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# YEMEN TIMES

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## OUR VIEWPOINT

### The Media and the Elections

Democracy is a process, and not a participular incident such as casting ballots and announcing results. Unfortunately, the media of Yemen has yet to appreciate this fact.

In the registration process, there are many human stories which need to be told. A British electoral consultant who visited Yemen this week was telling me with considerable enthusiasm the story of a Yemeni woman who plunged into a male registration station and insisted to register her name. The officials' repeated pleas that this was a male registration station did not deter her because there was no female registration station in the constituency. The result of registration at that time - 286 male registrants, and one woman.

There are many similar incidents. The media needs to bring the details of such human efforts to light, instead of running around reporting about the meaningless meetings of state officials.

The media could also play a decisive role in urging people to register for the elections. The people should be told, time after time, the importance of participation in the democratic process. The elections are an important component.

Finally, the media could tell the world about what Yemen wants to do. The story of little and backward Yemen in embarking on this most difficult path of democracy is an important one to tell. My difficulty is not only with the official media, although they carry most of the blame, but also with the media of the political parties as well as the independent ones.

It is crucial that Yemen secure international understanding and sympathy for what it is trying to achieve. Such understanding and sympathy is well-deserved, but it is upto us to bring to the open our genuine and serious efforts towards building a democratic system. It is a joint responsibility on all media persons.

The Publisher

عبدالله بن يحيى

### Yemeni Drive to Help Lepers

The Friends of the Lepers Association celebrated last week the Lepers Day. On the occasion, Dr. Yasseen Abdul-Aleem Al-Qubati, the Association's Secretary-General, and the one man who single-handedly forced the nation's attention to the lot of lepers in Yemen, had much to say.

"We have opened forty clinics to service the lepers and attend to their needs. This year, we have treated 244 cases, and we are working at the moment on 927 patients," he explained.

It is estimated that there are some 14,000 lepers in Yemen, and these suffer from extreme abuse and inhuman socio-cultural attitudes in society.

## Salim Saleh Mohammed: "We shall not allow the situation to deteriorate or to get out of hand."

In an extended and heart-felt conversation with Mr. Salim Saleh Mohammed, Member of the Presidential Council and Assistant Secretary-General of the Yemeni Socialist Party, attended by the Chief Editor, Political Editor, and Economic Editor of the Yemen Times, the official spoke candidly about the situation in Yemen and prospects of the future.

"We shall not allow the situation to deteriorate or to get out of hand," he insisted.

The full text of the interview next week



## PARLIAMENT APPROVES THE ADEN FREE ZONE LAW

The House of Representatives held a series of meetings last week during which it discussed the Aden Free Zone bill presented by the Executive Board of the Free Zones Authority.

The 32 article bill, once signed into law by the Chairman of the Presidential Council, is expected to open the door for serious efforts in converting the whole of Aden into a free zone.

Even then, however, there are a number of details to be worked in terms of jurisdiction between the Free Zones Authority (FZA), Aden Governorate, and the line ministries operating in the city.

"If the whole city is a free zone governed by the Free Zones Authority, what is the role of the governor of Aden? What becomes of the harbor and airport authorities? What is the role of the line ministries such as Housing and Urban Development, Security, etc.," asked one of the observers.

According to Free Zones Authority sources, these will be worked out in the by-laws and executive regulations which will provide details on the relations between the various parties involved with Aden. However, it will be several months before these will be fully worked out.

In the meantime, there will be very little which will guide the cooperation and coordination among the parties, already antagonistic towards one another.

At another level, the deterioration of safety conditions in Aden, once a security haven, has cast a lot of doubt on the readiness of local and foreign investors to pour their money into Aden. Therefore, the snag that has hit investment levels all over the country, as documented by the Supreme Investment Board, will affect the Aden Free Zone, in spite of the law. "Yet, we have live in hope," according to a FZA source.



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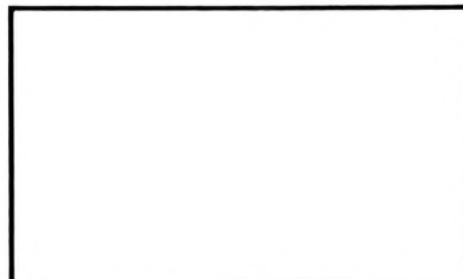
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English Lessons

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# YEMEN TIMES

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### EEC-Yemen Work Towards Financial Protocol

A large EEC delegation arrives in Sanaa later next week to hold the Fifth Round of Official Talks for the Joint Cooperation Committee. Mr. Torbin Holtze, Charge d'Affairs of the EEC Delegation to Jordan and Yemen, already arrived here on February 1st to prepare for the talks. The talks, to be held during 8-12/2/1993, will focus on an evaluation of the scope and direction of cooperation between the EEC and Yemen as negotiated in the May 1984 agreement in commercial and economic fields.

A responsible source at the Ministry of Planning and Development told the Yemen Times that the two sides will discuss amending the 1984 agreement to better meet the current needs of Yemen. "We are working towards changing the agreement into a financial protocol," the source said.

The two sides will also discuss the possibility of setting up an EEC representation in Sanaa, Yemen Times learned. This is justified by the high level of the delegation which is headed by Mr. E. Rhein, the Director of External Relations, and includes Mr. R. Houlston, Head of the Middle East Division, as well as Armeny Lerch, the Yemen Desk Officer at the EEC headquarters.

It will be noted that ongoing projects currently being financed by the EEC are worth ECU 29.51 million (about US\$ 35 m). One of the largest projects in this group is the 4th Fisheries Development Project in which EEC's share of the financing is ECU 13.9 million.

### Workshop on Shipping between US and Yemen

The Federation of Yemeni Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Commercial Office at the US Embassy are jointly sponsoring a two-day workshop dealing with commercial shipping between the US and Yemen. There are several themes to be discussed in the workshop to be held during 8-9th February, 1993. These include Freight Forwarding, Air Freight, Transshipment, and other issues in the shipping industry. According to David Katz, Senior Commercial Officer at the US Embassy, "Many Yemeni companies are not familiar with the current ways to save money and time in shipping goods from the US to Yemen. There is no reason that shipping costs from the US need to be significantly higher than from Europe." Interested parties can receive more information by calling 238-843, extension 49.

### Security Concern Rises in Embassies and Foreign Aid Agencies

Embassies and aid organizations have shown more concern about the safety and security of their staffs in Yemen. The recent incidents of individual cases of kidnapping and violence which targeted some foreigners in Yemen led to many precautionary steps. As an example, the British embassy was visited during 31/1-5/2/1993 by a Douglas Borrowman, a specialist in anti-terrorist matters. The policeman looked into the safety/security facilities at the embassy and residences, and the working/living habits of embassy personnel.

### The Jordanian Industry Minister Concludes Visit

The Jordanian Industry Minister, Dr. Abdullah Annusoor, left Sanaa yesterday following a three-day official visit to the Republic of Yemen.

During the visit, Jordan's visiting Minister held talks with Yemeni officials and businessmen regarding the possibilities of expanding trade and industrial joint ventures.

The Minister also attended the inauguration ceremony of the 2nd Jordanian Trade Exhibition in Sanaa.

It will be noted that the Republic of Yemen and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy an exceptionally good relationship and understanding.

### Yemen and Saudi Arabia Exchange Messages

Dr Abdulaziz Al-Khuwaiter, Saudi Minister of Education, concluded a two-day visit to Sanaa during which he delivered a letter from HM King Fahd to President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

It will be noted that Dr. Al-Khuwaiter on the Saudi side, and Dr. Abdulaziz Ad-Dali, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, are the two designated trouble-shooters in the relations between the two countries. Within these roles, the two men first initiated the border talks in Geneva, and Dr. Ad-Dali was in Saudi Arabia two weeks ago to deliver a letter from President Saleh to the Saudi Monarch. Yemeni-Saudi relations are improving.

### Yemen and Oman Sign Trade and Economic Protocol

The Yemeni trade delegation headed by Mr. Yaqoob Bin Hamad Al-Harithi, Chairman of the Omani Chamber of Commerce and Industry, left Mukallah Airport on Saturday, January 30th, at the end of a five-day official visit to Yemen.

Yemen and Oman have signed a commercial and economic cooperation protocol which is designed to promote trade and economic exchange between the two sides.

"We are hopeful that our visit and the protocol will lead to stronger cooperation between the business communities in the two countries," Al-Harithi said.

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**US FIRST LADY PUTS ON A PRESIDENTIAL PERSONA**

Forget the catty remarks about the absence of a crown. In her violet gown, resplendent with lace and sequins, Hillary Clinton was quite the queen of proceedings in the whirl of balls on inauguration night. For a woman once so famously uninterested in clothes that she bought her wedding dress off the peg on the very morning of her marriage, she had come a long way.

But as the gaudy thrill of America's coronation week fades, the real Hillary will emerge and with this persona, what will surely become a riveting case study in the workings of ultimate power. There have been influential first ladies before: Nancy Reagan, the capricious scourge of White House staff; Rosalynn Carter, the "Steel Magnolia"; and, most controversial of all, Eleanor Roosevelt, whose crusading social zeal made her partnership with Franklin one of the great family duos in US political history. Every American leader's wife is a force to reckon with. Sheer domestic proximity means that every presidential spouse is a figure to be reckoned with. But the whole country will look for Hillary's hand in her husband's decisions.

Even by former first ladies' standards, Mrs. Clinton is in a different league. There is a special dimension to her relationship with the man which official documents identify as William J. Clinton. It is as much professional as personal. In a business as well as a nuptial sense, they are a team.

They are alike; of similar educations, of equal academic accomplishment and - despite the talk that Hillary is the radical to Bill the pragmatist - of shared, broadly liberal views. While he governed Arkansas, she was a prime mover in reform of the state's education and child care policies. Where one begins and the other ends, even their best friends are pressed to say.

Everyone ac-

knowledges that she is his closest, most trusted adviser. In the selection of Cabinet

appointees, Mrs. Clinton was one of the "Gang of Five", (along with her husband, Vice-President Al



Gore, the transition director, Warren Christopher, and Mr. Clinton's closest friend, Bruce Lindsey, now to be White House personnel director), who made the final decisions. In Washington it will not be very different. Former first ladies' offices were in the private quarters of the White House proper. The word is that Mrs Clinton will be installed in the West Wing itself, the real engine room which houses the Oval Office, the offices of most senior staff, and the press room.

But that will make her no less easy to demonise. In Washington's ever febrile political brew, mere perception of a power behind the throne is a potent ingredient. Cartoonists have had a field day, from depiction of a dragon Mrs. Clinton, shoving her husband aside to take the Oath of Office; to a wife triumphant, carrying her husband across the threshold of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

No one is more aware of her complicated role than she is. How she combines the inescapable ceremonial role of First Lady, with her duties as a mother and her inevitable hand in policy-making, only time will tell. But the latter element looms large. Already, it is known that Mrs. Clinton will head a task force to elaborate the new administration's health care proposals, arguably its toughest domestic task in the four years ahead. The response of Mr. Clinton's press secretary, Dee Dee Myers, spoke volumes by omission. She was "not aware" of the scheme, but she did not rule it out. A classic case of the Hillary of old - there at her husband's elbow - but in an often undefined, informal guise.

And the function can be hugely beneficial and the relationship crucial to her husband's success. It will also feed into the subtle balances and power structures that emerge in any administration. Already there is whispering (denied, of course) that behind his good-trooper facade, Al Gore is chafing at the circumscribed role of the vice-presidency. "Yes, this may be a de facto co-presidency," someone said. "But Al Gore will have to accept he is not one of the co-es."

**UN PANEL MAY PROPOSE COURT FOR YUGOSLAV CRIMES**

A UN commission probing atrocities in former Yugoslavia may soon recommend that an International court try accused war criminals, according to legal sources.

Experts have been examining war crimes evidence from a nine-month conflict that has killed thousands and triggered Europe's worst refugee crisis since World War II. The Commission, established under a Security Council resolution last October, recently met in Geneva to complete an interim report to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. It is not expected at this stage to list the names of suspected war criminals, but to outline research by a five-member team, described in the council resolution as an impartial commission of experts. Its members were appointed by the secretary-general and its chairman is an eminent Dutch jurist, Frits Kalshoven.

The interim report is expected to give details of a computerized data base drawn from reports of war crimes provided by governmental and non-governmental sources. Although published accounts have blamed Serb forces for many of the atrocities, including 'ethnic cleansing,' Croat and Muslim fighters have been accused of similar crimes, although to a much lesser extent. In Geneva, the human rights group Amnesty International said last week that women from all sides of the Bosnian civil war have suffered sexual abuse, including rape, by the three warring factions, but Serbs were most guilty of the crimes.

European Community investigators said this month Bosnian Serbs soldiers had raped over 20,000 Muslim women as part of a campaign to terrorize people and drive them from their homes. In addition to recommendations to establish a court to deal with offences committed in the former Yugoslavia, the UN commission is likely to outline what international law is applicable.

This first Geneva Convention deals with the treatment of wounded and sick on land, the third concerns the treatment of prisoners of war and the fourth focuses on the treatment of civilians in time of war. The European Community, at a meeting in Paris on January 13, issued a declaration on Yugoslavia that, among other things, "stressed the need for an international criminal court and expressed their readiness to support this issue at the United Nations."

