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# YEMEN TIMES

• SANAA • March 10th thru 16th, 1997 Vol. VII, Issue No. 10 • Price 30 Riyals

<b>INSIDE</b>	Colonel Najjad Discloses New Passports for Yemen. Page 3.	Focused Efforts to Help Yemeni Women. Page 5.	US Resumes OPIC Cover to Yemen Page 7.	The Blossoming of Art in Yemen. Pages 8+9.
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## A Phenomenal Boom in Real Estate: The Construction of the South

By: Ridhwan Al-Saqqaf, Yemen Times Aden Bureau.

Wherever you go, you can see construction coming up. Tall apartment and office buildings, villas, simple residential units, showrooms, all kinds of buildings. In city after another in the southern governorates, you can't miss the construction boom. In Habelain, Al-Dhale' area, the total land area of the city today is six times what it was on unity day in 1990. In Sabr, Lahej, the city has grown threefold. The space between the various townships of Aden is quickly being filled up as urban sprawl grows in all directions. In Fou, a city has simply sprung up next to Mukalla, the capital of Hadhramaut. Ataq in Shabwah has doubled in size. Indeed, capitalism seems to be breathing life into an area paralyzed by communist policies.



## YSP Stays out of Elections

It was a cruel choice, leading to a difficult decision. But when it came on Wednesday March 5th, though it fell hard, it didn't come as a surprise. The air that dominated the endless orations of the closed-door meetings of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party was tense. The YSP decided to boycott the elections. The decision was taken by 56 votes against, 32 votes in favor, and one abstention. The decision was driven by a lot of frustration, due to what many saw as their inability to compete safely, fairly, and freely. "Unless we can effectively compete (meaning to win reasonably in the elections), there is no reason why we should participate in the elections. We are asked to participate simply to project a semblance of pluralism and a southern participation in the elections," repeated many during the 3-day deliberations. At another level, the Tazem Al-Wahdawi Al-Sha'abi Annasser's Central Committee will meet on Thursday, March 13th, to determine whether it will participate or not.

## EMC's Successful Launch of Volunteer Training



The first of 7 workshops to train the observers working with the Elections Monitoring Committee was completed today, Monday, March 10th. The 3-day program, involved 812 volunteers. "The next workshop will be in Taiz. We plan to work with other monitoring agencies," said Ms. Shada Mohammed Nasser, Technical Assistant Secretary-General. The EMC has already intensified cooperation with the Arab Democratic Institute, by coordinating training and other programs. "Meetings were held with Hafedh Fadhle, Faris Sanabani and Jamal Al-Adimi," she disclosed.

More on page 13

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## OUR VIEWPOINT

### Holding the Parasites at Bay

In all societies, there are parasites who feed on the efforts of others. Unfortunately, this is the normal order of life. But here in Yemen, the issues has grown much out of proportion to the extent that the parasites have grown so bold that claim a stake in the fruits of the work of those who actually get the work done. To add insult to injury, these parasites stake their claims ahead of everybody else, they make a louder noise than everybody else, and threaten everybody with their wrath unless they are satisfied.

Who are these people?

Some would immediately think of tribal sheikhs, government officials and military/security as the parasites. This is true. But more importantly, there is a class of people with high certificates (university graduates) who are in the business of being parasites. These are a growing class of lawyers, journalists, big-talkers in qat chews, etc. The 'modern' parasites take on a 'holier than thou' approach, and speak of modernity, civil society, democracy, etc. Do they have a steady job? NO! Individuals in society who have power are safe from these 'modern' blackmailers, because if they annoy them, they will simply hit back at them, in their own way. Yet, there are those who do not have the means to hit back at these parasites. They become victimized. They pay or else. I refer to businessmen, intellectuals, public figures, and even government officials.

Holding at bay the parasites is becoming a headache, especially as the judicial system does not really work. There is no mechanism to hold off the 'modern' bad moutherers. I have seen many instances in which businessmen are cornered, especially in qat chews, by a rascal, who is then bought off for a few thousand riyals. Businessmen now pay their own hoodlums to stand up to those who bad-mouth them in public.

In other countries, especially the advanced ones, there are various mechanisms to control these parasites. In Yemen, the tools and institutions are not yet in place. So, shall we simply succumb and pay off the hoodlums? Even if you decide to pay them off, this is not a one-time business. It becomes a serial process like the re-runs on Yemeni television. Besides, the number of "pay me or else" parasites is growing. Qat sessions give them an effective forum to bad-mouth whoever they want, without fear of any reprisal.

