 27, 27th June 1936, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Hamdan bin Mas'ud, born in Mecca, Sudani, about 17, 13th October 1928

Mubarak bin Jumah, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 30, 18th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Khamis, from Qatar, born in Tihama (village in Yemen), African, about 30, 7th October 1930, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Marzook, born in Najran, African, about 50, 22nd May 1937, his master rejected to liberate him

Mubarak bin Muhammad, from Qatif, born in Qatar, African, about 30, 30th April 1937, ill-treated, oil company worker

Mubarak bin Muhammad, born in Makran, African, about 35, 14th June 1931, ill-treated and beaten

Mubarak bin Othman, from Oman, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 25th April 1931, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Mubarak bin Said, born in Hijaz, African, about 25, 11th January 1930, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Salih, from Qatar, born in Makran, African, about 21, 11th April 1931, desired to be free, diver

Mubarak bin Salim, from Qatar, born in Mecca, Sudani, about 35, 3rd March 1928, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Salim, from Gha Gha Island of Abu Dhabi, born in Mecca, African, 35, 10th September 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Mubarak bin Salman, born in Yemen, Yemeni, 30, 19th May 1935, ill-treated, domestic

Mubarak bin Wadnar, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 33, 7th April 1931, cruelly treated, diver

Mubarak bin Yahia (and his wife Zafoor), from Dubai, born in Ibb (Yemen), Yemeni, about 32, 22nd April 1930, ill-treated, diver

Mubaraka bint Marzuq, from Dammam, African, no data about age, 6th June 1936, accompanied husband

Muftah bin Jouhar, born in Persia, about 23 years, 4th September 1940

Muhammad bin Khairullah, born in Mecca, Nubian, about 24, 9th July 1928

Muhammad bin Noor, from Bahrain, born in Abyssinia, African, 24, 19th November 1934, ill-treated, labourer and soldier in Hijaz

Muhammad bin Obaid, from Imany, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 11th August 1931, ill-treated, diver

Muhammad bin Sa'ad, from Qatif, born in Qatif, African, about 30, 23rd January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Musa bin Farhan, from Mareed near Ras al-Khaimah, African, 25, 24th August 1936, ill-treated, diver⁺

Musa'ad bin Zayed, from Dohah, born in Marzooq (Yemen), African, about 34, 16th April 1934, badly treated, diver

Naser bin Almas, from Khubar near Dammam, born in Budaiya, African, about 30, 8th February 1930, ill-treated, diver

Nasib bin Muhammad, from Jubail, born in Ghamid (Hijaz), African, 22, 14th May 1938, ill-treated, clerk

Nasib bin Sinjoor, about 30, 1932

Nubi bin Faraj Ullah Bakhit, from Dubai, born in Mecca, African, about 40, 12th August 1937, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver

Nubi bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Mombasa, African, about 50, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver⁺

Nubi bin Taufiq, from Sharjah, African, about 60, 26th February 1937, ill-treated, diver

Obaid bin Ghuloom, from Qatar, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 20th November 1934, ill-treated, servant

Omar bin Ali, from Wakrah, born in Berbera, Somali, about 22, 23rd August 1931, ill-treated, diver

Qambar bin Faraj, from Qatif, born in Qatif, African, about 20, 13th June 1932, ill-treated, diver

Rabaiyah bin Fadhel, from Dubai, born in Raddata al-Busaid (Oman), African, about 24, 9th April 1930, ill-treated, diver

Raihan bin Hussain, from Qatar, born in al-Ta'if (Hijaz), African, about 34, 1st November 1930, ill-treated, diver

Raihan (or Faihan) bin Obaid, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 28, 6th June 1931, beaten, diver

Ramadan (father's name unknown), from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, age not indicated, 7th April 1925, swam off to a man-of-war, ill-treated, diver, wished to be repatriated to Zanzibar

Rashid (father's name unknown), born in Medina, African, about 35, 13th October 1928

Rashid (father's name unknown), from Qatar, born in Yanbo (Hijaz), African, about 25, 25th February 1929, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Saad (father's name unknown), from Qatar, born in Mecca, African, about 33, 28th May 1930, ill-treated, diver

Saad bin Abdulla, from Bahrain, pretended to be from Syria, 7th October 1929

Sa'ad bin Abdullah, from Muharraq (Bahrain), born in Sham, African, about 18, 29th September 1929, ill-treated, labourer

Saad bin Adam, born in Aden, from Kuwait, African, about 32, 23rd March 1909, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Saad bin Bokhit, born in Mecca, African, 30, 19th November 1936, ill-treated, diver

Sa'ad bin Khamis, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 20, 3rd January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, coolie

Saad bin Marzook, born on Bahrain, about 20, 31st May 1932

Saad bin Marzook, from Qatar, born in Bararik (Hijaz), African, 35, 27th October 1936, diver, desired to live on his own

Saad bin Muhammad, from Darin, born in Mecca, African, about 23, 8th November 1938, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Saad bin Saeed, from Abu Dhabi, born in Jeddah (Hijaz), African, about 25, 13th January 1934, ill-treated, diver

Sa'ad bin Walaid, from Jubail, born in Jubail, Abyssinian, about 27, 14th March 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Saadah bint Mubarak, from Abu Dhabi, born in East Africa, about 50, 18th October 1937, servant, forced to hard service

Saeed bin Marzooq, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, 30, 4th December 1933, ill-treated and kept in chains, servant

Sadaqah bin Fairuz, from Jubail, place of birth unknown, African, 14, 20th March 1938, ill-treated, diver

Sadullah bin Salem, born in Yemen, African, about 45, 25th January 1929

Seed bin Ali, from Bahrain, born in Yemen, Yemeni, about 20, 3rd September 1927, ill-treated, labourer

Saeed bin Mahoob, from Qatar, born in Silayil (Hasa), African, about 30, 13th of December 1932, ill-treated, diver

Saeed bin Marzooq, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 4th December 1933, badly treated, diver

Saeeda bint Sadam, from Bahrain, born in Ghaman (Yemen), African, about 40, 28th September 1931, ill-treated, servant

Said (father's name and birth-place unknown), about 22, 24th August 1932

Said bin Bilal, born in Hijaz, African, 30, 16th June 1938

Said bin Husain, from Qatar, 35, 7th November 1945

Said bin Mahoob, born in Hasa, about 30, 13th December 1932

Said bin Mahoob, from Qatar, (age unknown), 31st December, 1945

Said bin Marzook, born in Qatar, about 30, 23rd April 1932

Said bin Mabrook, born in Tikarna (East Africa), African, about 30, 8th July 1936, ill-treated, servant

Said bin Omar, from Qatar, born in Suakin (Sudan), African, 25, 2nd December 1926, ill-treated, diver

Said bin Walaid, from Qatar, African, about 25, 30th October 1925, manumitted in 1912/1913, requesting for a duplicate copy

Sai'd bin Bilal, from Dammam, born in Ghamid (Hijaz), African, 30, 16th June 1938, ill-treated, diver

Sa'id bin Mubarak, born in Yemen, Yemeni, about 20, 12th January 1939

Sa'id bin Salih, from the islet Huwar, born in Yemen, African, about 27, 2nd June 1934, ill-treated, diver

Salamah bint Muhammad, from Bahrain, born in Sabya Bu Arish (Yemen), 25, 29th September 1929, afraid of being sold, servant

Salamah bint Musa, from Sharjah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 27, 6th February 1935, escaped from her master who ill-treated her and did not get her married, servant

Salih bin Amr bin Nasr, from Qatar, born in Riyadh, African, 28, 8th December 1934, ill-treated, servant

Salih bin Gul Muhammad, born in Dehmir (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 26th June 1936, ill-treated, diver⁺

Salih bin Omar bin Nasir, born in Riyadh, 28, 9th December 1934

Salih bin S'id, born in Aden, African, about 22, 29th October 1928

Salih bin Salim, born in Jubail, about 24, 19th April 1932

Salim bin Bilal, from Qatar, born in Bahrain, African, about 30, 28th September 1931, badly treated, diver

Salim bin Khamis, from Qatar, born on Zanzibar, African, about 40, 7th February 1932, ill-treated, diver

Salim bin Sa'id, from Dalmah, born in Qatar, African, about 10, 9th March 1935, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Salim bin Salih, from Jubail, born in Jubail, African, about 24, 19th April 1932, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Salim bin Walaid, from Dammam, born in Zallaq (Bahrain), African, about 45, 18th May 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Salim bin Wilaid, from Jubail, born in Jubail, African, about 20, 6th August 1933, ill-treated, diver

Salman bin Faraj, born in Qatar, about 9, 9th September 1939

Salmin bin Abdullah, from Qatar, born in Mecca, about 40, 12th March 1931, freed by his master, servant

Salmin bin Abdur Razzaq, from Jubail, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 18th November 1934, ill-treated, diver

Salmin bin Farhan, from Dubai, born in Shibam (Hadhramaut), African, about 35, 6th June 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Saluhah bint Mubarak, from Hirah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 30, 29th December 1930, ill-treated, beaten and molested, servant⁺

Sangor bin Ahmed, from Dubai, born in Shaikh Osman (near Aden), African, about 30, 5th September 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Sangur bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Lingah, African, 21, 28th April 1934, afraid of being sold, servant

Saroor bin Marzooq, manumitted before, applied for a copy of the certificate, 10th November 1930

Sarur (father's name unknown), from Qatar, born in the desert of Habsh (in Africa, French territory), African, about 55, 4th September 1929, ill-treated and not paid, forced to go for diving, mason

Saud bin Muhammad, from Qatar, born in Habbash, African, about 30, 27th October 1931, ill-treated, diver

Sha'ban bin Salim bin Saroor, from Dhahra al-Gharbieh (Oman), born in Dhahra al-Gharbieh, African, age not indicated, 30th July 1949, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Sulaiman bin Abdullah, born in the Sudan, Sudani, about 30, 13th October 1928

Sulaiman bin Dhafer, from Qatar, about 35, 10th August 1946

Sultan bin Abdullah, from Jubail, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 1st November 1937, ill-treated, diver

Sumhan bin Sarbok, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated, diver⁺

Suroor bin Ali, from Qatar, born in Mecca, African, about 25, 13th December 1932, maltreatment, diver

Surur bin Johar, from Qatar, born in Vagacha (Nubia), about 35, 29th June 1937, ill-treated, diver

Suwajlim bin Faraj born in Hijaz, about 25, 18th October 1934

Walaid (father's name unknown), from Qatar, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 15th May 1929, ill-treated labourer

Walaid bin Abdulla, born in the Sudan, African, about 35, 9th January 1930, ill-treated, diver

Walaid bin Chalban, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 55, 20th November 1934, requested for a duplicate of his stolen certificate, diver

Wulaid bin Ahmad bin Salih, from Qatar, born in East Africa, African, about 45, 30th June 1931, badly treated

Zaleikha bint Faraj, born in Bahrain, about 50, 31st May 1932

Zaloikhat bint Jumah, from Qatar, about 30, 12th September 1945

Zayed bin Joher, from Qatar, 23, 21st November 1945

Zamzam bint Mubarak, from Qatar, born in Yemen, African, about 30, 28th October 1936, ill-treated, followed her husband

Zayed bin Salman, from Qatar, born in Batinah (Oman), African, about 38, 13th December 1932, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, diver