The UN General Assembly, in a resolution on December 18th appealed to the Security Council to consider recommending an ad hoc International War Crimes" in Bosnia. Major Nazi war criminals of World War II were tried before an international tribunal set up by the victorious allies at Nuremberg, Germany, between October 1945 and October 1946. A dozen of the accused were sentenced to hang. It seems that similar measures may soon be undertaken in Bosnia.

**VIETNAM ANNOUNCES AID DONORS' CONFERENCE**

The first major international conference on aid to Vietnam since reunification of the country in 1975 will be held in September, 1993, Vietnamese and UN officials said.

Vietnam has invited the World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank to participate closely in preparing for the conference, in anticipation that the United States will lift its blockade on international lending to Hanoi beforehand in response to increased Vietnamese co-operation in accounting for American troops missing from the Vietnam War. The US has already loosened various aspects of its embargo since November 1991. Also since November 1991, Japan resumed ODA to Hanoi.

The UNDP has budgeted \$200,000 to help Vietnam organize the conference, which will bring together international financial institutions and potential donor countries, most likely at UN headquarters in Geneva.

The conference is aimed to both mobilize capital and co-ordinate the way it is spent, ensuring that it is used efficiently in line with priorities that the government defines with the assistance of international experts.

Vietnam desperately needs World Bank and ADB loans to upgrade its infrastructure, whose dismal condition after decades of war continues to deter industrial investors.

UNDP officials stressed that international aid should encourage - not replace - private direct foreign investment as the main source of foreign capital. Vietnamese officials are hopeful about the conference and its potential accomplishments.

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# Sons of the Crescent : Part One

## The Hero in Arabian Legend and Folklore

By: Jan Knappert

The oral literary traditions of Arabia can be traced back only to the 6th century A.D. They remained unwritten until the 9th century, which is the second century of the Islamic calendar.

In those pre-Islamic traditions, we meet heroes of a typically Arabian character ideal: They are both warrior and poet, generous to their friends and expecting generosity in return.

According to one tale, when a man named Amre ibnu'l-Qais was preparing to depart from the royal court in Egypt, the king presented him with a very meager farewell gift. On his way back to Arabia, Amr met a friend and recited to him a poem mocking the monarch's stinginess. The friend, in turn, recited this poem gleefully in public on reaching Egypt. The king, hearing of the poetic slander, was so enraged that he sent a band of armed men to Arabia with instructions to hunt down and kill Amr, which they did. This spurious tale implies that classical Arabic poetry was so powerful a weapon that it could doom offenders and bring even kings to despair.

The heroes were enmeshed in the complex patterns of tribal rivalries and clan loyalties that dominated life in ancient Arabia as they do today, though tribes no longer actually go to war, if we exclude the skirmishes of Yemen. Students of the Bible know how the tribes of Israel fought each other, as recorded in the Book of Judges.

Storytellers still can be seen at work in countries like Yemen, Egypt and Morocco. Surrounded by groups of boys and men, they use colorful pictures of elders earnestly decapitating enemies as a point of departure for their narratives.

### Heroic Traditions:

The early battles of the Arabs are recorded in the famous late medieval book *Ayyam al'Arab* (Arabian Days), in which some twelve hundred battles are described, interspersed with numerous poems praising friends and mocking enemies, mourning the dead and glorifying combat. The men of the Middle Ages (and not only the Arabs) loved a good fight; they were thrilled by warfare, despite the danger of losing life, limb, or friends. These warriors of the desert could not keep themselves from rushing into battle.

In Arabia, the stakes of battle were so high that the loser lost everything, including his freedom, and therefore would have to be ransomed by his clansmen. But the winner took what he wanted - all the booty was his. In the eighth century, the Quran introduced a series of new heroes into the Arabian storytellers' repertoire, most of them echoing stories from the Bible. Ismael, for example, the original ancestor of the Arabs as mentioned in the book of Genesis, is described in the Quran as an

obedient boy who shows patience and equanimity at an early age, as well as a readiness to die for God. Ismael's father, Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic), is portrayed as the father of the Arabs. He is a faithful man and prophet who abhors the worship of idols and sets an example for all to emulate. The Prophet Muhammad is seen by Muslims as the ideal Arab man. He is highly praised in the collection of sayings called the Hadith, meaning roughly "the Traditions."

The Prophet's youngest grandson, Hussain ibn Ali, is one of the Arab storytellers' darlings. He suffers hardship, especially thirst, with equanimity and lives and works hard for his family. Hussain has no regard for his own life but fights with great valor against many treacherous enemies. When death comes, he meets it with patience, dignity, and an unbreakable faith in God's goodness in his heart.

Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hussain's father and Muhammad's son-in-law, is another great hero of the Arab storytelling traditions, perhaps the greatest. He is the strongest of all warriors, the most faithful friend, the most pious of all Muslims, and the most intrepid fighter against evil men and demons. Whenever there is trouble in the world, Muhammad sends Ali to put it right.

### The Banu Hilal:

Hilal and his son Amir are known as the founders of the clan called Banu Hilal. Amir himself had three sons named Athbaj, Riyah, and Zughba. This illustrious clan goes back ten generations to Mudhar, a contemporary and follower of the Prophet Muhammad. Amir is also the name of the prolific tribe to which the Hilal and various other clans belonged in the early days of Islam.

The elders of this tribe, learning of Muhammad's military victory at Hunain in 630 over the Hawazin tribe, decided to pledge their adherence to him and to Islam. When the caliph Omar, whose rule began in 634, encouraged the tribes of Arabia to carry the teachings of Islam to outside the Peninsula, the Banu Hilal were among the first to send their bravest sons west into Egypt, north into Syria, and northeast into Iraq and, later, Iran. The clansmen were very successful in their conquests.

In this way, the Banu Hilal proliferated enormously, especially in Egypt, from where their conquests extended southward to the Sudan and westward to the Maghreb, all the way up to Morocco. They went on farther and farther until, by the eleventh century, they had occupied most of northern Africa.

They soon became the backbone of the armies of the new states and civilizations that emerged in north Africa. The Banu Hilal, after all, were the sons of hardy warriors from Arabia, and the mothers, of their new generations were from the local population, thus they were familiar with the climate and good at enduring the hardships to life. These are the ancestors of most of the Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Mauritians, Libyans and Egyptians of today.

Their history was full of chivalry and glorious events. The storytellers of North Africa tell of innumerable embellishments and miraculous events, making the sagas of the Banu Hilal, as recorded in the *Sirat Bani Hilali*, into vast romances comparable to the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Of these sagas, printed in nine volumes, there is no complete translation into English.

Parts of this romance go back to the thirteenth century and are still narrated in the vernacular in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, interspersed with romantic songs and many praise poems. One story begins when two wives of Al-Munzir, another of Hilal's sons, give birth on the same night - a clear sign of their husband's virility - to two sons, Jabir and Jubair. Jabir's son Rizq marries Al-Khadra, who bears him a son Barakat, who becomes famous as Abu Zayad, the great leader who rides west to Tunisia. Abu Zayad routs Ifrikiya, the Zanatah king of Tunis, then conquers the mythical seven thrones and fourteen castles of the west belonging to the Zanatah Berber tribe. The original goal of the expedition is rivadad, the never-ending search for green pastures, typical of the harsh life of the bedouin warriors.

The noble ethics of the bedouin sheikhs permeate the entire saga. Barakat can only be wounded from behind, but because he never flees from battle and his equally noble enemies never

attack him from behind, he survives until a traitor hits him in the back, much like the fate suffered by the mythical Germanic hero Siegfried. The romance of the Banu Hilal is full of chivalrous adventures, in which noble knights and warriors fight villains and often the elusive ifrits, powerful evil spirits.

### Miqdad:

Then there is Miqdad, meaning "dagger," who is one of the archetypes of the Arab hero. There are two or perhaps three different Miqdad characters in the Arabian sagas, but we will treat them as one as the theme of their exploits is always the same: valor, honor, loyalty, and pride.

The "splitting" of the hero into several persons is not unusual in folklore. In this case, it is caused by the Arabs' expansion into Iraq and Syria, and across northern Africa, for they carried these tales along with them. In addition, these tales have been told and retold by Arabs since before the time of the Prophet Muhammad, so Miqdad had sons and grandsons named after him. The Arab heroes had sons and grandsons who carried on their battles.

Typically, young Miqdad is an orphan. His father was killed in battle, usually by treachery, leaving a widow and a son (often posthumous), as well as a chest or trunk containing ancient weapons. All too soon the boy displays his father's qualities - pride, bravery, fighting spirit - and becomes a leader.

At the age of seven, Miqdad has to start earning a living for himself and his old

mother, Tamima. He becomes a shepherd, taking the sheep to the hills in the rainy season, when the slopes are covered with a thin carpet of verdure, and later to the riverbeds, which dry up rapidly after the rains, so the sheep may find the last grass of the season. At night he has to defend his flock against jackals, wolves, and lions, some of these animals still found today in the Arabian desert. He kills his first wolf at ten and his first lion at fourteen, while never losing the smallest lamb.

The local sheikh and cattle owner promotes Miqdad to camel herder. Before he is eighteen, Miqdad is again promoted, this time to look after the horses, noblest of all animals. Soon he is an expert groom and is allowed to accompany his employer to the market in Baghdad, where the horses are sold after long sessions of bidding and bargaining.

The trouble in Miqdad's life begins when he is ready to marry. It is not hard, of course, to find a young woman ready to fall in love with such a handsome horseman. Invariably, however, fathers demand extortionate bride-prices for their pretty and highborn daughters, despite the Hadith's stipulation that the bride's father may not ask more than five hundred dirhams (about eighty dollars) and the Quran's direction that the bride-price goes to the bride not to her father.

Storytellers usually are moralists. The first moral of this tale is that a man's hardships begin when he starts a family, and the second is that many men are greedier than the law permits.

In any case, Miqdad cannot abandon his desire to marry the pretty girl, for that would mean a loss of face. Nor can he offer to pay less than the sum demanded, for that would be tantamount to admitting that she was not worth that much, or that he was a poor nobody unable to raise sufficient funds.

Here the noble-born Arab's pride makes life very hard for him: Miqdad has to leave his job to become a knight-errant, a professional warrior who can fight for profit. To help prepare him for battle, his mother opens the family chest containing her husband's heirlooms: a sword, bow and arrows, spear, mace and shield, saddle, gives him a good horse called Rishan and off he goes, in search of enemies and bounty. Here begins the cycle of Miqdad's adventures and exploits.

Miqdad wins so many battles and duels that his fame spreads throughout Arabia and beyond. Foreign princes wish to recruit him to their wars. Finally, even the king of Persia wants to appoint Miqdad as his field marshal, offering enough salary in gold for the young man to settle with his father-in-law. In the meantime (or perhaps before, or even after - storytellers are notoriously negligent on their chronology), the young man experiences numerous adventures fighting jinns (spirits) and giants. He wins all the time, amassing enough booty to live comfortably. In the later, Islamicized versions of the tale, Miqdad also fights the enemies of Islam as a holy warrior.

Continues next page.

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## The Hero in Arabian Legend and Folklore

Unfortunately for Miqdad, the holy war is fought by volunteers for God, so all the booty goes to the Prophet and none to pay the bride-price for the impatient youth. This is not to say that he is entirely without female company. The jinns, giants, and assorted evil characters, comparable to the robber barons and Draculas of other story cycles, keep beautiful women prisoner, either holding them for ransom or intending to force them into carnal submission. Usually, Miqdad arrives just in time to liberate these poor damsels, and they invariably fall in love with the handsome youth with the charming manner. However, being a gallant knight, he returns them safely to their fathers or lawful husbands, apparently without touching them.

In the Hejazian version, which predates the Prophet and may be the oldest of the Miqdad sagas, Miqdad is in love with his cousin Meyasa, daughter of his greedy uncle Jabir. In ancient Arabia, women had much more freedom. Meyasa, for example, is an expert in jousting and has issued a challenge to any young noble man who can unseat her in a tournament. Miqdad, is, of course, not told by his uncle that Meyasa will marry the man who unhorses her, so he learns only at the very last moment of the place and time of the tournament. Quickly, he borrows a good horse from his aunt and rides to the arena. There, Meyasa has just defeated the last knight.



His dependable steed awaits as this young Arab warrior says good-bye to a lady friend. He probably is about to dash off to high adventure, to prove himself with deeds of valor in unknown lands.

Miqdad, with closed visor, challenges her and is accepted. Jabir does not even bother to ask his name, so convinced is he that Meyasa will win again. However, as the two riders come close, Miqdad levels his lance and lifts Meyasa high out of her saddle. He jumps off his horse so quickly that he is in time to catch her before she hits the ground. As he holds her, she

recognizes Miqdad, the cousin with whom she exchanged vows when they were children. Though she falls in love instantly, Jabir is not at all mollified to hear that his daughter has been conquered by his nephew. Since Miqdad is poor, in the eyes of his uncle he does not qualify as a suitor for Meyasa. He is requested to pay an astronomical bride-

price. It is here that Miqdad's adventures begin.

In this version, too, Miqdad ends up at the Persian court. Even the Persians are indignant when Miqdad tells them of Jabir's breach of promise and refusal to make his nephew his son-in-law. The Persian king, Shah Khosrow Anushirvan, then names Miqdad his field marshal. (Here, we are suddenly transported back to the pre-Muhammadan period: Shah Anushirvan died in A.D. 579, long before the emergence of Islam. So there is no conflict of loyalty, unless the storyteller gets his chronology confused again.) Miqdad goes on to slay a few armies and collects enough booty to pay the required bride-price.

The king gives him camels to transport the many baskets of gold and jewelry clected in his conquests, and off he goes. As Miqdad approaches Jabir's home, he meets another caravan whose owner turns out to be the brother of Mayasa's fiance. Yes, she has been betrothed, forcibly, by her father, and will become the bride of a rich old man. Yes, an enormous bride-price has been paid to Jabir. Yes, she will be handed over to her bridegroom (in chains, if necessary) this very day.

The bridegroom's name is Malik, and the speaker is his brother. He is accompanied by an army, so when Miqdad exclaims "Meyasa will marry none but me!" the two brothers order their troops to execute him. Of course,

Miqdad takes on the army single-handedly and slays all the soldiers. Only the clever Malik escapes, after his brother is killed by the enraged Miqdad.

Malik has time to reach Jabir and tell the terrible tale. When Miqdad arrives, Jabir pretending to be hospitable, gives his nephew wine to make him fall asleep. The storyteller's moral would be, never drink wine. Prophet Muhammad forbade it; moreover, uncles ought to be more hospitable than to offer abominable wine. Miqdad is sewn into a bull's hide and is locked up, still asleep.

In the meantime, Meyasa sends a note asking the elderly Tamima to go and tell Ali, the Prophet's cousin. Tamima sets out and "God folds up the hills for her," so that she walks a thousand miles in two hours. Ali is home and rides out at once when he gets this distress call. Again, he lays back a thousand miles in an hour or less. The moral is that, for the right cause, God can reduce distances to nothing. Ali arrives and liberates Miqdad, who lies moaning in the stinking hide. Then Ali finds Jabir and tells him to become a Muslim.

Meanwhile Miqdad finds the bedroom where Malik is trying to consummate his marriage, but to no avail: Meyasa fights him off.

The elderly Malik should never have desired to marry such a strong girl, one famous for her fighting spirit and fighting skill! Here, the narrator can launch into

endless moralizing about graybeards endeavouring to marry fierce women, or he may go into endless details of how Malik tried to undress his legal wife and got a beating instead.

If the audience is all male (and every narrator changes his story for different audiences), this episode will arouse considerable interest and not a little hilarity. For a male audience, the storyteller will describe the undressing. For a mixed, or more female audience (certain story tellers are hired to perform in the harems), he will describe the woman's virtues and strengths.

In the end, all is well. The sagas of the Banu Hilal and the Arab hero Miqdad are, in essence, heroic tales about the expansion of the proud Arabian race across the face of the Old World. Brave and glorious heroes, they subdue all opponents by day, and recite poetry about their exploits round the camp-fire at night.

There are many other loops in the narration that a storyteller can insert if there is time, the sponsor offers enough of an honorarium, and the company, the food, and the beverages are agreeable. Otherwise, he will say that his voice is hoarse. If the host takes the hint, he will at once call for more tea or halwa if he wishes to prolong the performance.

It is late into the night that storytellers draw to a close, leaving the heads of their listeners spinning with images of heroes, demons and fairies.



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### POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE REQUIRED ROLE DURING REGISTRATION FOR ELECTIONS

The records indicate that the registration of citizens is slow as a large number of electoral registration stations particularly in the remote villages have seen limited action.

Though we all hope this situation will change in the coming days, this is proof of the continuing weakness and absence of the driving force of the political parties. The media, as well, has no real impact in attracting the public to polls. The past three years of our pluralism and democratic practice is indeed a lacking process. Taking into consideration the importance of this first step in our democratic process, we direct our criticism to the official media in failing to raise awareness regarding the necessity of exercising the democratic right in electing the representatives to the next parliament.

The parties, organizations and the social personalities are able to encourage the people to register. Such an effort to mobilize popular participation could be part of an overall program. This will secure a minimum base of voters in order to give the system a certain degree of legitimacy.

Hence, it is the duty of all to participate actively in the whole process leaving aside the squabbles and marginal issues. This is critical as we approach the deadline, and the count down has already started. It is important to specify our lines of action and programs in our electoral process.

Time is short, so let us work hard to urge the people towards the polls.

26th September, Sanaa, 28/1/1993.

### YEMEN-SAUDI RELATIONSHIP MOVES TOWARDS REAL IMPROVEMENT

The adaptation of Yemen-Saudi relations and the resolution of the border issue between the two brotherly countries is regarded as one of the outstanding positive outcomes of post-war stage. Such an understanding/adaptation will be one of the essential keys for a future conciliation/solidarity among the Arab countries.

It is worth mentioning that the two countries are related historically with each other and the enmity was due to the policies of the two governments being frightened of one another and the division intensified the distrust more, because if the relation became good with one division, there was increased tension with the other division.

But the trends regionally changed and the hastening events proved that logic, feasibility good intentions, and endeavors should prevail to solve any confusions/complexes on the field. Thus, if such an alternative is prevalent in the Yemen-Saudi negotiations, we expect a solution and a new brotherly outlook in our relationship. We hope that the

negotiations reaching a suitable solution will secure the rights of both since there is an inherent desire for good will among the Saudi people. Yemen has shown such an equally sincere desire to put an end to the whole issue and we are awaiting a similar response.

Al-Thawri, Sanaa, 28/1/1993.

### LEADERS OF WAR

It is evident that there is no tragedy which equals the Somali catastrophe.

Thousands of children turned into just skulls and bags of bones. Others died of diseases, food deficiencies and starvation.

The conflicting Somali factions in authority prospected in distorting and dividing the state of Somalia into tribal region/influences, turning the people into refugees, the cities into ruins, and the gangsters began to wander working under the command of political leaders or under other major gangs.

What occurred or occurring now is Somalia is a natural outcome of despotic ruling system of Siad Barre who ruled Somalia for 22 years. Then fled away with the country's wealth leaving Somalia for an unknown fate. Somali's case is not an issue of having a difference on a land settlement or being invaded by a foreign army. In short, the whole problem is a difference of who is to inherit the ruling system after toppling down Barre.

Corruption grows under the totalitarianism where there is a tyrant surrounded by police bodies and people without any respect or value. The tyrant ran away, leaving his people to starvation/death. Somalis, after two continuous years facing the catastrophe, turned into vagabonds, refugees and gangsters. The whole state declined and there is no army, no state, no offices or bodies to implement laws.

It is to be noted that the day the American/French troops arrived in Somalia, the leaders of war and tribalism announced their agreement and they embraced each other with kisses as if no crime had been committed against their citizens.

The question which lies here, then is, who will be blamed and who is responsible for the destruction and starvation?

Al-Naba, Sanaa, 28/1/1993.

### FOREIGN MANPOWER IN OUR COUNTRY

It is to be noted that our country suffers from inflation, recession and unemployment, and such a situation requires the specialists/economists' concern to create profound solutions to get out of it.

The Yemeni workforce should have the priority when tackling the problems facing our economy. The point to be mentioned is that the foreign manpower in Yemen has the priority and this is unacceptable/illogical in every other country. The foreign manpower has certain rules and regulations,

and are restricted to specialized professions and fields.

It is time to take a sound/clear standpoint from the existence of thousands of foreign workers in the firms/companies of our country while hundreds of thousands are roaming aimlessly without employment.

I demand from the people concerned the necessity of laying down practical steps for a replacement of manpower with the establishment of training programs for the Yemeni workers to prove their skill, ability and knowledge.

It is time to tackle this problem seriously; making all the preparations for replacement of foreign manpower for those who finish up with their contracts. Such a large population of foreign manpower has a burden on increasing unemployment and the cost of living. Let us study this issue seriously!

By Ahmad Abid Rabu Al-Thawrah, Sanaa, 30/1/1993.

### WHO IS THE ENEMY OF UNITY?

The government and the senior officials ask our desperate people to have patience with the poverty and the hike of prices; i.e. people should endure the burdens for the sake of unity.

It is known that the senior officials who are chosen for leadership ought to be qualified/specialized in their fields of study and expertise. By scientific knowledge, I mean not only possessing a certificate but to possess the potential of leadership for his position.

The broad strategic lines of the state's policy in various fields depend on the mentality of these senior officials and to what extent they are capable of leading their ministerial offices.

The government appeals to the citizens for the protection of the unification and interior front, but it complains about the conferences and mass marches. It discards violence and assassinations which began to appear once again here and there, but also without taking any steps to put an end to it.

Hence, who is confusing/bothering the interior front and the citizens? Are they foreign forces or the unity forces from inside? To tell the truth, if there is a state of law and discipline, no riots could happen. I believe the solution for our agonies, worries, and sufferings lies in the existence of a strong state/government which could put things right, stemming from the leaders' scientific foundations to construct/reform and develop the country.

It is not a matter of who is to blame. The issuance of resolutions without corresponding implementation is just like giving morphine for lessening a minor headache.

The government bears the whole responsibility in case any setback occurs or any abuse is done to unity and history will not forgive anyone who might be in favor of such a setback.

By Faiza Abdulraqueeb Salam Al-Hadath, Sanaa, 27/1/1993.

### WOMEN AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Women in our country suffered a lot of humiliation/indignity because they lived only for the purposes of giving birth, educating her children, and taking care of her husband - until the uprising of the September/October revolutions which liberated them.

It is essential to understand that the emancipation of women has pushed the society ahead on all levels. The constitution of the republic confirmed the important role of Yemeni women and on their necessary participation in all the educational, political, cultural, judicial activities. Now there are women who are members in political parties and parliament.

Though women have achieved a lot of prospective successes throughout the years, she received many strikes/impediments along the path of her march towards progress.

Within the first stages of registration and enrollment of voters identity, I call for each Yemeni woman to be honest/careful to bring about the success of this democratic process, because it embodies Yemeni women's struggle.

Let's stay far from all narrow affiliations. Our only salvation is this march towards democracy, and we bear a historical responsibility to protect it from any and all pitfalls that may arise to stifle the progress of the nation and its women.

By:

Valantina Abdul-kareem, Al-Mustaqbal, Sanaa, 31/1/1993.

### AN ADVISORY

Machiavelli, in his book (The Prince), mentioned certain points as advice for those in power to save them from being toppled from power. Though Machiavelli believed that one can reach his final goals through crooked/diabolic means, his philosophy still includes advice to the rulers, Kings and Princes. His philosophy recommends leaders not to address speeches to the people all the time without any certain goals/purposes or practicality, because such appearances will devalue the rulers' authority. Any public appearance should be accompanied by great plans/programs which are about to be laid down for implementation. As for less important issues, he should leave them for those officials who are below him in the hierarchy.

In accordance with the concepts and the necessities of

the time period, it is the duty of the ruler to think deeply about these preparations before exposing himself to the public. He should not issue an order or a resolution if there is no necessity or legal justification for its issuance, so as not to put him in a critical situation. He should also protect the superiority of his position and the security of the state stemming from two major points:

First - seriousness/strictness in the application of law and discipline on all without any discrimination.

Second - a good selection and choice for those who assume leadership positions in the state, because the respect of the state lies in the respect of its people.

It is his duty to announce his mistakes which he has committed against his people. The respect of the state does not lie in having fancy vehicles or living in fancy places. It lies in the application of laws and resolutions.

By: Abbas Al-Deilami, Sawt Al-Ummal, Aden, 28/1/1993

تهنئة

يتقدم الأهل والأصدقاء والجيران  
بأحر التهاني والتبريكات لأسرتي  
جمال محمد المترب وأنيس حسين عباس  
بمناسبة خطوبة نجليهما  
(( زينا ونجرا ))

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David Sconyers:

# "AMIDEAST Has Been involved with Yemen since the 1950s."

AMIDEAST is an American private, non-profit organization incorporated in 1951 with the objective of promoting understanding and encourage cooperation between the US and Arab peoples. It has 14 offices in ten countries in the Middle East and North Africa with a headquarters in Washington, DC. AMIDEAST has no ties to the US or any other government or organization.

The Country Director of AMIDEAST is Dr. David Sconyers. In an interview with Yemen Times, he explained that although AMIDEAST has been involved in educational assistance to Yemen since the 1950s, its office representation in the country dates back to 1981 and has had a Country Agreement since 1984.

AMIDEAST/Yemen presently administers many long-term academic student placements in the USA. The clients are, for the most part, Yemeni Government ministries. Over the years, AMIDEAST has assisted and administered US placements for over three hundred Yemeni students and an additional 100-150 in Egypt and Jordan.

The organization also administers short-term academic and training programs. In addition, it provides a full range of academic advice and counselling services.



The AMIDEAST staff are well qualified individuals who are also well-motivated. AMIDEAST Yemen is also involved in technical assistance programs and is 2 1/2 years into a large World Bank-funded technical assistance project for the Ministry of Education. This project, the Primary Teacher Training Institutes project (PTTI) is headed by Dr. Ahmed Al-Hubaishi of Sana'a University. From 1990 to 1992, Dr. Al-

Hubaishi and a team of dozens of Yemeni and Jordanian educators, have completely revised the curriculum for primary teacher training. Presently, the project staff are producing dozens of textbook manuscripts which will be published this year and integrated into the curriculum of Yemen's Teacher Training Institutes beginning this Fall. Finally, AMIDEAST also provide Educational Testing Service tests such as

TOEFL, GRE, GMAT and other standardized tests for US placement: GED, SAT, ACT, etc.