Zulekha bint Aman, from Bahrain, born in Bahrain, African, about 40, 17th July 1933, ill-treated, servant

Statements recorded at the British Consulate in Bandar Abbas

Almas bin Farhan, African, about 35, manumitted on 17th January 1926
Firooz bin Jowhar, from Sharjah, born in Kirawan (Makran), Baluchi, about 45, 7th June 1928, ill-treated, gardener
Gharib bin Saeed, from Dubai, born in Shinas (Batinah), African, about 38, 30th November 1924, escaped slave recognized by his master, sailor
Id bin Salim, from Medina, about 23, manumitted on 6th November 1926
Maryam bint Faraj of Sirik, 29, manumitted on 29th April 1926
Muhammed bib Shanbeh of Kirawan, about 23, 5th March 1925
Sadullah bin Nasib, born in Africa, about 40, manumitted on 29th April 1926

Statements recorded at the British Consulate in Basidu

Amina bint Isjenaki, Abyssinian, about 30, manumitted on 15th December 1925
Aminah bint Mubarak, from Za'ab Island, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 25, 21st January 1941, afraid of being sold, servant
Hallum bint Juma, Makrani, manumitted on 19th February 1926
Jamileh bint Mubarak, Najdi, 35, manumitted on 15th December 1925
Medinah bint Wekayu, Abyssinian, about 20, manumitted on 15th December 1925
Sa'ad bin Barut, from Zanzibar, about 70, applied twice, in Sharjah on 21st 1921, and in Basidu in November 1926
Sharifa bint Wekayu, Abyssinian, about 25, manumitted on 15th December 1925

Statements recorded at the British Residency in Bushire**

Almas bin Khamis, from Abu Baqar (Batinah), born in Swahil, African, about 40, 13th April 1925, picked up by a man-of-war and brought to Bushire, ill-treated and beaten, diver and gardener
Ambar (father's name unknown), from Bushire, born in Lingah, about 25, 26th January 1906, desired to be free, diver
Harbi bin Ambar, from Zanzibar, about 25 years old, manumitted on 2nd October 1926
Khamis bin Saleh, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in East Africa, African, about 55 years, registered on the 5th day of January 1935, ill-treated, diver
Mabrook bin Jomah, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 45, 13th December 1922, ill-treated, not paid and beaten, diver
Marzuk bin Mahbub, from Zanzibar, about 30, manumitted on 2nd October 1926
Shirin bint Firooz, from Muhammadi, born in Burdukhun (a Dashti port, Dashtistan), Baluchi, about 45, 2nd January 1937, beaten and turned out of the house, servant

Statements recorded in Dubai***

Moti Girav, from Karachi, about 16, recorded on the 17th day of November, 1926
Shankar Shamrao Jadhav, from Dhulia Mogla in West Khandesh, India, about 16, 17th November 1926

** The statements submitted to the Residency in Bushire were few. Generally, the statements from the Arabian shore were submitted to the local Agencies.

*** These are either oral statements registered by British Consulates' officers and by officials of the Government of India visiting the Gulf or the cases which can be traced by the date of manumission only.

Statements recorded at the British Agency in Kuwait

Bilal bin Faraj, age of 25 years, recorded on the 24th day of May, 1927

Hadiya bint Ali, born in the Sudan, near Sawakin, about 23, 7th May 1921

Khamis bin Shambih, born in Makran, about 20, 5th August 1927

Statements recorded at the British Consular Agency at Lingah

Ramsingh son of Jagansingh (known as Abdullah), from Lingah, born in Nandel (near Bombay), Indian, about 15, 13th December 1927, sexually abused, labourer

Statement recorded on HMS *Fowey*

Salih bin Almas, from Ajman, born in Shukra near Aden, African, age not indicated, 13th March 1936, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Statement recorded on HMS *Lupin*

Welaid bin Chalban, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 55, 4th September 1934, asked for a duplicate copy, labourer

Statements recorded at the British Agency in Muscat

Abaid bin Hadaid, from Buraimi, born in Buraimi, African, about 40, 12th June 1936, ill-treated, gardener

Abaid bin Sangur, from Ajman, born in Karakan (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 45, 27th June 1936, afraid of being sold as unable for diving, diver

Abaid bin Sarwash, from Abu Dhabi, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 20, 4th January 1931, escaped to search for his relatives, diver

Abaid bin Walaid, from Deirah (Dubai), born in Majrid of Beni Bu Hasan country of Ja'alan, African, about 35, 5th November 1929, ill-treated and desired to escape, diver

Abaidah bint Almas, born in Muladdah (Batinah), African, about 38, 17th October 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Abaidah bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 50, 12th October 1938, ill-treated, servant

Abd Ali bin Chawash, from Sohar, born in Kirawan (Persian Baluchistan), Baluchi, about 20, 30th October 1929, afraid of being sold, gardener

Abdulla bin Mohammad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Bashakard (Persia), Baluchi, about 35, 3rd October 1930, ill-treated, servant

Abdullah bin Rajab, from Geshsheh (Hasa), born in Mecca, African, about 70, 19th October 1935, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, gardener

Abdullah bin Salmin, from Liva, born in Suwaiq, African, about 65, 22nd November 1934, ill-treated, cameleer

Abdullah bin Yahya, from Dalmah Island, born in Hodeidah, African, about 42, 13th March 1936, ill-treated, diver

Ahmad bin Muhammad, from Buraimi, born in Rudoon near Minab (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 26th November 1932, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Ahmad bin Said, from Abu Dhabi, born in Riyadh, African, about 31, 9th April 1929, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Aida bint Farhan, from Dubai, born in Hanjam, African, about 35, 23rd August 1934, escaped from ill-treatment (kept in chains) with her niece Romana bint Miftah and her two sons, took refuge on HMS *Lupin*, servant

Aisha bint Jafar, from Serak (Makran), about 50, 6th August 1934, asked for release of her 15-year-old daughter who was kidnapped

Ali bin Hasan, from Ballak (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 52, 29th December 1938, asked for a certificate for his wife and son kidnapped and kept in Dubai

Ali bin Othman, born in Makran, about 40, 22nd March 1941

Almas bin Goorich, from Dubai, born in Bir (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 21st October 1938, ill-treated, diver

Almas bin Hasan, from Bokha, born in Masketan (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 28th May 1934, ill-treated, labourer and fisherman

Almas bin Sarwash, from Dubai, born in Surak (Baluchistan), Baluchi, about 32, 6th May 1933, kidnapped and escaped, diver

Amal bin Sa'adallah, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 35, 13th June 1939, refused to go to diving and afraid of being sold, diver

Annah bint Mussa, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 32, 5th September 1921, ill-treated, escaped with her husband, servant

Atiyeh bint of Nasir, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 45, 6th September 1937, ill-treated and beaten cruelly, housemaid

Attoo bint Mohamed, from Dubai, born in Berbera, Somali, about 35, 22nd September 1938, treated nicely but afraid of being sold, servant

Bilal bin Ali, from Khan (Sharjah), born in Dubar (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 6th February 1937, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Ismail, born in Sharjah, African of East Africa origins, about 30, 1st September 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Bilal bin Jinjal, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Bint (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 4th February 1931, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Bilal bin Jumaat, from Jegin (Makran), born in Jegin, Baluchi, about 25, 4th December 1936, escaped from Jegin in order to search his family sold to Oman

Bilal bin Marzuq, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 25, 31st July 1933, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Bilal bin Miftah, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 1st November 1933, ill-treated because unable to work, diver

Bilal bin Mohamed, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 2nd September 1938, ill-treated, beaten and kept in custody, diver

Bilal bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 27, 8th November 1934, ill-treated, kept in prison, diver

Bilal bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 2nd September 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Bilal bin Murad, from Dubai, born in Chahbar (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 24th July 1933, kidnapped and escaped, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Bilal bin Sadulla, from Abu Musa Island, born in Zanzibar, African, about 33, 18th November 1926, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Salfah, from Khasab, born in Hanjam, African, about 16, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, escaped with his father

Bialal bin Shamal, from Dubai, born in Rapch (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 50, 4th August 1931, kidnapped and escaped, diver

Bilal bin Walid, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 45, 29th January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Bukhit bin Almas, from Dubai, born in Dubai, half-African, half-Baluchi, about 35, 24th March 1939, ill-treated, diver

Bungi bin Salmin, about 20, 30th May 1938

Buti bin Walaid, from Dubai, born in Africa, African, about 40, 22nd October 1929, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Charki bin Angaro, from Dubai, born in Chahabar, Baluchi, about 35, 5th November 1938, ill-treated afraid of being sold, servant

Dashok bin Gezzi, from Kirawan, born in Kirawan, Baluchi, about 16, 31st October 1929, ill-treated, gardener

Duhay bin Othman, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Wudam, African, about 35, 25th January 1937, ill-treated, diver

Ebrahim bin Abbas, from Sur, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 10th July 1949, manumitted by his master but enslaved by his heirs, labourer

Fairoz bin Zaiyid, from Ajman, born in the Trucial Coast, African (?), about 50, 20th October 1937, afraid of being sold, diver

Falluh bin Faraj, from Buraimi, born in Hasa, African, about 60, 25th November 1933, ill-treated because unable to work, diver

Faraj (father's name unknown), from Deirah (Dubai), born in Uganda (Makwa tribe), about 40, 3rd February 1931, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Abdullah, from Abu Dhabi, born in Swahil, African, about 45, 9th April 1929, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Nasib, from Hamriyyah, born in Shahr, African, about 50, 23rd February 1929, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Saroor, from Leiyah near Sharjah, born in Shahr, African, 40, 24th August 1936, diver⁺

Faraj bin Zahid, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 20th October 1937, afraid of being sold, diver

Faraj bin Yaqut, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Zanzibar, African, about 50, 25th January 1937, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Farajullah Ibn Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, about 25, 1st April 1929, escaped to search for his brother, diver

Farhan bin Isa, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Kirawan (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 15th August 1936, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Sarfish, from Abu Dhabi, born in Jegin (near Jask), Baluchi, about 50, 1st November 1928, ill-treated, the master didn't give him a wife, diver

Fatimah bint Ahmad, from Dubai, born in Wadi Zhahra (Yemen), African, about 55, 29th December 1938, beaten when protesting against selling her daughter, servant

Fatimah bint Hasan, from Abu Dhabi, born in Rudbar (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 21st October 1931, ill-treated, applied for the certificate for herself and two her children, servant

Fatimah bint Kohair, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Mand, African (?), about 25, 23rd July 1936, treated cruelly, escaped with her sister Maryam, servant

Fattum bint Abdullah, from Abu Dhabi, born in Hasa, African, about 20, 2nd September 1931, oppressed by her mistress, escaped with her girl friend Rabuh, servant

Feroze (father's name unknown), from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 13th October 1926, afraid of being sold, gardener

Firoz bin Jowhar, from Kalbah, born in Jask, Baluchi, about 40, 9th March 1929, afraid of his children being sold, gardener

Gharib bin Said, from Abu Dhabi, born in Zanzibar, African, age not indicated, 19th April 1925, manumitted by his master but re-enslaved by his heirs, diver

Haikal bin Muqaddam, from Jask, born in Jask, Zanzibari, about 22, 13th June 1927, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Haji Ali bin Sanqoor bin Nakwalah, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 31st August 1935, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Halima bin Sangoor, from Hirah, born in Mukallah, African about 60, 22nd December 1941, trying to restore her daughter Khamisah manumitted in 1937 and kidnapped