In describing the selection process, Dr. Sconyers said, "Our clients do not come on their own to study. Most of them are sponsored by the government (ministries). So they study what the government wants them to study." Students come to the AMIDEAST after being nominated by a ministry. First candidates do research on the availability of the programs they are interested in. Then they take the necessary tests for admission depending on the level and kind of degree they're seeking. Then AMIDEAST makes recommendations either to start with English courses at YALI, or if the sponsors choose to start English programs in the US as the first part of the program.

The staff in Washington initiate continuous contact with hundreds of American universities after they receive the files from the Middle East offices. They look at the needs, abilities, and then they give a list of possible universities, with their applications and all the information needed. Part of the information is also on the places considered, the whole programs, of the studies with the costs.

"We always send somebody to visit the students and to meet with their advisers. This aims at getting reports on the progress of students, and to obtain feedback from the universities," David said. We have the same procedures for US students who study at the Middle East Universities," she added.

AMIDEAST is funded through fees which it charges for the services it renders. It also receives grants and contribution from the major American companies, especially those doing business in the Middle East. "We are supported by grants and fees for services. But remember, we are not only private but we are also non-profit organization, all our fees go to maintain our operations," stressed Sconyers.

In a few days, the president of the AMIDEAST, Mr. Robert Sherwood Dillon, arrives in Yemen. Speaking on the purpose of the visit, the AMIDEAST Country Director said, "He usually tours all the offices once a year, hence his visit to Yemen. While in Yemen he will meet with some of their major clients such as the ministry of oil, the ministry of Education and of course, one of our major contributor in Yemen, Hunt Oil Company."

"We expect our association with Yemen to continue to be mutually fruitful, and to continue to grow," he concluded.

## Spiders and Silks

By Amjed Abdul Hamid, Science Editor, Yemen Times

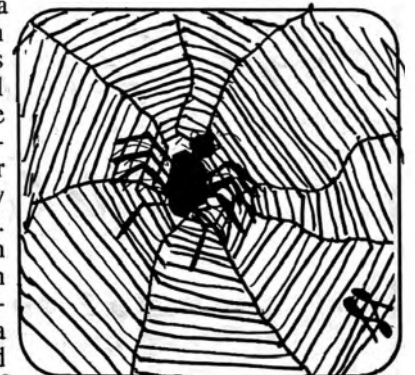
Without question, spider silks are some of the most extraordinary material produced in nature. By weight, the spider silk is five times stronger than steel, and that's not so unusual. Some synthetic fibers, like nylon and kevlar, which is widely used in bulletproof vests, also exhibit the same qualities. But spider silk, unlike synthetics, is also highly elastic. It can be stretched to 130% of its original length and that is twice as stretchy as nylon. It is chemically inert, stable even at high temperatures, waterproof and non-allergenic. In short, it's everything one would want a fiber to be.

These weavers produce a variety of silks, each secreted by a different set of glands and extruded from spinnerets (on the underside of the abdomen). One set of glands produces dragline silk, the lifeline that many spiders constantly trail behind them, enabling them to drop through the air to safety. Other glands make capture silks, sticky threads that form the bulk of the web and hold a struggling insect in place until the web's owner arrives. Still other glands produce tough fibers as reinforcing threads for the web, and many other kinds of silk. So far, most research has concentrated on dragline silk. This fiber is so strong that a single strand would have to be nearly 100 kilometers long before it would break under its own weight.

The prospects of such a fiber has long attracted the interest of industrialists, both military and civilian. Cords and threads manufactured from spider silk would revolutionize the specifications of what is made these days out of synthetic materials. Surgeons see a potential for stronger, nonallergenic sutures, artificial tendons and implantable medical devices.

Spiders are able to produce prodigious quantities of silk. In nature, adult females can spin 1.5 meters of silk a minute, and up to 6 meters a minute when their silk is mechanically teased out of them. But the silk is so fine that it would take months of 5,000 spiders to produce one square meter of fabric. Each type of silk starts out a soluble protein secreted in one of the spiders abdominal silk glands. But as the protein is extruded, it passes through a tubular duct on the way to the spinnerets. These narrow tubes force all the protein's molecules to align in the same direction, turning it

into a solid, rod-like quasicrystalline thread. In the University of Wyoming, USA, a program is going on since 1986 to study the subject, and a team of researchers are looking now into the subject of mass-producing the silk proteins in a non-chemical synthetic procedure. They are looking for the actual spider gene that orchestrates the protein production. In 1989, they found a gene in the glands that is responsible for the production of the silk, they called it spideroin-1. Upon analyzing its amino-acids in detail, they found that there is still another gene, spideroin-2, that produces proteins which act as a scaffold for the first protein. It was the structure of these two interacting proteins that helped explain the silk's unusual combination of strength and flexibility. In their extruded form, these proteins have - not only stiff, rod-like regions - but regions that curve back and forth. When the fiber is stretched, these kinked regions straighten out. But when the fiber is released, they snap back into their original shape, hence the fiber's elasticity. In any given length of silk,



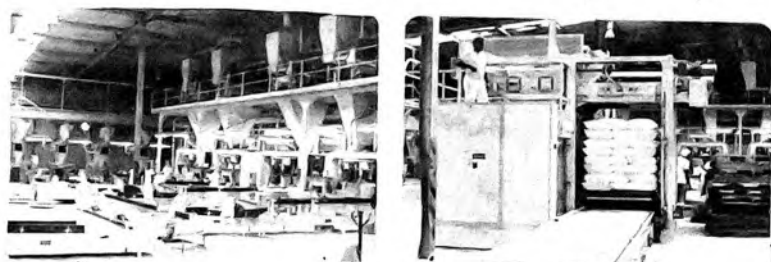
these two interspersed regions function a little like a chain with alternating links of steel and rubber. The Wyoming researchers' next step will be to engineer the genes for both proteins into an accommodating organism and turn it into a spider-silk factory. So far, though they had only limited success in inserting the genes for spider silk into common bacteria, for it seems that these lowly organisms recognize spider DNA as distinctly foreign and get rid of it. Meanwhile they are looking for yet lower organisms yeasts.

One of the researchers speculates that "When it comes to making large quantities of natural spider silk, it may always be more efficient and economical to stuff leaves into a bunch of silk worms". Silkworms, of course don't produce fibers that are as strong or as stretchy as spider-silk, at least not yet. "Or spider-silk genes might even be spliced into the cells of cotton plants" he amuses, "making it possible to grow one of nature's strongest and stretchiest fibers." Was he amusing?



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صناعات: ت ٢٤٠٧٠٢، ٢٤٠٩٥٢، ٢٦٣٠٨٦، ٢٧٨٠ ناجيل يمن فاكسميل: ٢٦٣٠٨٦ ص ب ٢٥٢٨  
الحديدة: ت ٣٢٢٤٦٠/٣٥، ٥٦٦١ ناجيل يمن فاكسميل: ٢١١٥٥١ ص ب ٤٠١٥  
الخرطوم: ت ٧٤٥٦٩، ٧٤٦١٠، ٧٤٥٦٢ فاكسميل: ٢٢٣٦٩، ٧٤٥٦١ ص ب ١٩٢٦  
بورتسودان: ت ٢٦٣٠، ٢٩٧٩، ٤٤٦٥ فاكسميل: ٧٠٠٧١، ٧٠٠٧١ ص ب ١٦٠



## Letters to the Editor

### INJUSTICE AND INEFFICIENCY SHOULD BE CHECKED BEFORE DEMOCRACY TURNS INTO DEMO-CRAZY

As we approach our elections, the majority and minority are looking forward to casting their votes to elect our future leaders. But to achieve that, every citizen must present his/her national identity card to be registered. This causes difficulties especially to the children of Yemeni immigrants or 'muwalladins' (Yemenis born in foreign lands, and often of foreign mothers.) Due to inefficient administrators who have taken this as an opportunity to earn. Since this process of issuing identity cards has been restricted to Sana'a, it is necessary for one to prove his place of origin by being issued proper documents from his home village, which everybody has done, to avoid forgery as has been noticed with the influx of Somali refugees. In this way,

many citizens have proper documents to be entitled to have an identity card free of charge and NOT by dubious means. The reluctance of these high officials to fulfil common men's needs, reflects the truth that they can not work to the capability of democracy. We common men are not pleased by the inefficiency of one who reports on duty at 9:30 a.m. and signs off at 12:00 noon. How many people's needs can be met in a period of two and a half hours a day? Are these officers really worthy of the duties with which the government entrusts them? If one travels all the way from Hadramout to Sana'a (just imagine the distance) with the hope of getting an Identity Card in one or two days, but instead, a period of two months is needed for someone to be served here in Sana'a, what can this person do about the expenses while in Sana'a? All of us who run after the I.D cards depend on relatives, because we cannot work until we

get the cards. Can somebody tell me who can pay for a brother's, or cousin's expenditures of a few months stay in Sana'a? Bear in mind that democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

By:  
**Gamal Bawazeer Suleiman Nahdi,  
Mukalla.**

### THE PERSECUTION OF OUR FATHERS IS THE AFFLICTION OF US 'MUWALLADIN'

At the time of Imam Ahmad Hamid-din, many Yemenis were persecuted by their homeland. In those days, people suffered a lot from the security of the administration. Legend said that within three years, about 13 thousand Yemenis were killed in abominable ways. This was among the reasons for many of those persecuted by Yemen to flee to neighbouring countries such as: Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and as far as the East African countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). In fact, Yemenis traveled in many parts of the world.

In many places they were accepted in the communities, they became involved in businesses, agriculture, and in many other activities. Like in Ethiopia, many of the Yemeni immigrants were involved in the struggle for the Ethiopians' freedom from Italian invaders. These immigrants didn't expect to go back to their country, in order to get married, so wherever they were at the time, they got married and settled.

As a result of these inter-marriages, we muwallads were formed. I can say that we have the choice either to stay at our mothers' land or our fathers' land, and some of us have decided to come here.

In order to work and lead a proper life in the society like other Yemeni citizens, we need National Identity Cards. Without I.D. cards no one can be employed. But the whole thing has turned into a nightmare; it is too difficult for us to get these IDs. When we go to our Karia (village) of origin for help, our family never quite accepts us; they think we came back to claim our fathers' lands. Where do we stand? We look like we're dead living, without spiritual stability. What will be our future? Are we muwallads not acceptable in Yemeni society anymore? If our problems are among others of the society, the government should see that

the authority responsible solves these problems. I believe that there is a solution to every problem.

By:  
**Hassen Sherif Ali  
Al-Asbahi.**

### REFUGEES ARE IN A BETTER POSITION THAN MUWALLADEENS

I have my doubts and I thought the only way to clear them is through your esteemed paper. I think the reason for having an embassy in a foreign country is still not clear in many minds of the Yemeni people. Yemen, like all the countries in the world, has placed embassies in various countries. One of the many reasons is to see to the problems of Yemenis who are in foreign countries. We, the sons of Yemen immigrants (as they call us here 'Muwalladin'), have endured a long process in our mother countries before we were accepted to come here as Yemenis. Moreover we had to swear in front of an advocate that we're changing our citizenship from that of our mother's origin to our father's country, because

they don't allow two identities (passports). The Yemen Embassy, before issuing Yemen passport has to go through a long process to prove our father's origin. Finally, after getting a Yemen passport, we were no longer citizens of those other countries and we came here. But still, we can not be identified as Yemeni citizens until we get Identity Cards. Since I started going through the process to get the ID card, about 6 months have passed, and I don't know how much longer I will be running after it. I can not go back to my mother's land because

I have already surrendered my identity there, and I can not get a job here and be settled because I don't have an ID card. I don't know where 'I exist. Can somebody tell us the reason for delaying the issuance of our IDs? We have all the papers that are needed.  
By:  
**Fawzy Saeed Rawah,  
Sana'a.**

Editor's Note:  
Yemen Times learnt that many muwalladeens are getting together to form a party that will cater to their needs.  
Good for them!

## Personal View

### The State Even Wants to Weep Instead of Us

By: **Hassan Mohammed Zaid,  
Hizbul-Haq.**

Yemen was isolated from the rest of the world for many centuries. Once the gates were opened, however, our enthusiastic plunge into the last days of the 20th century has been frightening. This is true in our hunger for the use of modern technology in many fields, including arms. One of our major problems has arisen from the fact that it was the state that has been modernizing the country.

This means that the state has tried very hard to modernize the tools it needs to "manage" the country. Thus, the officials have become very rich and use ultra-modern facilities in their homes and work places. The state has installed some of the most upto date machines for controlling the people, or more appropriately to protect itself against the people.

Now, in our democratization process, there is a new twist. The state and its symbols have rushed to forestall any efforts by the people to establish organizations and associations. It competes to start human rights organizations, political parties, etc.

The desire to control everything is not something our officials will easily give up. Over the last few weeks, we have seen the state participate in demonstrations, and then take measures to penalize those who demonstrated.

The state apparatus even nowadays is busy with arrangements for supervising the honesty of elections, and the full observation of human rights. In fact, the state wants to do everything the people may think of doing simply to undermine such efforts. It is not far-fetched for the state to shed tears weeping for the people's dismal conditions.



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Colonel Hamood Asheikh:

# "We have a lot of work cut out for us in the Sanaa Traffic."

One of the most difficult tasks in Yemen today is to drive in the capital city, Sanaa. Even more difficult, however, is the task of regulating traffic flow in this city of over one million inhabitants - almost a thirty fold increase over the last three decades. This job belongs to Colonel Hamood Ismail Asheikh, the Director-General of the Sanaa City Traffic Department. Yemen Times correspondent Ismail Al-Ghabiri spoke to Mr. Asheikh on various aspects of the traffic flow in Sanaa City.



Q: How many cars are there in Sanaa City?

A: You will remember that Sanaa was a very small city a few years ago, but today it sprawls many kilometers in every direction every year. The number of cars has also risen as the number of people has grown, and the level of affluence rose. Our Department by itself has issued over 100,000 licence plate numbers to the citizens. In addition, there are cars that belong to the army, police, government, diplomatic corps, aid development projects, etc. Another way of looking at the volume of traffic is the number of cars that flow into the city every day. On average some 20,000 cars enter Sanaa city every day.

Q: There is a vast array of licence plate numbers. Are there any attempts at unifying these plates?

A: You are right, there are a variety of types, shapes, and colors of licence plate numbers. This is partly because they are a carry-over from the two former parts of Yemen. We have completed plans to issue new licence plate numbers along standard international systems. We plan to embark on this effort during 1993. It is a question of resources and management.

Q: Traffic violations are recurrent on our roads. What are you doing to remedy this situation?

A: Respect for the law is a cultural matter, and we are a society slowly adjusting to the requirements of a modern state. We have a daily fight at our hands when our traffic policemen confront violators of the law. We have a lot of work cut out for us in this regard. By the way, even foreigners, who are supposed to be a good influence, are often caught breaking the laws of traffic. In any case, we are doing our best to bring sanity to our traffic flow.

Q: In terms of accidents, what are the numbers?

A: We have a rather high rate of accidents per number of cars as well as per inhabitants. Most of the times, the accidents can be avoided by a more patient driving habit, and better maintenance of the vehicles. (Please refer to table for statistics on the accidents). We are hoping that insurance companies will help us in this regard as they insure cars.

Q: There is a lot of digging around traffic intersections. What is going on?

A: A number of traffic lights were destroyed during the recent violent demonstrations. We are now installing a number of traffic lights at intersections, and we are replacing the damaged ones. We hope to be able to complete the work as soon as possible, and I would like to use this opportunity to apologize to the drivers for the inconvenience.

Q: There are increasingly young traffic policemen who man the intersections. Is this part of an on-going training program?

A: Yes, it is, and I am glad people do notice. The work of traffic policemen is a difficult one, and a thankless job, or even a dangerous one. That is why we have a high turnover. We have many batches that we recruit, put them through intensive and thorough training programs, and then we assign them to man the intersections.

Q: Is there any service or control over the inter-city highways?

A: We have recently established inter-city highway patrol units for Sanaa governorate. This is still in its early stages to provide any tangible services. Insufficient resources is the main reason for the shortcomings. But we hope to improve with time, and eventually to provide the adequate level of service.

Q: Parking is a major problem in many of our roads. Have you considered installing parking meters and provide the service?

A: We have considered this, but in a society like ours, it is not practical. In addition, it will require a large task force to enforce. We have programs to teach drivers the proper parking methods. We plan to leave it at that, for now. But this issue also requires the cooperation of the real-estate owners and developers, as well as the citizens.

Q: What are your plans for the near future?

A: As I have indicated earlier, we are already working on changing the traffic lights wherever they are damaged, and to install new ones at new intersections, in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. We also have plans to change the licence plate numbers. We plan to introduce signs and waiting points for public transportation (bus

and dabbab services) on the main streets.

Of course, there are plans to construct new roads, and pave/asphalt the main secondary roads.

Finally, we have plans to reduce bureaucratic paperwork in dealing with citizens in terms of their needs to obtain/renew driving licences or other documents related to vehicle ownership.

In spite of enormous tasks, I am happy to say that we have been able to cope very well.

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**1992 Traffic Statistics in Sanaa City**

Total Number of Traffic Accidents	19049
Total Number of Traffic Casualties: Deaths	287
Injuries	2957
Total Number of Licence Plate Numbers Issued	12003
Total Number of Driving Licences Issued	14184
Total Number of Traffic Accident Cases Resolved	1281

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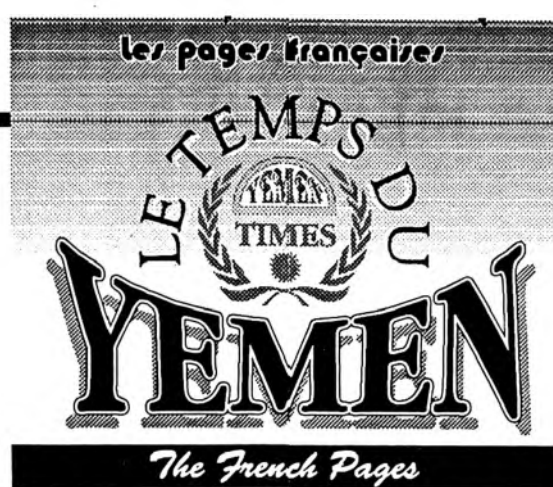
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Un entretien avec M. Jarallah Omar, membre éminent du Parti Socialiste

## "Il n'y a pas d'autre choix que l'entente entre PSY et CPG dans le cadre démocratique"

Il y a deux semaines encore, l'entente entre le Parti Socialiste Yéménite (PSY) et le Congrès Populaire Général (CPG), les deux formations qui se partagent le pouvoir depuis l'unification, semblait au beau fixe. On avait même annoncé une réconciliation entre les deux frères ennemis, les "deux Ali", le Président Saleh et le Vice-Président Al-Bid et les deux partis laissaient abondamment couler la rumeur d'une "fusion" entre eux, à tout le moins qu'ils iraient aux urnes, en avril prochain, en ordre de bataille, avec des listes communes.

Or, la semaine dernière, une nouvelle rupture est survenue entre les deux formations, le CPG annonçant que la fusion et même les listes communes n'étaient plus à l'ordre du jour.

L'histoire d'amour forcée que vivent le CPG et le PSY depuis deux ans maintenant a démontré que ces revirements sont très fréquents pour deux entités que tout opposerait à priori mais qui sont "condamnées" à s'entendre pour éviter le chaos. C'est l'équilibre de la terreur, à l'échelle du Yémen: chaque formation sait que si elle dépasse un certain point de non-retour, l'autre a les moyens de le lui faire payer chèrement: une nouvelle partition du pays en deux, au mieux, une guerre civile, au pire. Les cadres des deux partis en sont suffisamment conscients ainsi que de la terrible responsabilité qui leur incombe.

Cela n'a toutefois pas empêché un nouveau rebondissement la semaine dernière, rebondissement qui a donné lieu à une belle série de déclarations empreintes d'hypocrisie de la part du CPG. C'est lui qui a annoncé la rupture alors qu'elle venait apparemment du PSY, en proie à une forte crise interne et dont les hauts responsa-

bles sont incapables de se décider sur la stratégie à suivre, en partie à cause des relations étroites entre le CPG et le troisième pôle du paysage politique, le parti Al-Islah, représentant le système tribal et, dans un moindre mesure, l'islamisme. Ainsi, un communiqué du CPG, le 25 janvier, a annoncé qu'il n'était plus question d'envisager une fusion ou des listes communes, arguant qu'il s'agissait d'une tentative de confisquer la volonté du peuple et d'empêcher sur le processus démocratique, par le biais d'arrangements électoraux. Éléгант manière de "dégager en touche" quand il est aujourd'hui admis que le premier à proposer la fusion fut le président Saleh lui-même, et que des membres éminents du CPG ont affirmé qu'un de leurs rêves était de "phagocytter" le psy au sein du CPG.

Dans un entretien avec Le Temps du Yémen, l'un des plus hauts responsables du PSY, M. Jarallah Omar, membre du Bureau Politique et responsable des relations avec les autres partis, a admis que sa formation était en proie à une crise interne et que les avis divergeaient parmi les cadres sur la stratégie à suivre. Il a révélé que le PSY envisageait d'autoriser l'existence officielle de courants en son sein mais que la décision finale restait à prendre. M. Omar a également affirmé que le "mariage malheureux" entre les deux partis au pouvoir était une nécessité absolue pour la sécurité et l'économie du pays malgré les heurts inévitables entre les deux, dus essentiellement à la position ambiguë de l'Israh, allié de fait du CPG mais qui "voudrait éliminer le PSY", selon lui.

raisons invoquées par lui. L'une d'elle, qui revient comme un leitmotiv dans la bouche de ce représentant de l'aile gauche du PSY, considéré comme l'un des derniers "purs et durs, chargé à ce titre de négocier au plus serré avec l'Israh, c'est ce dernier parti qui est la cause principale des dissensions CPG-PSY. Il dénonce le "double jeu" du parti du Cheikh Al-Ahmar, qui entretient toujours des relations étroites, plus ou moins ouvertes, avec le CPG et le président Saleh: "d'un côté l'Israh mobilise ses militants contre les socialistes et ne condamne pas les attentats contre les cadres du PSY et, d'un autre côté, ils réclament le dialogue avec nous mais exigent qu'il soit tenu secret". M. Omar en profite pour nous annoncer que les entrevues régulières entre le PSY et l'Israh ont désormais cessé, "jusqu'à ce qu'ils acceptent qu'elles soient rendues publiques". Lorsqu'on lui demande s'il pense qu'un jour le CPG pourrait choisir l'alliance ouverte avec l'Israh plutôt qu'avec le PSY, il répond que "si cela arrive, ce ne pourra être que conjoncturel et ne durera pas. Il y a trop de différences entre les deux sur la politique intérieure et extérieure. S'ils s'allient avant les élections, cela ne sera pas tena-

ble après". A propos des élections, M. Omar reconnaît que tout peut encore arriver, même le pire, mais, en tant que membre de la Haute Commission Electorale, il est confiant: "Je suis presque sûr qu'elles auront lieu à la date décidée, sinon, on ne pourra pas éviter la catastrophe. Il peut y avoir quelques problèmes avant et après, mais je pense qu'elles auront lieu". Les relations tendues entre PSY et CPG peuvent-elles faire échouer les élections? "Tout est possible dans la situation actuelle", répond M. Omar. Mais les dirigeants des deux partis sont sages et comprennent les dangers. Ils connaissent leurs responsabilités et les lignes rouges qu'il ne faut pas dépasser". Pour lui, les deux partis vivent un "mariage malheureux", forcé, mais ils n'ont d'autres solutions que de s'entendre. Leurs relations connaissent des hauts et des bas, c'est tout. "Le PSY est véritablement soucieux de favoriser un climat de détente avant les élections", ajoute-t-il. D'ailleurs, un programme de réunions entre les deux partis est fixé pour les jours qui viennent, démontrant que la rupture annoncée n'est probablement qu'un caprice de jeunes mariés...

Emmanuel GIROUD

Echanges d'émissaires et de lettres entre les deux chefs d'Etat

## Les relations entre Sanaa et Ryad semblent se réchauffer

Il semblerait que les relations entre l'Arabie Saoudite et le Yémen, minées par la position jugée pro-irakienne de Sanaa durant la guerre du Golfe et par la résurgence d'un vieux conflit frontalier depuis un an, soient en train de se réchauffer. De même, le Yémen essaie de renouer des liens plus serrés avec les autres pays de la péninsule arabique, au premier rang desquels le Sultanat d'Oman (Lire notre dernière édition).

Lundi 18 janvier déjà, fait exceptionnel considéré comme un tournant dans les relations houleuses entre les deux voisins, le ministre d'Etat yéménite aux Affaires étrangères, M. Abdulaziz al-Dali, avait été reçu personnellement par le roi Fahd à Ryad, à qui il avait remis une lettre du président Saleh. La semaine dernière, le 29 janvier, un ministre saoudien est venu pour la première fois depuis deux ans en visite au Yémen, remettant au président Saleh une lettre du roi Fahd portant sur le conflit frontalier et les moyens de développer les relations bilatérales, selon l'agence de presse yéménite SABA.

Mais les mauvaises relations entre les deux frères ennemis du Golfe ne tiennent pas simplement à un bout de désert ou à quelques puits de pétrole mais davantage à la différence de régime politique: le Yémen, sur la voie de la démocratie depuis l'unification, fait peur à la monarchie absolue qui règne à Ryad, d'autant plus qu'il est le pays le plus peuplé de la péninsule avec 14 millions d'habitants (22 millions en 2010, selon les projections statistiques).

Au moment même de l'échange de lettres et de l'affirmation de la volonté de régler les différends à l'amiable, l'Arabie Saoudite continue de soutenir certains mouvements irrédentistes dans le sud du pays, notamment dans l'Hadramaout et l'Ambassade du royaume à Sanaa a mystérieusement et soudainement rouvert ses portes aux nombreux demandeurs de visas (dont la plupart ont été expulsés lors de la crise du Golfe, environ 800.000), afin de gêner les opérations d'inscriptions sur les listes électorales à l'approche des élections au Yémen, selon certaines mauvaises langues... D'autres parlent de "paranoïa" et préfèrent y voir un signe de l'amélioration des relations entre les deux pays.

### "Renforcer la solidarité arabe et islamique"

Malgré tout, une image de réchauffement des relations entre les deux pays est distillée dans la presse yéménite, à l'occasion, il est vrai, de visites réciproques qui marquent un tournant dans les négociations difficiles de ces derniers mois.