Halimah bint Abdullah, from Dubai, born in Geh (Makran), Baluchi, about 45, 10th January 1935, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Hasan bin Muhammad, from Kalbah, born in Jask, African, about 20, 20th March 1939, ill-treated, gardener

Hasan bin Muhammad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Sohar, African, about 30, 21st February 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Hasan bin Muhammad, from Kalbah, born in Kalbah, Baluchi, about 30, 8th September 1932, free born but afraid of being enslaved, labourer

Hasina bint Khamis, from Ras al-Khaimah, from Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 24th June 1935, ill-treated, servant

Hubaish bin Rashid, from Dubai, born in Hadhramaut, African, about 30, 15th October 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Id bin Ghulam, from Buraimi, born in Bir (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 18th November 1932, kidnapped but escaped, labourer

Ismail bin Khamis, from Sharjah, born in Chaughat (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 23rd December 1930, ill-treated, diver

Ismail bin Muhammad, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Bashakard (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 15th December 1936, ill-treated, diver

Ismail bin Mubarak, from Khor Fakkan, born in Sur, African, about 30, 9th January 1937, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Jafar bin Shahab-ud-Din, from Deirah (Dubai), born in Bir (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 60, 30th November 1928, searching for his son

Jaman bin Abdullah, born in Sirik (Makran), Baluchi, about 16, 23rd June 1939, did not want to share an advance with his master, ill-treated, diver

Jaroh bin Laho, born in Prag (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 23rd August 1921, enslaved in Makran and sold to the Trucial Coast, recovered at Kalbah

Johar bin Kohin, from Buraimi, born in Bampur (Makran), Baluchi, about 37, 10th November 1936, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Juma bin Faraj, from Mareed near Ras al-Khaimah, born in Mareed, African, about 28, 24th August 1936, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Juma bin Rihan, from Khan (Dubai), born in Bagamoya (East Africa), African, about 55, 29th November 1926, ill-treated as unable to work, diver

Juma bin Sangur, from Mareed near Ras al-Khaimah, born in Mareed, African, 40, 24th August 1936, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Jumaah bin Almas, from Sharjah, born in Batinah, African, about 28, 14th May 1937, ill-treated and beaten because sick and unable to go for diving

Jum'ah bin Abdulla, from Dubai, born in Sirik (Makran), Baluchi, about 16, 23rd June 1939, beaten and turned away, servant

Jum'ah bin Bakhit, from Ajman, born in Abha (Yemen), African (?), about 25, 21st January 1938, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Jumah bin Bilal, from Khasab, born in Hanjam, African, about 35, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, diver

Juma'h bin Ibrahim, from Sharjah, born in Mombasa, African, about 25, 9th September 1938, ill-treated, diver

Jumah bin Marzook, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 11th January 1934, ill-treated, beaten and kept in prison, diver

Jum'ah bin Salih, from Dubai, born in Ja'alan, African, about 40, 26th October 1938, ill-treated, servant

Kafoor bin Husain, from Abu Dhabi, born in Minab, African, about 40, 9th April 1929, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Kannuh bint Said, from Dubai, born in Muscat, African, about 31, 28th September 1924, kidnapped and desired to be free, servant

Khaddum bin Sa'ad, from Kalbah, born in Jask, Baluchi, about 45, 9th March 1929, ill-treated, gardener

Khadhru bint Miftah, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 28th December 1933, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Khalifah bin Saif, from Abu Dhabi, born in Abu Dhabi, African, about 45, 9th April 1929, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Khamis bin Abdulla bin Zaid, from Barka, born in Barka, African, about 17, 21st April 1949, ill-treated and hoped for better life

Khamis bin Abdur Rahman, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 34, 27th July 1933, forced to go for diving by his sister, diver

Khamis bin Bilal, from Hamriyyah, born in Burka (Batinah), African, about 30, 29th September 1937, refused to do diving and punished, diver

Khamis bin Farajullah, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Swahil, African, about 30, 9th May 1928, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Farhan, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 11th December 1936, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Farhan, from Laiyah near Sharjah, born in Laiyah, African, about 30, 11th December 1936, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Fatah, from Dubai, birth place unknown, about 35, 29th July 1938, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Habish, from Abu Dhabi, born in Bint (Persian Makran), African, about 45, 30th March 1933, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Khamis bin Halais bin Barut, from Abu Musa Island, born in Bidiyah in Sharqiyah Oman, African, about 22, 25th November 1921, kidnapped and escaped, diver

Khamis bin Johar, from Qatar, born in Mombasa, African, about 40, 22nd January 1937, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Masood, born in Abri, no information, 53, 15th December 1939, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Mohammad, from Buraimi, born in Baluchistan, Baluchi, about 50, 10th November 1936, ill-treated, labourer

Khamis bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Saddech (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 3rd August 1938, opposed to be sold and imprisoned, diver

Khamis bin Sabait, from Fujairah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 22, 8th April 1936, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, labourer

Khamis bin Saied, from Abu Dhabi, born in Geh (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 30th May 1939, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Salim, from Dubai, born in Mombasa, African, about 30, 13th August 1935, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver

Khamis bin Shanbeh, from Ajman, born in Gowri (Makran), Baluchi, about 26, 14th October 1933, ill-treated, not paid, afraid of being sold, diver

Khammus bint Mubarak, from Abu Musa Island, born in the Trucial Coast, African (?), 30, 20th October 1937, ill-treated, servant

Khammusha bint Mabrook, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 4th December 1936, ill-treated and beaten, escaped with her mother Obaidah, servant

Khudai (Konar) Darzadag, from Sur, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 50, 4th June 1924, kidnapped with his daughter, escaped, labourer

Latifah bint Faraj, from Ajman, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 27, 27th November 1939, annoyed with her master and afraid of being sold, servant

Mabrook bin Juma'at, from Dubai, born in Bahu, African, about 40, 14th October 1933, ill-treated, labourer

Mabrook bin Mohamed, from Sharjah, born in Geh (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 21st August 1934, ill-treated, diver

Mahbub bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Zahran (Saudi Arabia), African, about 35, 21st October 1938, ill-treated, diver

Maryam bint Abdullah, from Lowa near Muscat, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 24th August 1936, afraid of being sold to Bedouins, servant

Maryam bint Abdullah, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Sardah (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 28th November 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, servant

Maryam bint Kohair, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Mand, African (?), about 34, 23rd July 1936, ill-treated and tortured, escaped with her sister Fatimah, servant

Maryam bint Mohammed, from Abu Dhabi, born in Kaich (Makran), Baluchi, about 45, 30th October 1939, troubled by her master, servant

Maryam bint Salim, born in Nazerabad (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 9th January 1937, ill-treated, servant, came to Muscat from Dubai on foot

Marzooq bin Ali bin Obaid, from Ajman, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 7th May 1949, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Marzuq bin Abaid, from Sharjah, born in Sur, African, about 65, 13th December 1934, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver

Marzuq bin Kumbo, from Dubai, born in Africa, African, about 50, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Marzuq bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in al Awaidhat (Yemen), African, about 26, 29th July 1935, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Mashmoom bin Sadain, from Khasab, born in Khasab, African, about 20, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, took refuge on the man-of-war with his father

Mas'ud bin Gundan, from Abu Dhabi, born in Kirawan (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 15th October 1937, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Masud bin Rubayya, from Deel (Batinah), born in Deel, African, about 40, 30th May 1929, a free man but enslaved and escaped, servant

Matroh bint Sangoor, from Sharjah, born in Dibah (Batinah), African, about 30, 16th June 1939, trying to recover her daughter, servant

Mohamed alias Mahram bin Ahmad, from Kalbah, born in Bashakard (Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 1924 (?), kidnapped with his brother Musa, sold and escaped, labourer

Mubarak bin Abdullah, from Hamriyyah, from Swahil, African, about 40, 20th November 1931, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Mubarak bin Bahari, from Matrah, born in Kirawan of free parents, about 24, 8th May 1929, ill-treated, labourer

Mubarak bin Chori, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 50, 21st October 1938, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Gul Mahammad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born at Dohmir, Baluchi, about 27, 27th June 1936, ill-treated, escaped with his brother Salih, diver

Mubarak bin Ismail, from Dubai, born in Sur, African, about 36, 26th July 1933, ill-treated and accused of debts, diver

Mubarak bin Khalfan, from Dubai, born in Makran, about 35, 24th November 1939, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Mubarak bin Khamis, from Dubai, born in East Africa, African, about 55, 13th December 1934, embarked on the British man-of-war, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Mohamed, from Dubai, born in Chahabar, Baluchi, about 27, 16th November 1937, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Mohammed, Baluchi, from Khadrah, born in Makran, about 32, 10th September 1949, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Mubarak bin Nar, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 24th November 1930, ill-treated, diver

Muhammad bin Abdullah, from Liwa (interior of Oman), born in Bampoor (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 28, 2nd November 1934, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Muhammad bin Musa, from Muscat, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 25th July 1935, kidnapped and desired to be free, servant

Muhammad bin Pulad, from Dubai, born in Surak (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 21st February 1932, kidnapped but escaped and was searching for his relatives

Muhammad bin Sarwash, from Kalbah, born in Jazin (Makran), African, about 60, 12th November 1938, afraid of having his children kidnapped, servant

Murad bin Shanbeh, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Bint (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 24th October 1932, kidnapped but escaped, labourer

Murad bin Sher Muhammad, from Masnah, born in Kirawan (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 28th February 1939, afraid of being sold, gardener

Musa bin Abdullah, from Sharjah, born in Batinah, Baluchi, about 30, 15th December 1925, ill-treated, diver

Musa bin Ahmad, from Kalbah, born in Bashakard (Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 1924 (?), kidnapped with his brother Mohamed, sold and escaped, labourer

Musa bin Farhan, from Mareed near Ras al-Khaimah, born in Mareed, African, about 25, 24th August 1936, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Na'ama bint Salim Alhaidan, from Sur, born in Aden, African, about 35, 18th May 1949, ill-treated and not paid, servant

Naseeb (Bakheet) bin Faraj, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 30, 5th September 1921, ill-treated, escaped with his wife, labourer

Nasib bin Khadim, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Mukallah, African, about 20, 14th December 1930, ill-treated, diver

Nasib bin Marhoon, from Abu Dhabi, born in Wadi Muawil, African, about 18, 9th April 1929, free born but kidnapped and escaped, diver

Nassib bin Salmin, from Dubai, born in Bir Ali (Yemen), African, about 30, 23rd January 1937, ill-treated, diver

Nekbat bin Gondoo, from Subaihi, born in Balak, African, about 14, 31st October 1929, afraid of being sold, gardener

Nubi bin Faraj Ullah Bakhit, from Dubai, born in Mecca, African, about 40, 12th August 1937, ill-treated and kept under chains, diver

Nubi bin Miran, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 17th November 1927, ill-treated, diver

Nubi bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Mombasa, African, about 50, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated and kept in chains, diver

Nubi bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Makran, African, about 40, January-March 1949, ill-treated, servant

Nubi bin Pashok, from Dubai, born in Pir (Persian Makran), African, about 30, 26th May 1938, desired to escape, diver

Nubi bin Sahambah, born in Baluchistan, (age unknown), 27th May 1938

Nubi bin Taufiq, from Sharjah, birth place unknown, African, about 60, 26th February 1937, ill-treated, escaped with his wife and children, diver

Obaid bin Mohammed, from Owaibi (near Nizwa), born in Makran, Baluchi, about 20, October-November 1949, ill-treated, servant

Obeid bin Jumaah, from Khor Fakkan, born in Wudam, African, about 27, 9th January 1937, ill-treated and beaten, gardener and diver

Omar bin Mabrook, from Dalmah Island, born in Qatar, African, about 25, 13th June 1930, kidnapped and desired to come back home, diver

Paishak bin Zawari, about 20, 16th May 1938

Pirak bin Darak, from Sharjah, born in Yakdar near Jask, Baluchi, about 40, 6th March 1935, free man but afraid of being enslaved, searching for his son, diver

Qaidi bin Salmin, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Suhart (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 1932 (the day and the month not given), ill-treated, labourer

Rabuh bint Sa'adallah, from Abu Dhabi, born in Abu Dhabi, African, about 15, 2nd September 1931, oppressed by her mistress, escaped with her friend Fattum, servant

Rahin bin Walidad, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Panuch (Makran), Baluchi, about 28, 10th May 1934, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Rubaya bin Khamis, from Sharjah, born in Mombasa, African, about 50, 23rd April 1929, with no master but afraid of being enslaved

Ruwayyeh bint Tanaf, from Sharjah, born in Buraimi, African, about 35, 13th January 1933, free born but sold by her brothers, ill-treated by her mistress, servant

Sa'ad bin Fraj, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 45, 23rd October 1929, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Sa'adah bint Farhan, from Abu Dhabi, born in Zanzibar, Africa, about 30, 20th November 1939, ill-treated, servant

Sa'adah bint Mubarak, from Abu Dhabi, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 16th October 1937, ill-treated, servant

Sa'ayid bin Hashim, from Sharjah, born in Kordofan (Sudan), African, about 35, 20th October 1937, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Sa'ayid bin Said, from Dubai, born in Mecca, African, about 40, 3rd October 1938, ill-treated, diver

Sadain bin Farhan, from Khasab, born in Hanjam, about 50, 4th April 1934, afraid of being bartered for master's debts, diver

Safi bint Muhammad, born in Sur, about 20, 4th April 1934,

Said bin Almas, from Khaburah (Batinah), born in Khaburah, Baluchi, about 25, 4th April 1934, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Said bin Faraj, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 24th November 1939, afraid of being sold, labourer

Said bin Ismail, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 45, 10th February 1934, forced to go for diving, diver

Said bin Jum'ah, from Umm al-Qaiwain, birth place unknown, about 35, 4th August 1938, ill-treated because sick and unable to work, diver

Said bin Khamis, from Abu Dhabi, born in Yangul (Sharqiyah), African, about 30, 5th November 1930, kidnapped and sold, ill-treated, diver

Said bin Kahiri, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 31st July 1933, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Said bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Abyssynia, Abyssinian, about 20, 30th November 1932, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Said bin Sangoor, from Za'ab Island, born in Buraimi, African, about 40, 8th September 1932, ill-treated, servant

Sa'idah bint Salmin, place of residence and birth not indicated, about 27, 14th May 1938, afraid of being sold and separated from her children, servant

Sakkdah bint Khamis, from Dubai, born in Sur al Ibri (Batinah), African, about 26, 6th September 1926, ill-treated, servant

Saleha bint Saad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 25, 12th August 1937, ill-treated, her young son was forced to do diving, servant

Salfah bin Nubi, from Khasab, born in Hanjam, African, about 50, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, took refuge on board of the man-of-war, diver

Salih bin Gul Muhammad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Dehmir, Baluchi, about 30, 26th June 1936, ill-treated, escaped with his brother Mubarak, diver

Salim bin Firooz, from Dubai, born in Khazrah (Batinah), African, about 25, 8th June 1931, escaped after being accused of stealing gold ornaments, diver

Salim bin Hichan, born in Makran, about 35, 26th May 1938

Salim bin Muhammad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Mombasa, African, about 35, 25th May 1926, manumitted by his master but afraid of being re-enslaved, diver

Salim bin Safar, about 25, 16th May 1938

Salima bint Murad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Bashakard (Makran), Baluchi, about 50, 29th October 1939, troubled by her master, servant

Sallum bin Salfah, from Khasab, born in Hanjam, African, about 8, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, escaped with his father

Salmin bin Farhan, from Dubai, born in Sharhi (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 25th November 1939, ill-treated, diver

Saloomah bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 55, 27th November 1939, troubled and beaten by her master, servant

Sangah bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Abu Dhabi, African, about 40, 28th February 1930, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Sangor (Roshan) bin Ahmad Darzadah, from Dubai, born in Chahan (Makran), Baluchi, about 21, 1921 (?), kidnapped but escaped, diver

Sangoor bin Khamis, from Dubai, born in Jumah (near Masnah in Batinah), African, age not indicated but his father was alive at Zanzibar, 23rd August 1933, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Sangoor bin Nakwala, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, Africa, about 45, 25th November 1939, ill-treated, diver

Sangur bin Pirak, from Jazirat Zaab (Ras al-Khaimah), born in Bumpu (Makran), Baluchi, about 50, 6th February 1937, ill-treated, diver

Sanqur bin Abdul Khair, from Buraimi, born in Makamayo (Swahil), about 40, 22nd June 1931, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Sarur bin Muhammad, from Jumairah, born in Bashakard (Persia), Baluchi, about 40, 21st November 1934, ill-treated and imprisoned, diver

Shaikhat bint Salim, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 35, 20th November 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Shambah bin Roshab, from Dubai, born in Sarich (Makran), Baluchi, about 19, 18th September 1926, kidnapped but recovered by his father Roshan

Shambi bin Mohammed, from Tharmad (inside Oman), born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 24th May 1949, ill-treated and beaten, labourer

Shammo bint Salim bin Hamud Al-Mijadi, from Wudam, born in Burami, about 37, 16th July 1949, kidnapped and ill-treated, servant

Shanbeh bin Chawash, from Suwaiq, born in Kirawan, African, about 14, 31st October 1929, ill-treated and beaten, gardener

Shanbeh bin Haikal, from Yakdar, born in Guhert (Persian Makran), Baluchi, about 30, 26th October 1932, freed by his master but afraid of being re-enslaved, labourer

Sibil bin Balash, from Khor Kalbah, born in Makran, about 35, 21st April 1939, free man, asked to liberate his kidnapped wife and children

Sihal bin Zabardast, born in Baluchistan, (age unknown), 27th May 1939

Sorur bin Tahrir, from Dubai, born in Jeddah, African, about 30, 23rd February 1929, ill-treated, diver

Sowaikah bint Mubarak, from Maladhah, born in Hatta (near Sharjah), about 35, 27th May 1949, kidnapped in Sharjah when waiting for a manumission certificate, ill-treated, servant

Su'aiyyid bin Hashim, from Sharjah, born in Kordofan (the Sudan), African, about 35, 20th October 1937, ill-treated, diver

Sultan bin Aman, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, Abyssinian, about 35, 22nd July 1924, ill-treated and not allowed to work, diver

Sumhan bin Sarbakh, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, about 60, 2nd August 1937, ill-treated because unable to work, diver

Swaidan bin Bilal, from Dubai, born in Dubai, Baluchi, about 25, 29th November 1938, ill-treated, beaten and afraid of being sold, diver

Taaib bin Bilal, from Muslamat (Oman), born in Muslamat, African, about 40, 1927 (the day and month not indicated), manumitted by his master and trying to recover his sons

Tannaf bin Sangor, from Dubai, born in Yal Bu-Rashid near Suwaiq, African, about 45, 10th December 1924, ill-treated, diver

Tarash bin Bilal, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 31st July 1933, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Thani bin Mitrah, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 55, 12th October 1928, ill-treated and not getting advances, diver

Washahu bin Gowahram, from Masna'ah, born at Balak, African, about 14, 31st October 1929, desired to be free, gardener

Walaid bin Madugo, from Dalmah Island, born in Ja'alan, African, about 40, 7th December 1932, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Walaid bin Mulla, from Dubai, born in Yukamba (near Mombasa), African, about 40, 29th November 1930, ill-treated, diver

Walaid bin Okwitundre, from Shandaghah (Dubai), born in Ashimataka (Uganda, Mahyau tribe), African, about 35, 4th February 1931, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Wulaid bin Bilal, from Ajman, born in Africa, about 45, 15th December 1936, ill-treated, diver

Wulaid Jumaat, born in Chahbar (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 11th December 1936, ill-treated, afraid of being separated with his family, diver

Yameelah bint Omar, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 50, January-March 1949, afraid of being sold, servant

Yaqut bin Sajf, from Ajman, born in Khan (Trucial Coast), half-Arab, half-Baluchi, about 30, 23rd December 1936, ill-treated, diver

Yusuf bin Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Ajman, 22nd October 1949, ill-treated, gardener, builder

Zafur bint Malum Darzadah, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Dashtiyarin (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 15th January 1925, afraid of being sold and separated from her son, servant

Zahoor bint Marzook, from Sharjah, born in East Africa, African, about 40, 16th October 1939, afraid of being sold to Bedouins, servant

Zahra (her father's name unknown), from Laiyah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 4th April 1924, beaten and troubeled, servant

Zaid bin Marzooq, from Hajar, born in Hajar, about 30, October-November 1949, ill-treated and not paid, labourer

Zaid bin Miftah, from Dubai, born in Naba (Sharqiyah, Oman), African, about 40, 26th February 1932, ill-treated, labourer

Zamri bint Khamis of Bahu Dashitiyari, from Dubai, about 45, 12th January 1935, escaped to recover her son and her grand-daughter, servant

Zamzam bint Awadh, from Khasab, born in Dhufar, African, about 55, 4th April 1934, afraid of being sold, servant

Zayyud bin Hasan, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Dar es Salam, African, about 70, 5th November 1934, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Zubad (her father's name unknown), from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 20, 19th February 1937, ill-treated and beaten because unable to work, servant

Additionally, fifteen unknown slaves (11 males and 4 females) were manumitted by the British Consulate in Muscat in 1949, the last on the 31st March

Statements recorded at the British Agency in Sharjah****

Abbud bin Qanbar, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 17th June 1929, African, afraid of being sold, diver

Afiyah bint Bilal, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, 30, 16th February 1939, afraid of being sold and separated from her sons

Ahmad bin Hasan, from Liwa, born in Kaurstun (Persian Makran), about 18, 25th June 1930, kidnapped to cultivate palm trees

Ali bin Ghulam Ali, from Dubai, born in Rudan (Persian Makran), Persian, about 23, 8th of July 1929, kidnapped to be a diver

Ali bin Muhammad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Allayah (Somaliland), Somali, about 45, 18th September 1938, desired to be free, labourer

Almas (fathre's name unkmown), from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Swahil, African, about 38, 23rd March 1925, manumitted by his master and afraid of being re-enslaved, diver

Almas (father's name unknown), born in Kuknar (Makran), about 40 years, 2nd January 1942, afraid of being sold, diver

**** Statements submitted to the Residency Agent in Sharjah were transferred to al-Manamah in Bahrain to the British Political Agent who was authorized to issue certificates of manumission.