Après la visite de M. Al-Dali au roi Fahd, c'est le chef de l'Etat yéménite qui a reçu, la semaine dernière, une lettre jugée très optimiste de son homologue saoudien, par l'intermédiaire du ministre de l'Education, M. Abdel Aziz al-Khouiter, premier ministre saoudien en visite officielle à Sanaa depuis deux ans, après la rupture due à la crise du Golfe.

Selon l'agence de presse officielle SABA, le message du souverain "porte notamment sur les négociations sur le différend frontalier qui oppose les deux pays et les moyens de développer les relations bilatérales".

Le président Saleh a récépionné, pendant l'audience de réception de M. al-Khouiter, le "souci de son pays d'ouvrir de nouveaux horizons dans les relations yéméno-saoudiennes", et a estimé nécessaire de "renforcer la solidarité arabe et islamique".

Ces échanges d'émissaires et de messages au plus haut niveau interviennent après quatre séries de négociations vaines, que le Yémen et le royaume saoudien avaient entamées en juillet dernier à Genève, précisément par MM. Al-Dali et Al-Khouiter.

E.G.

### SECURITE

Pour que les autorités lui livrent les assassins d'un des leurs

## Près de de Dhamar, une tribu a kidnappé un homme d'affaires canadien

Un homme d'affaire canadien d'origine allemande, M. Mike Schmitz, a été kidnappé le 24 janvier, par les hommes d'une tribu près de Dhamar, sur la route Sanaa-Aden. A l'heure où nous mettons sous presse (lundi 1er janvier), M. Schmitz est toujours retenu en otage. L'affaire a été révélée à la presse jeudi dernier seulement.

M. Schmitz a été kidnappé près de Dhamar, alors qu'il se rendait d'Aden à Sanaa, à une centaine de kilomètres de la capitale, par des hommes de la tribu d'al-Hada, près du village de Zarajeh. "Les ravisseurs posent comme condition à la libération de leur otage que les autorités leur livrent

l'assassin d'un membre de la tribu, tué en décembre à la suite d'un conflit sur un terrain", a déclaré un haut responsable à l'Agence France Presse, ajoutant que des dignitaires d'une autre tribu de la région de Zarajeh ont proposé leur médiation pour obtenir la libération de Mike Schmitz.

Selon un chef de tribu important présent à Sanaa, il s'agirait en fait de deux assassins, officiers de l'armée. Ceux-ci auraient été envoyés par les autorités l'un en Allemagne pour raisons de santé, l'autre aux Etats-Unis.

M. Schmitz est cadre de la compagnie de navigation et de fret Sterling Air Services.

(Source: AFP)

### COOPERATION

En augmentation par rapport aux années précédentes

## Aide alimentaire française de 4.000 tonnes de farine pour 1993

La semaine dernière, un navire de la Marine française, le Tadorne II, a acheminé au Yémen l'aide alimentaire française à ce pays au titre de l'année 1993. Le navire a déchargé sa cargaison dans le port de Hodeidah.

Il s'agit de 4.000 tonnes de farine de blé, au titre de l'aide alimentaire que la France verse chaque année au Yémen. Cette livraison est en augmentation sensible par rapport aux autres années puisque les tonnages précédents variaient entre 2.500 et 3.000 tonnes annuelles.

Ce don de farine a été remis à la coopérative de consommateurs yéménite GAMIA qui

doit le commercialiser sur le marché intérieur au prix couramment pratiqué dans le pays (la farine étant l'un des produits subventionnés par l'Etat dont les prix sont bloqués à un niveau bas).

Les recettes résultant de cette vente alimenteront, comme pour les années précédentes, un compte dit "Fonds de contrepartie" de l'aide alimentaire française au Yémen. Grâce à ce fonds, les autorités des deux pays s'entendent pour financer des projets destinés à améliorer l'auto-suffisance alimentaire du Yémen, notamment dans le domaine agricole.

### CONFERENCE

Célèbre islamologue français mort en 1962

## Louis Massignon à l'honneur au Centre Culturel Français de Sanaa

M. Jean Moncelon, Docteur ès-Lettres et professeur à la Faculté de français de l'Université de Sanaa, donne ce soir (mercredi 3 février) une conférence sur Louis Massignon, à l'occasion du trentième anniversaire de la mort du célèbre islamologue français. "Louis Massignon, une parole donnée à l'Islam", tel est le titre de la conférence, qui se tiendra au Centre Culturel Français de Sanaa, à 20h00.

Orientaliste célèbre né en 1883 et décédé à Paris en 1962, Louis Massignon était professeur au Collège de France puis à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Il a laissé d'importants travaux sur

la mystique islamique: *La Passion d'Al-Halladj, martyr mystique de l'Islam* (1922), *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (1922), *Les Sept Dormants d'Ephèse* (1955), *Parole donnée* (textes réunis et publiés en 1962).

Bien que marié, Louis Massignon fut ordonné prêtre de l'église melkite.

"Louis Massignon, une parole donnée à l'Islam", mercredi 3 février à 20h00 au Centre Culturel Français de Sanaa, immeuble N°6, rue N°8, face au Ministère de la Justice, rue de la Justice.

## Sanaa devient le théâtre de règlements de compte entre tribus

La capitale devient de plus en plus souvent le théâtre de combats de rues entre tribus rivales. Il y a trois semaines, une rue principale près de Al-Hasabah, sur la route de l'aéroport, a été fermée pour permettre aux membres d'une tribu de prendre d'assaut la maison d'un homme qui avait tué l'un de leurs. Etrangement, la sécurité militaire avait même prêté main-forte aux assaillants en menaçant l'homme de faire sauter sa maison. Les combats à l'arme automatique ont duré une journée.

Dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi dernier, le même type de combats de rues a duré depuis une heure du matin jusqu'au lever du soleil, après une intervention plus que tardive des forces régulières... Quatre hommes ont été blessés, de sources sûres, et l'on parle même de deux morts. Ces deux cas, même s'ils sont les plus violents, ne sont pas les seuls ces derniers temps.

Dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi dernier, nombreux sont ceux qui ont été réveillés par des tirs d'armes automatiques qui ont duré environ cinq heures, les combattants se déplaçant dans plusieurs quartiers de la ville. Tout a commencé entre minuit et une heure du matin, derrière l'hôpital Al-Thawra, près de Bab al-Yemen. A cet endroit, les membres de deux tribus, al-Khawlan et al-Hada, se disputaient un terrain depuis longtemps. Un Cheikh Khawlan, Nagi Ibn Abdallah al-Soufi s'est déplacé dimanche à Sanaa pour arbitrer le différend. En revenant vers sa voiture vers minuit, il a été attaqué par des membres de la tribu al-Hada. Quatre de ses hommes ont

été blessés. Il est donc revenu un peu plus tard avec, dit-on, 700 membres de sa tribu qui ont encerclé le quartier avant d'ouvrir le feu sur les maisons de leurs ennemis. La Sécurité militaire aurait alors refusé d'intervenir, arguant qu'il fallait attendre le jour. Les Khawlan se sont alors propagés dans plusieurs autres quartiers de la ville pour attaquer d'autres maisons des Hada. Le chef d'une troisième tribu, al-Mourad, est alors intervenu pour tenter une médiation. Il n'ont réussi qu'à faire cesser le feu mais pas l'encerclement des maisons.

Ce n'est que vers 5h00 du matin que deux ou trois véhicules blindés de l'armée sont venus ouvrir les rues pour désenclaver les quartiers assiégés. Dans l'après-midi de lundi, les trois tribus ont tenu deux réunions pour régler pacifiquement le problème. On parle de deux morts durant la nuit...

Il est un fait acquis: de plus en plus de chefs importants de tribus ont désormais des maisons dans la capitale et leurs cortèges d'hommes armés. Pour M. Jarallah Omar, membre éminent du PSY (lire l'entretien avec M. Omar page 10), ces problèmes de sécurité liés aux tribus sont dus au fait que de plus en plus de chefs tribaux se rapprochent du pouvoir qui leur donne argent, voitures et gardes armés pour s'assurer de leur soutien et se rallier des futurs électeurs. "Même le PSY utilise les tribus aujourd'hui", nous a déclaré M. Omar.

E.G.

Sur décision du siège de l'organisme d'aide au développement des Nations-Unies à New York

## L'aide du PNUD au Yémen est réduite de 25 %

Selon des sources gouvernementales, les aides de l'ONU au Yémen par l'intermédiaire du Programme des Nations-Unies pour le Développement (PNUD), qui est le premier bailleur de fonds international au pays, seraient autoritairement réduites d'un quart, sur décision unilatérale du siège de l'organisme, à New York, pour le programme quinquennal 1992-1996. Visiblement gêné, le bureau permanent du PNUD à Sanaa, qui ne veut pas aborder le problème pour l'instant, a invoqué, dans une lettre d'excuse au gouvernement, des raisons techniques et la baisse des ressources centrales de l'organisme (les contributions volontaires des pays membres de l'ONU).

A New York, on précise qu'il a été demandé au PNUD de prévoir, pour le Yémen, une "réserve non-programmée" de 25% pour la période 92-96, déjà commencé depuis deux ans ! La dotation initiale pour ce programme sur cinq ans était d'environ 42,6 millions de dollars (auxquels viennent s'ajouter quelques fonds spécifiques pour des projets particuliers); New York demande de réduire cette somme à 29 millions d'ici la fin du cycle, en 1996, soit une perte de près de 25 à 30 %.

On fait valoir à New York que le Yémen n'est pas le seul pays en développement touché par ces réductions, et que l'ensemble des Pays les Moins Avancés (PMA, revenu par habitant inférieur ou proche de 500 dollars par an) a

été touché. Mais on ajoute qu'il est vrai, le Yémen est le pays auquel on a coupé le plus d'aides (d'autres PMA d'Afrique notamment ne se sont vus imposer des réductions très faibles en comparaison). Le gouvernement yéménite peut se poser légitimement une question: pourquoi le Yémen est-il l'un des principaux pays visés au moment où il a le plus besoin de l'aide extérieure. D'autant plus qu'il a prouvé sa bonne volonté à plusieurs reprises cette année, notamment lors de la Conférence de Genève, en juillet dernier, où il a été confronté à 43 donateurs potentiels qui ont jugé "remarquable" le plan de redressement économique que le gouvernement lui présentait mais qui ont suspendu toute décision d'aide au bon déroulement des élections notamment. D'autre part, il est vrai que les sacrifices demandés aux Pays en Développement sont dus à une baisse des ressources centrales du PNUD, une partie ayant été réaf-

fectée par les pays donateurs eux-mêmes aux "opérations d'urgence" type Somalie, Ex-Yougoslavie ou Cambodge, d'autres pays n'ayant pas reconduit leurs contributions; or, alors que 63 pays en développement (tous bénéficiaires net de l'aide du PNUD) n'ont pas annoncé de contributions cette année, même faibles, le Yémen a, lui, reconduit sa contribution annuelle de 40.000 dollars, payables en monnaie locale certes, mais tout de même.

Pourquoi cette "pénalisation" alors ? Car il s'agit d'une somme importante: alors que le PNUD avait planifié de répartir la dotation de 92-96 pour 10 à 11 millions de dollars par an, il ne restera plus que 3 millions pour l'année 1996 et d'ici là, certains projets seront interrompus probablement.

Qu'est-ce qui a poussé, le 11 décembre dernier, les membres du Bureau Directorial du PNUD à New York, chargé de réviser les dépenses, à pénaliser le Yémen

d'un pourcentage aussi élevé ?

Aucune justification officielle n'a encore été donnée mais l'on avance l'hypothèse selon laquelle le Yémen était l'un des pays les plus favorisés par le PNUD dans la région depuis la réunification. Il est vrai que lorsque les deux pays ont fusionné, le PNUD a fait une entorse à ses règles en additionnant tout simplement l'aide prévue pour le sud et celle pour le nord avant l'unification, pour le cycle 92-96, sans réviser entièrement les dotations; calculées sur des critères liés à l'économie et à la population. Peut-être les fonctionnaires du PNUD à New York, loin de la réalité d'un Yémen qui tente de poursuivre une expérience démocratique inédite dans la région, n'ont pas compris que l'un des principaux obstacles à son accomplissement était désormais d'ordre économique et social et que le pays ne pouvait s'en sortir sans une aide extérieure plus conséquente depuis que les pays du Golfe (Arabie Saoudite et Koweït essentiellement), traditionnels bailleurs de fonds, ont arrêté toutes leurs aides financières au Yémen lors de la crise du Golfe... On a peut-être estimé que la baisse des ressources centrales était l'occasion de régulariser la situation du Yémen après la "fleur" qui lui a été faite lors de la réunification. Avec une réduction de la dotation de 25 %, il semblerait que l'on soit revenu sur la base d'un seul pays.

E.G.

### Un fonds pour les pays les plus pauvres

Contrairement à la Banque Mondiale, organisme dépendant des Nations-Unies aussi mais qui ne fait que prêter, le PNUD est un fonds, une agence de financement et d'exécution de l'aide au développement, sous forme de dons. Ses ressources proviennent pour moitié environ (1,2 milliards de dollars) de contributions volontaires de pays. Les principaux bailleurs de fonds du

PNUD sont, en proportion de la population et du PNB, les pays nordiques, Suède et Norvège en tête.