Almas bin Abdulla, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born at Pishi (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 18th July 1940, ill-treated by his mistress, diver

Almas bin Muhammad, born in Makran, about 30, 4th January 1942

Almas bin Salmeen, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 4th February 1939, ill-treated, labourer

Almas bin Wulaid, from Za'ab Island, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 4th January 1938, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Alvi bin Muhammad, from Calicut of Malabar, Hindu, about 26, 28th April 1928, kidnapped when going on pilgrimage, recovered

Alya bint Firoz, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 17, 22nd March 1940, ill-treated by her mistress, servant

Ambar bin Juma'h, from Haili (Oman), born in Batinah, African, about 45, 27th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Ambar bin Mubarak, from Dubai, about 40, 30th December 1942

Amina bint Isjenaki, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 30, 16th November 1925

Annah bint Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Bampur, Baluchi, about 27, 26th February 1928, kidnapped and sold by her former husband, kept as a concubine

Anbar bin Faraj, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 20, 9th December 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Antal bin Walaid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 17, 26th February 1938, ill-treated, diver

Asad bin Marzuq, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 3rd January 1940, ill-treated, diver

Ashur bin Barruk, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 18, 31st December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Attoi bint Oqad, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 13th November 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Atwi bint Farhan, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 40, 17th September 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Atwi bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 24, 27th June 1936, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Atwi bint Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Berbera, Somali, about 35, 19th June 1936, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, servant

Ba'oodhah bint al Nubi, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 26th April 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Barut bin Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 2nd May 1940, ill-treated as unable to work, diver

Bashina bint Shaban, from Sharjah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 18th July 1939, afraid of being sold and separated from her husband, servant

Bashir bin Johar, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 40, the 19th Shawal 1347 [1928], manumitted by his master and threatened to be re-enslaved, diver

Bashir bin Mubarak, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 50, 27th April 1938, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Bashir bin Muhammad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 18th January 1941, afraid of being sold, diver

Bashir bin Salim, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 25, 11th December 1938, ill-treated and tortured, afraid of being sold, diver

Bashir bin Salim, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Abyssinia, Abyssinian, about 25, 6th May 1939, ill-treated and beaten, driven

Belal bin Khamis, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 6th November 1925, manumitted by his mistress and re-enslaved, kept in irons, labourer

Bibak bint Muhammad Rudbari, from Gahur Mushkak (Makran), born in Gahur Mushkak, Baluchi, about 27th, 21st January 1928, kidnapped from her house but recovered and brought to the Agency and repatriated

Bilal bin Anbar, from Dhank (Buraimi), born in Kawraj (Makran), African, about 25, 19th May 1938, taken to the Agency by his brother, labourer

Bilal bin Bahadur, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 20th August 1939, ran away from his master who refused to give him an amount

Bilal bin Baskari, from Dubai, born in Chahabar (Makran), Baluchi, about 37, 7th July 1939, ran away from his master who refused to give him an advance, diver

Bilal bin Faraj, born in Dubai, about 25, 2nd February 1942

Bilal bin Husain, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 19th April, 1939, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Ismail, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 14, 5th February 1940, afraid of being sold, diver

Bilal bin Jumah, from Dubai, born in Batinah, African, about 40, 14th May 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Bilal bin Jum'ah, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 23rd July 1939, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Marzuq, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 40, 25th July 1938, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, diver

Bilal bin Matgieh, from Bokha (Roos al-Jibal), born in Kirawan (Makran), Baluchi, about 21, 13th October 1932, ill-treated, diver

Bilal bin Musabbih, from Jumairah, a Baluchi, made a statement on 10th December 1940 that was manumitted in 1938

Bilal bin Said, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 24th May 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Bukhitah bint Abdul Karim, from Dubai, born in Sur, about 30, 25th July 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Bukhitah bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Tihama (Yemen), African, about 40, 29th December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Bukhitah bint Surur, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 16th January 1938, turned out by her mistress, servant

Esmail bin Haykali, from Hamriyyah, place of birth unknown, age unknown, May 1933, ill-treated, diver

Faiduh (her father's name not known), from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 8th November 1938, kidnapped by the Bedouins, servant

Faiduh bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), about 34, 4th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Faraj bin Almas, from Hirah, born in Dhufar, African, about 35, 16th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Falaifil, from Dubai, born in Hanjam, African, about 35, 16th December 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Faraj bin Jumah, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 45, 29th August 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Faraj bin Mubarak, born in Musawa, about 20, 2nd February 1942

Faraj bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Delamofar (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 35, 17th January 1939, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Faraj bin Qibris, from Dubai, born in Kallah, Abyssinian, about 20, 17th January 1937, treated with harshness, diver

Faraj bin Safar, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 29th April 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Faraj bin Salim, from Abu Dhabi, born in Hasa, African, about 40, 21st August 1940, afraid of being sold, labourer

Faraj bin Sulaiman, from Dubai, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 40, 12th August 1938, ill-treated, diver

Faraj bin Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Swahil, about 45, 2nd January 1940, ill-treated, diver

Farhan bin Bilal, from Ajman, born in Swahil, African about 40, 18th May 1939, ill-treated and deprived from earnings, diver

Farhan bin Salmin, from Dubai, born in Matrah, African, about 45, 20th June 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Farhan bin Saud, from Dubai, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 60, 31st January 1938, ill-treated as an old helpless man, diver

Fashid bin Faraj, from Za'ab Island (under Ras al-Khaimah), born in Za'ab, African, about 35, 11th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Fatimah bint Abdullah, from Dibah, born in Bunji (Baluchistan), Baluchi, about 30, 27th July 1938, ran away from her kidnappers

Fatimah bint Shambad, Baluchi, from Dubai, born in Gabrig (Baluchistan), about 25, 1st July 1925, kidnapped when her husband left for diving

Fattum bint Khalfan, a Baluchi, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 30, manumitted 18th December 1926

Firoz bin Anbar, from Abu Dhabi, born in Abu Dhabi, about 35, 28th September 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Firoz bin Saifal, from Dubai, born in Makran, African, about 35, 26th November 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Ganhaj bin Sanad, from Siri Island, born in Bawkalat (Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 23rd May 1932, ill-treated, diver

Gargaram son of Hanuman Bunnia, from Tatta, India, about 13, 7th of March 1927

Ghabaish bin Masood, from Sunainah of Oman, born in Sunainah, about 40, 17th February 1938, ill-treated, diver, not entitled to a manumission certificate

Ghanim bin Yaqut, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 25, 28th November 1938, threatened to be sold, diver

Gharibah bint Faraj, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 12th January 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Gharibeh bint Sa'dullah, from Sharjah, born in Abu Dhabi, African, about 40, 16th May 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Ghazul bint Rabi, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Sharjah, African, about 25, 13th May 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Ghulum bin Qasim Ali Hijlasaz, from Minab, Baluchi, about 17, 10th April 1928, kidnapped and brought to Dubai for sale, recovered

Gumashah bint Marzooq, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 50, January 1939 (?), afraid of being sold, servant

Guwaiz bin Marzooq, from Hasa, born in the desert of Hijaz, about 23, 20th September 1939, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Habaish bin Zoodi, from Dubai, born in Addis Ababa, Abyssinian, about 25, 23rd March 1933, ill-treated, diver

Hallema bint Sha'aban, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 40, 28th February 1939, ill-treated, servant

Halima bint Laghi, from Lingah, born in Baskito (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 30, 13th January 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Halimah bint Muhamad, from Dubai, born in Lashar (Makran), about 30, 31st August 1939, treated harshly and cruelly, servant

Halimah bint Sarur, from Sharjah, born in Addis Ababa, Abyssinian, about 28, 15th August 1936, mortgaged several times, afraid of being sold, servant

Hallom bint Mubarak, from Khan, born in Khan, African, about 35, 12th September 1940, beaten by her mistress, servant

Hallom bint Radhi, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 45, 10th February 1939, oppressed and tortured by her master, servant

Hallum bint Abdullah, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 20, 12th December 1930, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Hallum bint Abdullah, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Orah (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 35, 26th December 1937, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Hallum bint Faraj, from Dubai, born in Yemen, about 35, 2nd June 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Hallum bint Firoz, from Ajman, born in Dubai, about 40, 26th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Hallum bint Jumah, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 10, 28th August 1938, afraid of being sold, ran away to her sister already manumitted

Hallum bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Swahil, African, about 55, 10th January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Hallum bint Muhammad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Kuhru in Rudbar (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 9th July 1927, ill-treated, servant

Hallum bint Sa'ad, from Dubai, born in Addis Ababa, African, age not indicated, 20th May 1936, oppressed, servant

Hallum bint Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Dibah, African, about 40, 26th December 1937, afraid that her daughter will be sold, servant

Haman bin Mubarak, from Abu Dhabi, 55, 1st December 1941

Hammam bin Jummo, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 12, 25th October 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver, escaped with his mother

Hamood bin Ali, from Sharjah, born in Kuwaitij (Makran), Baluchi, about 16, 4th April 1930, kidnapped to be sold

Harib bin Said, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 20, 18th March 1940, afraid of being sold, diver

Hasan bin Ali, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 30, 1st May 1940, ill-treated, diver

Hasan bin Ahmad bin Ghait, from Shaikh Shuaib Island, born in Shaikh Shuaib Island, African, about 40, 12th December 1935, free born but afraid of being enslaved, diver

Hasinah (name of her father unknown), from Dubai, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 45, 25th February 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, servant

Hasinah bint Hasan, from Ajman, born in Hodeidah of Yemen, African, about 50, 29th October 1938, ill-treated, servant

Hasinah bint Sai'd, from Hamriyyah, born in Hamriyyah, African, about 40, 17th January 1938, ill-treated and unable to work, servant

Hasinah bint Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 24th July 1939, ill-treated, servant

Hassun bin Ali, born in Dubai, about 20, 18th February 1942

Hilaweh bint Rashid, born on Za'ab Island, about 35, 18th February 1942

Husain bin Ibrahim, from Dalmah, born in Lingah, about 25, 22nd October 1931, ill-treated and desired to be free, diver

Idah bint Fairuz, from Abu Dhabi, born in Dubai, African, about 40, 3rd January 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, suspected of committing theft, servant

Idrees bin Mijjan, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 19th January 1941, African, afraid of being sold, diver

Ismail (father's name unknown), from Khan (Sharjah), born in Gwadar (Makran), Baluchi, about 40, 18th April 1940, afraid of being sold, diver

Ismail bin Kahur, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 20th August 1933, not paid, diver

Ismail bin Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Shamal (Ras al-Khaimah), African, about 25, 28th October 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Ismail bin Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 22, 12th October 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Ismail bin Rashid, from Dubai, born in Ghaya (Makran), Baluchi, about 50, 15th December 1938, beaten, diver

Ismail bin Ruba, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 14, 3rd January 1940, ill-treated, diver

Ismail bin Wulaid, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 11th October 1939, ill-treated, diver

Izkin bint Jaffer, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, 29th October 1928, requested a manumission certificate for her stolen son Siroosh

Jamilah bint Marzuq, from Ajman, born in Mecca, African, about 40, 11th January 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Jamilah bint Marzuq, from Sharjah, born in Jeddah, African, about 60, 16th July 1939, not able to work and ill-treated, servant

Jamilah bint Mubarak, from Qatar, born in Najd, Abyssinian, about 35, 16th November 1925, kidnapped to be sold, servant

Jamuh bint Firuz, born in Sharjah, African, about 15, manumitted on 18th December 1926

Joan bin Bilal, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 6th January 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Johar bin Taysi, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 22, 3rd January 1938, treated harshly, diver

Jowhar bin Faraj, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 25, 11th April 1940, afraid of being sold, diver

Jumah bin Faraj, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Qatar, African, about 45, 22nd March 1940, ill-treated and beaten, caretaker of a tower,

Jumah bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Hamriyyah, African about 27, 14th February 1931, afraid of being sold, labourer

Jumah bin Sanqur, from Ajman, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 65, 1st February 1938, turned out by his master from his house as too old for diving

Juma'h bin Sanqur, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 45, 11th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Jum'ah bint Mubarak, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 30, 19th July 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Jumeh bint Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Sharjah, about 35, 23rd July 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Jumeh bint Slayem, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 15th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Jumuh bint Firuz, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 15, 10th October 1926, escaped with her mother Zainab

Jumuh bint Salim, from Hirah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 27, 14th February 1931, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Kammool bint Bashir, from Sharjah, born in Hamzun (Makran), Baluchi, about 19, 27th March 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Kamoosh bint Noobi, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 22, 27th December 1930, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Khaddoi (her father's name was unknown), from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Zanzibar, African, about 50, 13th September 1938, hoped for better life, servant

Khaddoi bint Ali, from Dubai, born in Azzam in Yemen, Yemeni, about 45, 17th December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Khaddoi bint Ali, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 27th October 1940, ill-treated and oppressed by her master, servant

Khaddoi bint Barut, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 27th November 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Khaddoi bint Ismail, from Khan, born in Khan, African, about 25, 25th February 1939, ill-treated, servant

Khaddoi bint Mabrook, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 30, 24th February 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Khaddoi bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 35, 3rd January 1938, treated harshly, servant

Khadieh bint Saif bin Sultan, from Khan, born in Khan, Baluchi, about 35, 12th August 1932, ill-treated and beaten, escaped with her mistress, servant

Khadrah bint Jouhar, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, about 50, 19th February 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Khairi bin Fray, from Qatar, born in Medina, African (from Nubia), about 27, 11th December 1924, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Khalfan bin Jowhar, from Dubai, born in Khan (Dubai), African about 40, 9th April 1940, not paid an advance, diver

Khalis bin Muhamad, from Hirah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 50, 26th February 1938, ill-treated and turned out by his master, diver

Khamas bin Abaid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 16, 29th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Khamis bin Abdullah and his wife Khaddoj bint Ismail, Baluchis, 1939

Khamis bin Dasmal, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 14th April 1941, ill-treated, diver

Khamis bin Johar, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 21, 6th June 1925, manumitted by his master and re-enslaved, labourer

Khamis bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 30th May 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Khamis bin Mubarak, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 35, 14th April 1940, not paid advances and turned out of his master's house

Khamisa bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Hirah, African, about 25, 19th November 1937, ill-treated, servant

Khamisa bint Nasib, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 56, 10th January 1941, escaped with her husband Suwaid bin Marzooq, servant

Khamisah bint Salim, from Dubai, born in Dhank, African, about 40, 1st January 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, servant

Khamus bint Firuz, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 17, 10th October 1926, escaped with her mother Zainab, manumitted on 18th Dec. 1926

Khammus bint Fairuz, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Mukallah, African, about 25, 19th September 1937, ill-treated, servant

Khammus bint Miftah, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 30, 25th December 1937, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Khazur bint Abdullah, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Jask, Baluchi, about 40, 22nd June 1939, afraid of being sold and separated from her children, servant

Khedijah bint Firoz, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 40, 8th February 1940, oppressed by her master, servant

Kidi bin Bishak, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 26th December 1937, ill-treated, diver

Latifah bint Faraj, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 25, 12th January 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Latuf bint Firoz, from Sharjah, born in Sirri, African, about 40, 12th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Latuf bint Jumah, from Hirah, born in Hirah, about 30, 25th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Latuf bint Khamis, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 14th December 1941, afraid of being sold, servant

Latuf bint Mulaid, from Sharjah, born in Sur, about 35, 4th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Latuf bint Walaid, African, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Zanzibar, about 50, 2nd February 1929, manumitted by her mistress and threatened to be re-enslaved, servant

Lattoof bint Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 18th February 1939, arrived with her husband who was freed by his master

Lattuf bint Fairuz, from Ajman, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 15th January 1937, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, servant

Lattuf bint Mubarak, from Za'ab Island, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 25, 12th June 1940, ill-treated, servant

Mabrook bin Sanbat, from Ajman, born in Addis Ababa, African, about 24, 24th December 1937, ill-treated, beaten and not paid, diver

Mabrukah bint Bilal, from Hirah (Sharjah), born in Abyssinia, African, about 30, 17th July 1938, ill-treated and oppressed by her master

Mahtab bint Kamal, from Dubai, born in Lashar in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 6th March 1928, kidnapped with her children and recovered

Maku bint Nikbad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Dashku in Biaban (Makran), Baluchi, about 47, 15th November 1929, manumitted by her master and claimed by his heirs, servant

Malakan (her father's name unknown), from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Lashar (Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 12th January 1931, arrested and sold because of her parents' debts, servant

Mallotah bint Peshoo, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Qasbir (Makran), Baluchi, about 20, 23rd February 1939, kidnapped and recovered

Mannah bint Abdulla, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Mu'airidh (Ras al-Khaimah), African, about 35, 28th July 1941, afraid of being sold and separated from her family, servant

Manyuh bint Hilal, from Sharjah, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 45, 3rd October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Manyuh bint Khalfan, from Dubai, born in Dibah, about 35, 24th October 1938, pretended to be free as her mother was manumitted, servant

Marhumah bint Saleh, from Dubai, born in Hodeidah, African, 27, 19th June 1936, kept in confinement in a godown and beaten, servant

Mariam bint Abbud, from Umm al Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 30, 16th January 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Mariam bint Muhammad, from Khan village (near Sharjah), born in Guristan (Persia), about 35, 24th June 1929, kidnapped for ransom

Mariam bint Muhammad, from Abu Dhabi, born in Kitch (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 3rd November 1937, ill-treated, servant

Mariam bint Rashid, from Za'ab Island, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 30, 8th June 1940, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Maryam Begum bint Jamuk, from Dubai, born in Boonu (Makran), Baluchi, about 27, 17th December 1928, kidnapped and recovered

Maryam bint Faiz Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Bahra (Bampur, Makran), Baluchi, about 25, 17th December 1928, kidnapped and recovered

Maryam bint Hasan, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 45, 28th May 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Maryam bint Omar, from Qatar, born in Selali (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 15, 16th November 1925, recovered, servant

Maryam bint Sha'aban, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 25, 10th December 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Maryami bint Jumah, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 30, 17th May 1931, afraid of her son being sold

Marzooq bin Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 24th July 1939, not able to work and ill-treated by his mistress, diver

Marzooq bin Suwaid, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 40, 10th January 1941, escaped with his father Suwaid bin Marzooq, diver

Marzooq bin Muhammad, from Hirah, born in Ghamid (Hijaz), African, about 20, 18th December, 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Marzuq bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 35, 26th November 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Mas'odah bint Wazir, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, about 35, 10th January 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Masrur bin Bashir, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 20, 17th April 1941, afraid of being sold, diver

Matar bin Wulaid, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 12, 26th November 1938, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Matruh bint Firuz, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 11, 10th October 1926, escaped with her mother Zainab, manumitted on 18th December 1926

Medineh bint Wekayu, from Qatar, born in Selali (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 20, 16th November 1925, recovered with her sister Sharifah, servant, recorded at Basidu

Miftah bin Farhan, from Dubai, born in Muscat, African, about 50, 2nd January 1940, ill-treated, diver

Mili bin Hammam, from Dubai, born in Qatar, African, about 25, 26th February 1938, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Mubarak (father's name unknown), from Ajman, born in Sur, African, about 40, 16th February 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Mubarak (father's name unknown), from Hirah, born in Swahil, about 25, 11th December 1939, not getting any support from his master, diver

Mubarak bin Ali, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 23rd January 1938, turned out by his mistress, servant

Mubarak bin Bilal, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), about 45, 4th October 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Mubarak bin Bukhit, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, about 30, 20th July 1939, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Daroh, from Dubai, born in Makran, African, about 26, 19th February 1939, beaten and afraid of being separated from his wife, servant

Mubarak bin Farhan, from Ajman, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 45, 2nd February 1939, ill-treated, labourer

Mubarak bin Firoz, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 13th November 1938, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Firoz, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 25, 15th November 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Mubarak bin Hasan, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 8th September 1940, ran away because his master refused to get him married, diver

Mubarak bin Ibrahim, from Dubai, born in Sur, about 35, 27th November 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Mubarak bin Isa, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 14th December 1937, ill-treated and forced to work, diver

Mubarak bin Jumah, African, about 41 years, 29th January 1931

Mubarak bin Miftah, from Dubai, born in Sarbash (Persia), Baluchi, about 25, 31st January 1938, oppressed by his master, diver

Mubarak bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 20, 24th December 1937, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Sa'ad, from Dubai, born in Wudam, African, about 29, 18th November 1937, freed by his master and kidnapped, diver

Mubarak bin Salih, born in Oman, about 35, 29th December 1941

Mubarak bin Salim, from Dubai, born in Chahbar, Baluchi, about 25, 15th August 1939, ran away from his master who refused to give him an advance, diver

Mubarak bin Salim, from Buraimi, born in Kirawan (Makran), about 45, 15th May 1940, afraid of being sold, labourer

Mubarak bin Salmin, from Dubai, born in Shaqra (Najd), African, about 50, 13th April 1940, ill-treated and not paid advances, diver

Mubarak bin Sangur, born in Makran, about 40, 5th January 1942

Mubarak bin Sangur, from Dubai, born in Sur, African, about 37, 23rd July 1939, ill-treated and paid an advance, diver

Mubarak bin Shanbeh, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 60, 26th November 1938, ill-treated, diver

Mubarak bin Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 35, 8th July 1939, ran away from his mistress who refused to pay him an advance, diver

Mubarak bin Yaruh, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 19th June 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Mubarakah bint Suwaid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 10th January 1941, escaped with his father Suwaid bin Marzooq, servant

Muhammad bin Abdullah, from Dubai, born in Rudbar (Makran), Persian, about 35, 8th July 1929, kidnapped to be a diver

Muhammad bin Alidad, from Dubai, born in Surna (near Bandar Abbas), Persian, about 24, 8th July 1929, kidnapped to be a diver

Muhammad bin Daud, from Abu Dhabi, born in Kasar Kand (Makran), Baluchi, about 4, 12th August 1927, captured twice, wished to return to the first owner who treated him as his son

Muhammad bin Shah Karam, from Dibah, born in Bashakard (Baluchistan), Baluchi, about 35, 21st July 1938, ran away from his kidnappers

Mulaid bin Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Swahil, African, about 60, 19th April 1939, trying to restore his sold wife and children, servant

Murad bin Mohamed, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 35, 22nd August 1940, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Murad bin Shams-ud-Din, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 17th May 1940, not paid advances, diver