Les "Pays à revenu faible" (moins de 700 dollars par habitant et par an) reçoivent 80 % des dépenses du PNUD. Parmi eux, la quarantaine de Pays les Moins Avancés (PMA- revenu par habitant inférieur ou proche de 500 dollars par an), dont le Yémen, en reçoivent 55 %.

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# On Free Press in Yemen ...

By: Saad Salah Khalis,  
Cultural Editor,  
Yemen Times.



Going over a group of Yemeni newspapers of the past two weeks, some of which were official, others of different backgrounds, I confess that I really had the taste of free press. Many Yemenis criticize the basis on which Yemeni press act, claiming that this is no freedom, but rather disarray and disorder, calling for the act of publishing to practise strict censorship over press licences and activities. What I want to say to those good citizens, assuming that they are acting of keenness and diligence, that free press is a mirage sought by Arab writers and journalists for ages, as many martyred fighting for that right in various areas between the gulf and the Atlantic, yet failing to abstract even one tenth of the amount of freedom enjoyed by their counterparts in Yemen. I'm not saying that Yemeni press have got full freedom and has nothing more to ask for, but I'm assuring my fellow journalists of a fact that they are very well aware of, that what they got is far beyond the dreams of their colleagues in other Arab countries of far more rooted press institutions and traditions.

what really provoked me, is that some writers are calling for the help of government censorship to silence other fellow writers and newspapers for mere difference in points of view, forgetting that they are opening the door widely for the instinct of tyranny ever present in governmental outfits everywhere in the world, regardless of the political system and tendencies. And forgetting that someday will come when they find themselves preys of the same wild beast, uncontrollable once released. All writers, journalists and chief editors of whatever background, affiliation or political tendencies should understand that whatever their differences might be, they are and will be in the same trench fighting one common foe, tyranny, oppression and backwardness. Some may argue that some papers are going over the

edge to unbearable limits practising daily insult and misbehavior, being dangerous to national unity and..and.. What I like to clarify is that practising freedom with responsibility is not an easy goal to achieve, but there should always be a price to pay, and that's exactly what we are witnessing right now in Yemen. If the freedom is really our aim, not just a mean to climb to power, then the price paid is justifiable, rather necessary helping us acquiring enough experience to oppose huge challenges of the future. One journalist told me that Yemeni people are not ready yet for democracy and that a certain time period is required for them to adjust to such system and stated that a strong unforgiving governmental procedure should prevail to ensure law and order, an idea shared by a considerable portion of Yemeni intellectuals, let alone laymen. what I have commented, is that democracy and democratic way of life is a dream sought by mankind for ages, and once acquired, it should be held tight and dedicated to, as such historic chance, as the one Yemen is witnessing, might never occur again if

the Yemeni writers and thinkers fail to seize the opportunity leaving it for the control of the opposing current. Some writers claim that there is no point in free speech as long as there is no one to listen, others claim that political parties, let alone ordinary people, are not yet accustomed to transact democratically, while a third party claims that democracy as a way of living is just another imported western commodity. To all those I would say that practising democracy, if ever there is someone to listen or not, would, through the passage of time create a tradition that cannot be changed if the political regime ever does, and would create what is called the general opinion through which the people can practise virtual effect on the political decision. Political parties will find out, with time, that democracy and democratic system for the only guarantee for them, as well as for their counter parts, to stay alive whatever the magnitude of their publicity for me to believe that if he thinks thin he exists also, and once we accept co-existence as a fact of life we are way above the first step in civilization. To those who claim that democracy is an imported

idea, I would reply that our world had never witnessed any rise age without a degree of freedom of expression accompanied to it depending of course on the historical period and social development, but freedom is not a gift, nor a luxury. It is a right fought for generations. Freedom of expression is the forefront of freedom of will and decision of the main feature of the civilized, healthy human-being. Based on all that, I sincerely call all Yemeni writers and journalists to agree on a convention, elaborated by themselves, where basis of action among themselves and their publications should be identified and agreed upon on basis of mutual respect for each other's right of free belief and expression. And where all agree to fight for each other's rights where all differences vanish when facing the threat of confiscating their collective freedom as a hole or as individuals and where all aims of the signees are represented, that are freedom, equality, justice, fraternity..etc. A group of journalists attorneys could form a committee to defend the rights of their colleagues in the courts of law, provided of course that the charges placed are of nature related to freedom of

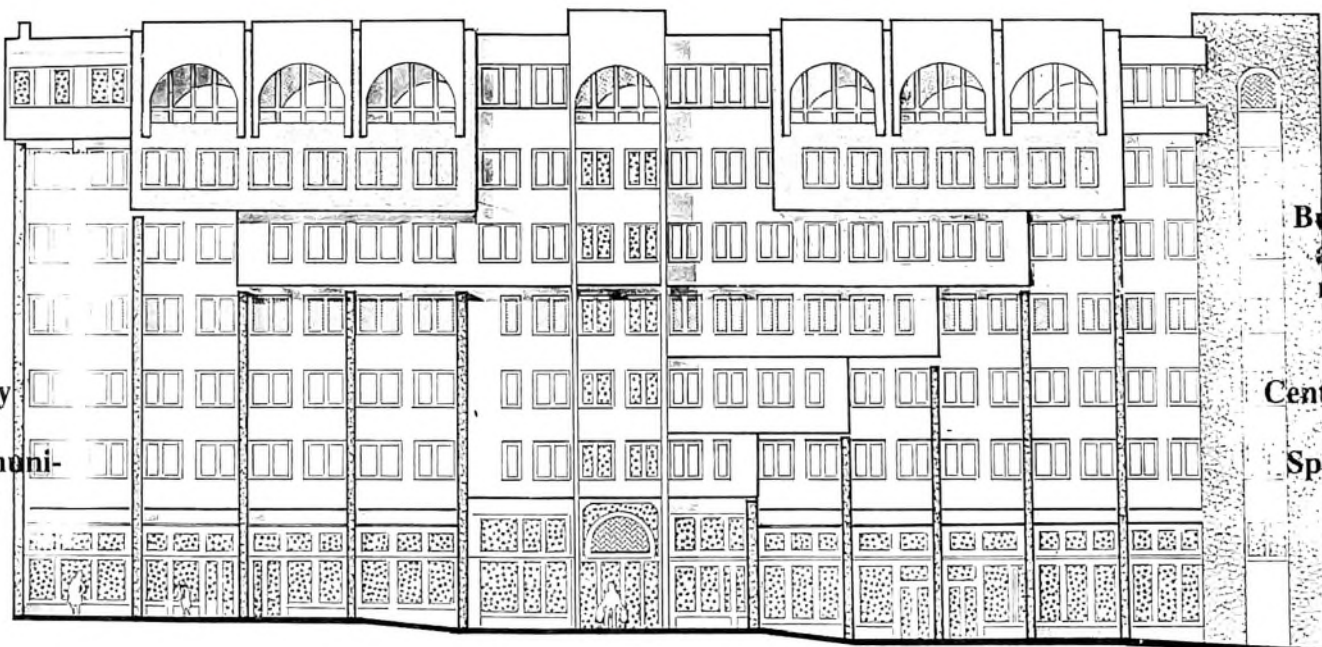
thought, expression and belief. All journalists and writers should sign in person as an obligation to commit to convention terms. A dream, but worthy of attempt in my opinion. And to come true it requires some other objective factors, the most important of which is the existence of the struggle of all Yemeni writers, to build a healthy, civilized and free society. Arab writers are not the victims of the rulers only, in addition each one of them has created his own oppressor within his own mind ranging from ideological to what is called "The inner policeman" which is bearing all the fear and restrictions accumulated through ages as red lines were drawn in his conscious and subconscious mind right from the very start of history. Erasing those lines is the only way to rise into the lofty heights of creativity and imagination creating the right base to establish tradition of writing and thinking. I'm not giving precedence for freedom over the bread, but I'm calling for both to precede together assuring that if free hungry people are useless. then the enslaved people, whether hungry or satiated, are worthless.

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# Upsurge of Rhino Horn Imports into Yemen, Second and Final Part

By: Lucy Vigne and Esmond Badley Martin

In the jambia workshops in Sanaa's souks, water buffalo horn is the predominant material used for making dagger handles. It is encouraging that traders today are allowed to obtain from private (not government) sources as much hard currency as they can afford in order to import horn from the domestic buffalo in India. Large quantities of water buffalo horn have, therefore, become available.

The other main substitute, an amber-colored plastic, which was introduced by the main trader in the late 1980s when water buffalo horn and rhino horn were difficult to import, is still being widely used for the cheaper jambia due to the increase in imports since late 1990.

In April 1992, in the main trader's workshop, we saw a man at the back of the shop holding a whole rhino horn that had been sliced in half with its tip removed. We tried to take a flash photograph, but the craftsmen were furious. One craftsman in this shop was in the process of making nine handles out of rhino horn. It is noticeably lighter in color than the ubiquitous water buffalo horn, with a grained appearance. Normally two or three handles can be made from 1 kg of horn. The craftsman very carefully marked with a black felt-tip pen small dots on to a handle which he

would later drill and fill with metal for decoration. For water buffalo horn, far less artistry is employed, and dots are usually not made before drilling. Under the roughly shaped handles was a sheet of plastic on which had collected fine grey shavings of rhino horn from his filing work. The main trader later said that he currently possessed 10 kg of these shavings, and that a Chinese trader would be coming to buy it all in the next few days, for about \$167 a kg. In 1986, shavings were selling for \$227 a kilo.



The Yemeni government banned the export of rhino horn scraps and shavings in 1987, and it is regrettable that the Chinese are still buying the material. The shavings are smuggled into China and processed into traditional medicines despite pleas from international conservation organizations for this practice to stop. In the dagger retail section of the souk, it was dis-

couraging to see more new rhino horn handles than had been available in the late 1980s. Some were connected to blades and others were displayed on their own. This was proof of a considerable rise in rhino horn imports after 1990. In April 1992, a new dagger with a plastic handle was selling for about \$5, and one with a water buffalo horn handle was around \$8. A dagger with a new rhino horn handle was priced at an average of \$580, while antique rhino horn jambias, being the most prestigious, were selling usually for around \$1200 each.

The busiest time for selling jambias is just prior to the two annual Eids (Islamic festivals) when everyone wants to look their best for the celebrations. The Eid al-Fitr (the festival of the breaking of the month-long fast) was occurring during our visit. Craftsmen had been working late into the night in order to meet the rising demand for jambias. The traders admitted that they had not used up their rhino horn stocks, yet they were eager for new supplies. Yemeni merchants usually keep very small stockpiles (unlike the Taiwanese) and normally consume what they obtain in the same year.

We reported our disheartening findings to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in an hour-long meeting at his house. Despite many other pres-

ures, the Minister has a serious interest in rhino conservation and has tried hard to end the rhino horn trade in Yemen. Due to the problems of unification and the Gulf War, however, he had not followed up the 1990 action plan which we devised with him on our previous visit to Sana'a. He again agreed that he would try to get the government to join CITES, and would ask the Mufti (religious leader) to issue an edict opposing the rhino horn trade. As a third plan of action, he suggested showing a film about the rhino crisis

on Yemeni Television as a plea to those involved to stop buying rhino horn. Although imports of rhino horn have been banned for years, there has been no internal prohibition. The Minister composed with us a draft decree banning the sales of raw (unworked) rhino horn within Yemen, and stating that any old rhino horn supplies would have to be marked and recorded by the Ministry of Trade, which would later make surprise inspections of the workshops. If any new horns were found, there would be a heavy fine, equal to the value of the horns. We wait to hear whether this decree has been issued. This would be easier to enforce than



legislation banning rhino horn imports, and could be very effective in curtailing the trade.

Yemen particularly wants to improve its international image following the country's unpopularity during the Gulf War. The actions of a small handful of traders responsible for Yemen's renewed role as a major market for rhino horn will only further damage the country's reputation. We spoke to several Yemeni officials and academics who want to end the rhino horn trade, and who believe public awareness and education to be the long term solution. The Ministry of Information, the Environment Protection Council and the Yemen Times newspaper all agreed to publish material on the problem, and a professor from Sanaa University who is presently in charge of redesigning the school curricula agreed to incorporate the rhino conservation message into it.

Our information on the increased rhino horn trade in Yemen distressed many Yemenis we saw. Their helpful responses and enthusiasm to do something about it were very encouraging. But continued support and pressure from international conservation organizations is needed. Otherwise, that eagerness amongst the officials to work towards stopping the rhino horn trade will dwindle and other conservation issues within the country will take its place.

"Should not Africa put its own house in order?" is an understandable question

asked by some Yemenis. And it is true that far more effort is needed in Africa, especially in Tanzania and Zambia, to stop the smuggling networks. Intelligence gathering is the most cost-effective way to identify and prosecute traders. This strategy must be developed further in eastern Africa as well if the illegal trade routes are to be broken. It is imperative that the neighboring Arab countries which are acting as entrepôts also help: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates could do far more to police their airports and intercept rhino horn consignments. And if Yemen bans domestic trade in unworked rhino horn and increases public awareness, the jambia craftsmen may develop prestigious substitute in place of new rhino horn.

Only then would it be conceivable for Africa's rhino populations to recover and be safe enough from poachers for conservationists to think seriously of establishing a highly controlled legal trade in rhino horn exports to Yemen.

Another possibility would be for Yemeni businessmen to purchase a breeding group of rhinos from southern Africa and to farm them commercially in Yemen. Every year or so the horn could be cut and sold to the dagger craftsmen. In reality, however, rhino farming is presently a long way off. It is essential that Yemeni traders accept that they must stop importing new rhino horn for the foreseeable future.