Musa bin Abdullah, born in Makran, about 25, 29th December 1941

Musa bin Haidar, from Dubai, born in Karachi, Baluchi, about 16, 14th October 1927, desired to be free, diver

Musa bin Jumah, from the interior of Oman, born in Sharjah, about 35, 20th July 1938, desired to be free, labourer

Musa bin Mubarak, about 19, 12th October 1939

Musa bin Rajab, from Sharjah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 24th October 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Mutaira bint Marzooq, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 24th December 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Nafa'ah bint Sorur, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 19, 22nd June 1939, afraid of being sold and separated from her mother Khazur, servant

Nawazi Miyabi Chotomia, from Ajmere, India, Indian, about 31, 28th April 1928, kidnapped when going on pilgrimage, recovered

Noonah bint Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 14, 16th December 1939, ill-treated, servant

Nubi bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 16th August 1939, kept in chains in order to be handed over to the Bedouins for slavery, diver

Nubi bin Muhammad, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 45, 12th December 1939, ill-treated, diver

Nubi bin Nakibo, from Dubai, born in Makran, African, about 30, 26th November 1938, ill-treated, diver

Obaid bin Hameen, from Ajman, born in Maldah (Batinah), about 30, 10th September 1940, ill-treated and tortured, diver

Obaidat bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Khabbah (Batinah), about 39, 29th August 1938, afraid of being sold

Othman bin Jarka, from Dubai, born in Addis Ababa (Abyssinia), African, about 25, 26th July 1938, forced to go for diving, diver

Othman bin Wulaid, from Dubai, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 40, 15th May 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Qamush bint Malu, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 40, 11th November 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Qamush bint Nubi, from Sharjah, born in Ajman, African, about 30, 17th March 1940, ill-treated, servant

Qumashah bint Muhamad, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 35, 27th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Rabi bin Sabt, from Dubai, born in Sur, African, about 25, 2nd January 1940, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Rabi'a bin Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 28th February 1939, ill-treated, diver

Rabi'a bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 19th April 1939, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, diver

Rafia'h bint Marzuq, from Jumairah (Dubai), born in Makran, Baluchi, about 25, 21st October 1925, kidnapped and escaped, servant

Rayah bint Saleem, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 40, 18th December 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Rayeh bint Khaddum, from Dubai, born in Khadrah (Batinah), African, 36, 27th June 1936, ill-treated, beaten, servant

Reba bin Firuz, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 20, 10th October 1926, escaped with his mother Zainab, diver

Reza bin Rahmat, born in Kumazi (Makran), Baluchi, about 21, 11th January 1928, kidnapped at Sharjah when looking for a job

Ruba bin Firuz, African, about 20, manumitted on 18th December 1926

Rubaiya bin Farhan, born in Dubai, about 25, 30th December 1942

Sa'ad bin Farhan, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 2nd June 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Sa'ad bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 2nd March 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Sa'ad bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 31st January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Sa'adah bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 40, 21st July 1940, ill-treated and oppressed by her master, servant

Sa'adah bint Salmeen, from Ajman, born in Hadhramaut, Yemeni, about 40, 7th December 1938, ill-treated and threatened to be sold, servant

Sabt bin Abaid, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 5th May 1939, ill-treated and beaten, diver

Sabt bin Suwaid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 21, 10th January 1941, escaped with his father Suwaid bin Marzooq,

Sai'd bin Ahmad, from Khan, born in Hasinah of Yemen, about 25, 6th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Sai'd bin Ali, from Dubai, born in Yaf'a (Yemen), about 30, 26th July 1939, afraid of being sold and separated from his wife, diver

Sa'id bin Sanqur, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, about 25, 13th August 1938, afraid of being sold, diver

Sa'id bin Suwaid, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 36, 10th January, 1941, escaped with his father Suwaid bin Marzooq, diver

Sa'ida bint Hassan, from Za'ab Island, born in Za'ab Island, African, about 35, 13th June 1940, ill-treated and oppressed, servant

Sa'idah bint Faraj, from Ajman, born in Ajman, African, about 25, 18th April 1939, servant

Saidah bint Muhammad, from Ajman, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 17th January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Saidah bint Surur, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 70, 17th February 1930, manumitted by her mistress but afraid of being sold

Saidah bint Ubaid, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 40, 25th October 1937, ill-treated, servant, escaped with her son

Sa'idah bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Khan, about 35, 7th February 1939, ill-treated and oppressed, servant

Saideh bint Farhan, from Ajman, born in Sadeireh (Oman), African, about 45, 19th May 1939, ran away with her husband, servant

Saideh bint Rashid, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 45, 17th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Saleemah bin Sangur, from Dubai, born in Makran, about 50, 15th January 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Salha bint Sa'id, from Ajman, born in Bashoot (Hijaz), African, about 40, 27th December 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salhoh bint Anbar, from Ajman, born in Hamriyyah, about 30, 28th November 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salhoh bint Juma'h, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, about 30, 1st January 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, servant

Salhoh bint Qasmul, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 25, 28th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salhoh bint Sa'id, from Hirah (Sharjah), born in Hasa, about 35, 13th September 1938, abused by her master, afraid of being sold, servant

Salhoh bint Sangur, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 35, 25th October 1937, ill-treated, servant

Salhuh bint Ahmad, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Mecca, about 35, 23rd July 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salhuh bint Zuwaid, from Dubai, born in Hamasah (Buraimi), about 40, 6th October 1938, ill-treated, afraid of being sold, servant

Saliha bint Abdul Rahman, from Abu Dhabi, born in Masna'ah (Batinah), African, about 30, 29th September 1939, ill-treated, servant

Salim bin Ali bin Salih al-Mashaikhi, from Abu Dhabi, born in Yadia (Oman), Omani, 25, 4th March 1929, kidnapped for ransom

Salim bin Bilal, from Jumairah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 34, 15th August 1939, ill-treated and trying to recover his sister sold by the master, diver

Salim bin Sadullah, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 29th April 1938, imprisoned by his master, diver

Salimah bint Farhad, from Ajman, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 40, 15th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salimah bint Khamis, born in Dubai, about 40, 6th January 1942

Salimah bint Marzuq, from Dubai, born in Zanzibar, African, about 40, 15th July 1938, ill-treated and oppressed by her mistress, servant

Salimah bint Mubarak, from in Dubai, born in Dubai, about 40, 29th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salimah bint Said, from Dubai, born in Batinah, African, about 35, 27th May 1938, ill-treated, servant

Salimah bint Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 22nd March 1940, ill-treated by her mistress, servant

Salimah bint Said, from Dubai, born in Sharjah, about 35, 17th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Salloomah bint Ferooz, from Hamriyyah, born in Hamriyyah, about 30, 3rd February 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Sallum bin Ali, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 56, 21st July 1939, ran away from his master who rejected to give him an advance, diver

Sallum bin Ismail, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 16th November 1938, ill-treated, servant

Sallum bin Mubarak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 10, 15th December 1939, afraid of being sold after his mother's death and brought to the Agency by his grandmother

Sallumah bint Jumah, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Sharjah, African, about 45, 13th May 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Sallumah bint Bukhit, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 30, 17th December 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Sallumah bint Hamad, from Hirah, born in Hirah (Trucial Coast), African, about 20, 29th December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Sallumah bint Hammad, from Dubai, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 38, 13th May 1940, ill-treated and beaten by her mistress, servant

Sallumah bint Mubarak, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 30, 30th December 1937, afraid of being sold, escaped with her sister Surur, servant

Sallumah bint Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Batinah, African, about 60, 3rd January 1938, ill-treated because unable to work, servant

Sallumah bint Mubarak, from Abu Dhabi, born in Dubai, African, about 40, 28th October 1940, threatened to be sold, servant

Sallumah bint Sa'ad, from Ajman, born in Hadhramaut, about 28, 23rd July 1940, ill-treated and beaten, afraid of being sold, servant

Sallumah bint Walaid, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 35, 23rd May 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Salmah bint Othman, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 20, 27th April 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Salman bin Jumah, from Hamriyyah, born in Hamriyyah, African, 22, 22nd October 1938, ill-treated, diver

Salmeen bin Ferooz, from Ajman, born in Dubai, about 40, 9th February 1939, turned out from the house by his master, labourer

Salmeen bin Sabir, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 18th February 1939, ill-treated and allowed to go by his master

Salmin bin Firooz, from Hamriyyah (Trucial Coast), Baluchi, about 25, 22nd January 1933, ill-treated and not paid, diver

Salmuh bint Marzooq, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 29th October 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Saluhah bint Ismail, from Sharjah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 30, 26th May 1938, treated with cruelty, servant

Saluhah bint Marzooq, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 33, 11th December 1929, ill-treated and kept in irons, servant

Saluhah bint Mubarak, African, from Hirah, born in Ras al-Khaimah, about 30, 29th December 1930, ill-treated and kept in irons, servant

Salumah bint Almas, from Shandaqah, born in Dubai, African, about 30, 21st October 1937, afraid of being sold, servant

Salumah bint Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Sur, African, about 35, 22nd April 1939, kidnapped and wanted to remain with her master, servant

Sanqah bin Salim, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 20, 19th March 1940, ill-treated, diver

Sanqur bin Atiq, from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 24th December 1937, ill-treated, diver

Sanqur bin Farhan, from Qatar, born in Sirij (Makran), Baluchi, about 50, 24th January 1931, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Saoodah bint Badhoom, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 45, 17th August 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Saoodah bint Mabruk, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 65, 1st February 1938, ill-treated as too old for work

Saoodah bint Mubarak, from Dairah, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 16th August 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Saoodah bint Salim, from Sharjah, born in Buraimi, African, about 35, 12th May 1940, ill-treated and oppressed by her mistress, servant

Saoodah bin Salmin, from Sharjah, born in Sur, about 30, 5th April 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Sa'oud bin Mabararak, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Dubai, African, about 20, 28th February 1939, ill-treated, diver

Sa'ouda bint Mohamed, from Dubai, born in Addis Abeba, Abyssinian, about 40, 24th August 1940, ill-treated and oppressed, servant

Sara bint Marzuq, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 20, 10th December 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Sarah bint Khamis, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 15, 14th April 1940, ran away with her parents, servant

Sarah bint Mubarak, from Dalmah, born in Dalmah, African, about 40, 17th December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Sarur bin Muhammad, from Sirri Island, born in Rudbar (Baluchistan), Baluchi, about 27, 1st June 1939, turned out of the master's house, diver

Sau'd bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 20, 2nd March 1937, ill-treated, beaten, afraid of being sold, diver

Saudah bint Marzooq, from Dubai, born in Riyadh, African, about 35, 7th May 1939, beaten, servant

Saudah bint Sa'adallah, from Hirah, born in Dhufar, African, about 50, 11th January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Saudah bint Wulaid, from Umm al Qaiwain, born in Umm al Qaiwain, African, about 35, 16th January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Shaikhah bint Anbar, from Ajman, born in Ras al-Khaimah, African, about 20, 14th December 1938, afraid of being sold, servant

Sharifah int Wekayu, from Qatar, born in Selali (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 25, 16th November 1925, recovered with her sister Medinah, servant, recorded at Basidu

Sharruf bint Mahruk, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 1st January 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, servant

Siroosh bin Sanqur, from Dubai, born in Kebreet (Makran), Baluchi, about 13, 2nd November 1928, kidnapped and recovered by his mother