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**The PGC Uses the State Machinery in an Onslaught Against an Opposition Party**

The People's General Congress has embarked on a relentless attack against Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen (League of the Sons of Yemen). According to, by now, a well-established tactic, the PGC has provided resources and support to certain Rabitah elements in order to create a schism within the Rabitah. When that tactic failed, the PGC employed two former Rabitah members who were sacked for their behavior, Ba-Rasain and Al-Batrah. One was sacked eight months ago, and the other four months ago. The two men were awarded prime time on national TV in order to denounce the leadership of Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen, they were given prominent coverage in the PGC and government press, and a press conference was arranged for them. It is to be noted that the leadership of the Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen was considered very close to the PGC in the past. But, as things evolved, Abdul-Rahman Al-Jafri, Chairman of the Rabitah, emerged as the leader of the National Conference, and was able to create a formidable opposition which has local and international credibility. This created a rift with the PGC, and now his party is paying for it.

In a communique issued by Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen this week, the party's Central Board blasted the state and its symbols for stooping so low and for making a mockery of democracy. "The ruling parties are only interested in a docile opposition. As the opposition parties gain in credibility and influence, they become the subject of illegal and immoral attacks by the rulers," the communique reads. This recent action by the state, spearheaded by the PGC, has caused much concern among political parties, syndicates, unions and social personalities. "We know that arm-twisting is part of political rivalry. But this is blackmail, and it is sad that the state machinery is employed to hurt our democracy," said a leading figure of another opposition party. The National Conference had earlier in the week issued a strongly worded statement in which it condemned the attempts to destabilize the Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen. "This will have no lasting impact on us. But it shows the true colors and nature of the ruling parties," said Al-Jafri.

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**LESSON #30 More Prepositions**

PRETEST Circle the sentences which are correct.

1. Ahmed has worked for that company since five years.
2. Before two years we lived in Hodeidah.
3. Khadija left before the end of class.
4. Mahmoud and Munir will go to Taiz after two weeks.
5. I waited since 3:00.
6. The baby slept for six hours.

With last week's lesson we began to look at prepositions, especially prepositions of time. This week we continue that theme by looking at four more prepositions which are used with expressions of time: *since, for, before* and *after*.

*since/ for* Both of these prepositions are used to tell how long something has been true; however, each has a different slant.

*Since* is used to show when something began to be true. Because of this, it is always followed by an actual date, not an amount of time. The amount of time is known because *since* implies that the action or state is still true in the present (or the point of reference if the statement is in the past or the future), and the amount of time can thus be determined. Also, because the action or state is still true in the future, *since* requires a perfect tense (see past lessons on the present perfect tense). examples: I have lived in Sana'a since 1989. (I still do.)

- Nour has sat here since noon. (She still is.)  
My parents have been married since 1956. (They still are.)

*For* can show the same information, except with an emphasis on the length of time. Because of this, *for* is not bound by time and can be used with simple or perfect tenses. Further explanation of *for* as a preposition of time can be found in last week's lesson.

Here are examples of how *for* can be used in place of *since* to convey the same information:

- I have lived in Sana'a for four years. (since 1989)  
Nour has sat here for two hours. (if it is 2:00 now)  
My parents have been married for thirty-seven years. (since 1956)

Note: *since* is followed by a specific date or time; *for* is followed by an amount of time.

**Practice A** Fill in the blanks with *for* or *since*.

1. Ali has been a student \_\_\_\_\_ 1990.
2. We walked \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
3. Amat has taught \_\_\_\_\_ three years.
4. I have studied English \_\_\_\_\_ 1987.
5. They have been eating \_\_\_\_\_ 2:30.

*before/after* Very often one can overhear Arab students of English say "Before three years..." or "After two weeks..." The student who does this is simply translating prepositions of time from Arabic to English. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

To talk about things that happen in the past, the preposition *before* can be used, but only followed by a specific date, time or event.

examples: We lived in Kuwait before the war.  
Abdullah was back before 5:00.

Before 1990, Yemen was two separate countries.

If you don't have a specific date, time or event against which to measure time, but only an amount, the structure is quite different. Rather than using a preposition, the adverb *ago* is used.

- We lived in Kuwait two years ago.  
Abdullah was back three hours ago. (if it's 8:00 now)  
Three years ago Yemen was two separate countries.

*After* is used in much the same way as *before*.

- We will go after 4:00.  
After February I am going to visit my friend in Cairo.  
After 1990 I began to work for the Ministry of Health.

However, you will hear native speakers use *after* with amounts of time as well. The preferred preposition in these cases is *in* (see last week's lesson) if the sentence is in the future.

- We will go in an hour. (it is 3:00 now)  
I am going to visit my friend in Cairo in a month.

**Practice B** Write sentences using *before* or *after* based on the model.

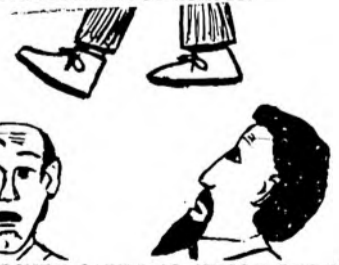
model: Fahmi stopped working at the bank in 1991.

- Before 1991 Fahmi worked in the bank.  
or...Fahmi didn't work in the bank after 1991.

1. On Tuesday I begin classes at the university.
2. We lived in Aden. In 1992 we moved to Sana'a.
3. Ebtisam got married in 1990.

**Practice C** Go back to the pretest and rewrite the incorrect sentences.

**WEEKLY IDIOM** Up in the air  
Something or someone is up in the air if it is uncertain or undecided.  
"Is Ali going to take that job with the institute?" "I don't know. He's still up in the air. He doesn't have to decide until next week."



**ANSWERS** Pretest Sentences 3 and 6 are correct. Sentence 4 will be heard although it is not the most correct form. Practice A 1. since 2. for 3. for 4. since 5. since. Practice B 1. Before Tuesday I have classes at the university. or After Tuesday I begin classes at the university. 2. Before 1992 we lived in Aden or After 1992 we live in Sana'a. 3. Before 1990 Ebtisam was single or After 1990 she was married. Practice C 1. Ahmed has worked for that company for five years. 2. Two years ago we lived in Hodeidah. 4. Mahmoud and Munir will go to Taiz in two weeks. 5. I have waited since 3:00.

Featuring Next Week

**Interviews:**  
 Presidential Council Member Salim Saleh Mohamed Talks about the Political Situation and Future Prospects.

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**Relations between the Judicial and Executive Authorities**  
 The Justice Minister Breaks His Silence.

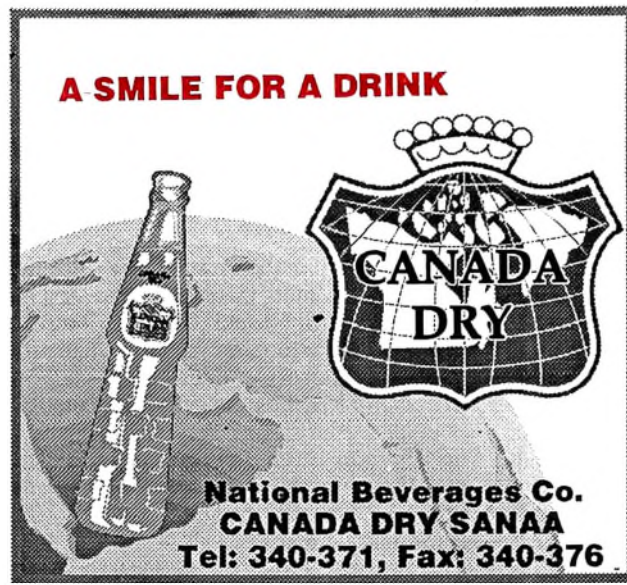
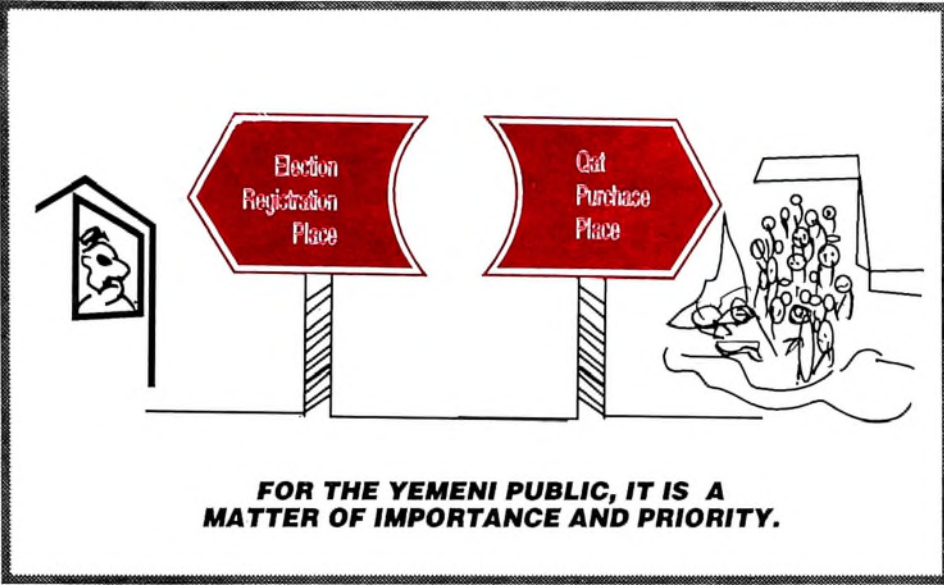
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**The Sage?**  
 Hassan Ali - poet, thinker and social reformer - Looks Back at Three Decades of Revolutionary Yemen.

● ● ●  
**The Registration Process:**  
 A Field Survey and an Update.

● ● ●  
**Independent Observers in the Elections Process**  
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**A Glass Artist:**  
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• Analysis •

## The Little Train That Could: The Efforts of Individual Yemenis in Making the Elections a Reality

By:  
 Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,  
 Professor,  
 Sanaa University.

"One thing we found out about managing a democratic system is that it is an awfully hard process to manage." So stated one of the senior advisors to President Saleh. Indeed, a democracy is far more difficult to handle than other systems. It is even more difficult if the country is poor, backward and lacks many of the institutions that help in running a democracy. Yet, the Republic of Yemen has taken on this Herculean task. Slowly and steadily, the Yemen is moving on this path of democracy. Two weeks have already passed since registration for elections has started. During this time, I travelled around to see how the people are responding to the process.

**A. My Picture for the First Time:**

At Registration Station C,

Constituency No. 11 in Sanaa City, I met a very old woman. Zara'ah gave her age as fifty, I would have given her seventy. She was eager to talk about what "demoqratiyyah" was all about. She had a fairly good idea, too "We are supposed to say who is good and who is bad among our officials. We are supposed to say 'Yes' to the good officials," she said. One important concession Zara'ah made to exercise her right in electing her parliamentary representative is that she allowed her picture to be taken. In Yemen traditions, women often avoid having their pictures taken, and for Zara'ah, the elections were important enough to break the rules and let her pictures taken for the first time in her life.

**B. Two Days on Biscuits:**

At Registration Station F in Constituency No. 64, in Shamayatain, Hugarriah, Taiz, Abbas Al-Mahdi is one of three persons manning the station. As they first arrived,

they could not link up with the local population. In the countryside, there are no restaurants, and they had to do with dry biscuits for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for two days. "It is ironic that living in Bani Shaibah tribe (which has specialized in running restaurants all over the country), we are unable to get food while this tribe feeds the whole nation," he said. Since then, the villagers have been supplying the team with its food needs. But it is all worthwhile. For the sake of making these elections stick and work, the young idealists who man the 1500 registration stations are willing to put up with all kinds of difficulties to make the elections process a success.

**C. Motivating Citizens to Register:**

Many candidates are urging potential supporters to register. Voters who live in cities are provided transportation to go to the villages and register there. The candidates, who are not yet to be officially announced as candidates, finance the



transportation costs. "For remote constituencies, the mobilization and transportation process is costing a bundle," said Mohammed Ali Al-Hag, a candidate in Constituency No. 65. This task (mobilizing people to register) is the job of the state or at least the Supreme Elections Committee, and it should consider co-financing the effort. As yet, it is a personal effort.

**D. Low Turn-out So Far:**

Yet, one of the most disturbing signs of the process in the visibly low turn-out so-far. The country's average daily number of registrants is about fifty persons.

Over the first half of the one-month registration period, only 634,000 persons have been registered. This is, indeed a low turn-out, as acknowledged by Mr. Abdul-Malik Al-Mikhlafi, Member of the Supreme Elections Committee and Chairman of the Media Sub-Committee. Yet, many people remain hopeful. That hope rests on the belief that most voters will make a dash to the polling stations as the deadline approaches. "People are relaxed in their drive to register because they feel they have a lot of time ahead of them. We will see a run on the polling in the coming days," said one official. Even if that were true, even if the number of voters to register in the second half of the period is double that of the first half, the total number of registered persons is still going to be less than two million persons. Out of a 14 million population base, and an eligible voting base of almost seven million, the percentage of registrants is just about 30%. If we assume, only two thirds of those registered will actually cast their ballots, it means that the next parliament, government and system draws its legitimacy from 20% of the voter base and 10% of the population. Yet, this reality, however disturbing, is a small step in Yemen's giant leap.

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