Soadeh bint Bilal, from Dubai, born in Maladdeh (Batinah), African, about 30, 16th July 1938, ill-treated and oppressed by her master, servant

Suhail bin Mubarak, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Filj al-Ali, about 25, 7th December 1938, afraid of being sold, labourer

Sulaimah bint Khamis, from Dubai, born in Khaboorah (Batinah), African, about 35, 23rd July 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Sulaimah bint Obaid, from Ajman, born in Duraiz (Oman), African, about 20, 19th January 1939, escaped with her husband Idrees, servant

Surur bin Mubarak, from Hirah, born in Hirah, African, about 19, 30th December 1937, afraid of being sold, escaped with her daughter Sallumah, servant

Suwaid bin Marzook, from Dubai, born in Mukallah, African, about 65, 10th January 1941, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, diver

Suwaid bin Zaid, from Sharjah, born in Janj (Sudan), African, 17th December 1937, afraid of being sold, diver

Tajiyah bint Mirad, from Dubai, born in Qatar, African, about 40, 16th June 1937, afraid of being sold to Buraimi, servant

Tanmush bint Othman, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 30, 3rd January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Thaniyeh bint Khamis, from Dubai, born in Dubai, about 25, 16th July 1938, ill-treated and oppressed by her mistress, servant

Thannoi bin Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 20, 20th November 1937, ill-treated, diver

Tuffaha bint Taysir, from Dubai, born in Dubai, African, about 25, 1st January 1938, ill-treated and afraid of being sold, servant

Walaid bin Firoz, from Ajman, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 2nd May 1938, ill-treated and oppressed, diver

Waleed (father's name unknown), from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 24, 28th December 1930, ill-treated and kept in irons, diver

Wulaid (father's name unknown), from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 40, 10th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Wulaid (father's name unknown), from Dubai, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 28th January 1938, ill-treated, diver

Wulaid bin Mubarak, from Ajman, born in Swahil, African, about 60, 8th May 1939, trying to help his ex-wife who was going to be sold, diver

Wulaid bin Musa, from Dairah, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 19th August 1939, ran away from the master who took all his earnings, diver

Wulaid bin Nasib, from Ras al-Khaimah, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), African, about 45, 14th January 1939, afraid of being sold, diver

Yasminah (father's name unknown), born in Zanzibar, African, about 51, 27th December 1927, manumitted by her mistress but afraid of being re-enslaved, servant

Yasminah bint Ali, from Hirah, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 31st December 1937, ill-treated, servant

Yasminah bint Khamis, from Hirah, born in Ghalfan (Batinah), African, about 35, 6th February 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Yasminah bint Mubarak, born on Za'ab Island, about 35, 5th January 1942

Yuri bint Lapek, Baluchi, from Oman, born in Buna in Mares (Makran), Baluchi, about 35, 29th July 1929, manumitted by her master and re-enslaved, servant

Zahra bint Bashir, born in Dubai, about 30, 29th December 1941

Zainab bint Mubarak, African, about 40, manumitted on 18th December 1926

Zafu bint Sanqoor, from Ajman, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 1st June 1937, ill-treated, wished to join her husband who already got the certificate

Zafur (her father's name unknown), from Sharjah, born in Swahil, African, about 50, 22nd March 1940, ill-treated and oppressed by her master, servant

Zaf'ur bint Khamis, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 40, 14th April 1941, afraid of being sold, servant

Zafur bint Nasib, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 40, 16th August 1939, beaten, servant

Zahiyeh bint Farhan, from Dubai, born in Swahil (Zanzibar), about 60, 1st February 1938, ill-treated as too old for work

Zahra bint Ahmad, from Minab, born in Minab, Baluchi, about 19, 21st January 1928, kidnapped from her house but recovered and brought to the Agency and repatriated

Zahra bint Ghuloom, from Shandaqah, born in Qishm, about 38, 29th September 1939, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Zahra bint Muhamad, from Sharjah, born in Addis Ababa, Abyssinian, about 35, 15th May 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Zahra bint Said, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, African, about 30, 14th April 1940, ran away with her husband, servant

Zahra bint Sa'id, from Sha'm, born in Sha'm, African, about 40, 8th June 1940, afraid of being sold, servant

Zahra bint Salih, from Umm al-Qaiwain, born in Umm al-Qaiwain, aged about 35, 6th April 1938, cruelty treated, servant

Zahran bin Mubarak, from Dubai, born in Sharjah, about 20, 5th February 1939, ill-treated and tortured, diver

Zahroh bint Saleem, from Ajman, born in Ajman, about 30, 25th December 1939, afraid of being sold, servant

Zahruh bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 30, 11th December 1929, manumitted by her mistress and afraid of being re-enslaved, servant

Zainab bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sharjah, African, about 40, 10th October 1926, pretended to be free as her mother was manumitted by her master, took refuge with her 3 daughters Khamus, Jumuh and Matruh and a son Reba

Zajnah bint Mubarak, from Sharjah, born in Sabiyah (Yemen), about 30, 27th June 1927, ill-treated and beaten and kept in orons, servant,

Zakaria ibn Abdul Rahim, from Dubai, born in Tharapore (India), Indian, about 17, 30th September 1932, desired to be free, diver

Zamooteh bint Abdullah, from Dubai, born in Makran, Baluchi, about 30, 9th December 1932, ill-treated and beaten, servant

Ziadah bint Farhan, from Dubai, born in Dhufar, African, about 55, 22nd January 1938, ill-treated, servant

Zufur bint Khamis, from Sharjah, born in Zanzibar, African, about 60, 20th November 1937, treated with cruelty, servant

Zuwaynah bint Salim bin Mashar, from Abu Dhabi, born in Asna (Jabal al-Akhdar), African, about 40, 9th April 1935, ill-treated and beaten, afraid of being sold, servant

Statement recorded at the British Consulate in Addis Ababa

Surur el Habashi, from Dubai, born in Wallamo (Abyssinia), Abyssinian, about 20, 4th August 1933, desired to be free, diver

**The list of slaves who applied for manumission during 1922–1923
in Bandar Abbas but whose statements have not been found in the
records**

Salamee bint Nasib, from Latf, manumitted on 20.7.1922
Raihaneh bin Salim Salim, 16.10.1922
Isghan bint Jaffar, from Jask, 18.10.1922
Kalpuregh bint Nariak, from Rudbar, 18.10.1922
Kaniz bint Muhammad, from Rudbar, 18.10.1922
Rowzi bint Kahurak, 18.10.1922
Sakina bint Nad Ali, 18.10.1922
Chiragh bin Nad Ali, 20.12.1922
Awinah bint Abdula, 20.12.1922
Khairi bint Souzing, 12.1.1923
Sultan, from Makran, 2.4.1923
Abdul Rahim bin Bilal, 16.5.1923

**The list of slaves who applied for manumission during 1929–1933
in Bahrain and Muscat but whose statements have not been found
in the records**

Aman bin Jasim, born in Hodeidah (Yemen), African, taken to Mecca and Qatar,
manumitted in Bahrain on 19.2.1929
Bakhit bin Muhammad, born in Mecca, African, taken to Riyadh and Dammam, manumitted
in Bahrain on 26.8.1929
Faraj bin Marzooq, born in Hijaz, African, taken to Jubail and Darin, manumitted in Bahrain
on 1.10.1931
Mubarak (fathre's name unknown), born in Yemen, Abyssinian, taken to Jeddah and
Dammam, manumitted in Bahrain on 6.6.1931
Nasir bin Almas, born in Bahrain, African, taken to Dammam, manumitted in Bahrain on
27.2.1930
Saïd bin Mubarak, born in Hodeidah (Yemen), Abyssinian, taken to Dubai, manumitted in
Muscat on 8.3.1933
Sroor (fathre's name unknown), born in Medina, Abyssinian, taken to Kuwait and Qatar,
manumitted in Bahrain on 22.9.1929

**The list of slaves who applied for manumission during 1937–1938
in Sharjah but whose statements have not been found in the records**

Almas and his daughter Khuri, date of application for manumission 3.12.1937, date of
Bahrain communication 9.1.1938, authorized on 29.1.1938
Awsha bin Nubi, 1.6.1937, 12.11.1937, 20.11.1937
Bakhitat bint Sarur, 16.1.1938, 7.2.1938, 21.2.1938
Bilal bin Fairuz, 3.1.1938, 20.1.1938, 11.2.1938
Hallum bint Mubarak, 10.1.1938, 29.1.1938, 8.2.1938
Idoh bint Mubarak, 26.12.1937, 27.1.1938, 8.2.1938
Jamuh Bint Mubarak, 19.9.1937, 8.10.1937, 23.10.1937
Jammu bin Nubi, 1.6.1937, 12.11.1937, 20.11.1937
Jush bin Sangur, 2.3.1937, 29.6.1937, 13.7.1937

Khaduj wife of Sangur, 2.3.1937, 29.6.1937, 13.7.1937
Khammas bin Nubi, 1.6.1937, 12.11.1937, 20.11.1937
Rashid bin Mubarak, 11.1.1938, 29.1.1938, 8.2.1938
Maitha bint Sangur, 2.6.1937, 29.6.1937, 13.7.1937
Saad bin Mubarak, 17.1.1937, 11.4.1937, 21.4.1937
Said bin Almas, 6.1.1938, 29.1.1938, 8.2.1938
Salim bin Farhan, 6.1.1938, 29.1.1938, 8.2.1938
Zafur bin Khamis, 20.11.1937, 2.12.1937, 11.12.1937

Names of slaves released, repatriated and handed over to their relatives from July 1922 to August 1923 in Bandar Abbas

1922

Jumi d/o Muftah with one son Bilal s/o Jara aged 2, Baluchi, repatriated to Karachi
Gunfrag, a girl, father's name unknown, 7, Baluchi, handed over to her parents
Firuz bin Baran, 40, Baluchi, released
Jafer bin Tanfiq, 14, Baluchi, repatriated to Jask to his father
Ahmad s/o Haikal, 40, Baluchi, released
Mabruk, father's name unknown, 22, Sawahili, released
Mabruk s/o Rahmad, 31, Baluchi, released
Saad bin Naqhit, 40, Baluchi, released
Abdullah alias Bilal s/o Ahmad, 20, Persian, released
Shambay s/o Sulaiman, 35, Baluchi, released
Saad s/o Mabruk, 37, Sawahili, released
Shawash alias Mabruk s/o Husain, age not indicated, Baluchi, released
Lashkaro s/o Saifi, 30, Baluchi, released
Shambay s/o Ahmad, 40, Baluchi, released
Sana'a alias Habush, 9, Baluchi, handed over to his father
Firoz s/o Fasha, age not indicated, Sawahili, released
Maryam bint Isa, 12, Baluchi, handed over to her father

1923

Sangor s/o Korait, age not indicated, Baluchi, released
Shambay bin Barut, 35, Baluchi, released
Salim s/o Juma, 25, Baluchi, released
Mabruk bin Sangor, age not indicated, Sawahili, released
Kalaiman alias Hindi, father's name unknown, age not indicated, Sawahili, released
Korij s/o Alluk, father's name unknown, age not indicated, Baluchi, released
Dali s/o Alluk, father's name unknown, age not indicated, Baluchi, released
Qambar s/o Zahruk, 30, father's name unknown, Baluchi, released
Baik bint Joomah, age not indicated, handed over to her parents (17.5.1923)