I was in a qat chew the other day, when one of these parasites was at it, again. I could see all the people around were uneasy with his tactics. They despised him. They know he is a cheap parasite. But no one is willing to stand up to him. When he started bad-mouthing a respectable member of society that we all knew, I decided to give him a piece of my mind. Yes, the b---d lost in that qat session. But, what I did was simply invite the wrath of this hoodlum against me in other qat sessions. Unfortunately, others did not stand up to him.

The meek and weak reaction of the public to these parasites encourages them to go on. The lack of viable recourse, except pay offs, makes handling them difficult. This is a burdensome situation.

The war is not just psychological. It has an economic dimension. Investment projects, for example, have a 10-15% allocation to pay off parasites!

**The Publisher**  


### Two American Musicians Planning Visit Yemen

The American musical duo, Billions, is scheduled to visit Yemen during the period from 10 to 16 March to hold a number of musical shows in Sana'a and Taiz. The tour is sponsored by the Cultural and Information Department of the American Embassy in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Yemeni-American Friendship Society.

Two musical shows are set to take place. The first will be in Hadda Hotel in Sana'a on Wednesday 12 March, the second will be at the Cultural Center in Taiz on Thursday 13 March. Billy and Toni form a husband-and-wife team making a three-month tour, visiting 14 countries including Yemen. They present popular American music through historical and cultural narration reflecting social and technological changes.

### Japanese Small-Scale Project Grant

On Sunday, March 9th, Japanese Ambassador Susumu Akiyama and Mr. Abdullah Shabeeb, Director of Baqim Medical Center in Saadah, signed an agreement according to which the Japanese will provide the center a cash grant of US\$ 15,132.

The money will be used to purchase medicine and medical equipment for the center.

### ADI Concludes Coordinators' Training

The Arab Democratic Institute concluded on Saturday, March 8th, a 4-day training workshop. Participating in the workshop were coordinators and supervisors of the electoral process.

The ADI is going to mount a comprehensive monitoring system covering all constituencies of the republic, including Socotra. Mr. Hafedh Fadhle, Chairman of the ADI and the person directly responsible for the elections monitoring program, indicated that all the supervisors and coordinators

### President Saleh Stresses the Role of Independent Monitoring of Elections

President Ali Abdullah Saleh, speaking at the Military Academy on Saturday, March 8th, stressed the need for all Yemenis to join hands to make the elections a success. He specifically referred to the role of independent observers - local and international.

He also indicated that the supervisory committees and sub-committees should be made up of all political parties as called for by the law.

### Al-Multaqa: A New Addition to Civic Education

The Arab Democratic Institute (ADI) issued the first number of the monthly newspaper, Al-Multaqa (means meeting place). The newspaper is totally oriented towards educating the public of elections in particular, and democratic values, in general. Mr. Jamal Al-Adimi, an able young man, leads the team of volunteers working on the paper. There is an interesting insert to the newspaper - caricatures. But these caricatures are oriented to illiterate "readers" as they are self-explanatory. The joke is that Editor Al-Adimi is looking for an "illiterate" advisor to tell him whether the caricatures amke sense or not.

## EU & Yemen to Sign Agreement

The European Union (EU) and the Republic of Yemen are gearing up to sign a new agreement on April 18th in Brussels. The agreement will provide the legal basis for cooperation, and will enable Yemen to receive EU grant aid.

Mr. Robert Houliston, Head of Unit covering the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran, said that the European Union supports Yemeni unity, democratic transformation, and economic reforms. "We would like to make a statement of political support for Yemen. Our willingness to assist Yemen is an embodiment of this support," he said.

Mr. Houliston and the accompanying delegation (Dr. Michael Kohler, Responsible for Yemen and Iraq in Brussels, Mr. Ramon Mestres, Economic Counsellor at the Amman-based Regional EU Delegation, and Rainer Freund, Head of the Yemeni Technical Office), discussed cooperation and the prospective agreement with various Yemeni officials, including the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulghani.

Mr. Houliston disclosed that the two sides discussed the steps to initiate new projects this year to be financed by grants from the EU, as follows:

1. ECU 11 million (about US\$ 13.7 million) to support development of food strategy aimed at increasing self-sufficiency in food.
2. ECU 15 million (about US\$ 18.7 million) for the Social Fund. This will be oriented to alleviate the burdens on the vulnerable members of society, especially in light of the reform steps.



3. ECU 7 million (about US\$ 8.7 million) for a new vocational training program.

In addition to the above projects, the EU is making additional contributions to many other projects such as elections projects and mother and child-care services.

The EU and Yemen have agreed on the broad guidelines of the agreement, which includes certain commitments for democracy, pluralist political system, human rights, market economics, etc.

Further negotiations and refinement of the agreement in preparation for signing it. "This will

hopefully on April 18th. The timing is chosen so that it reflects positively and projects our confidence on the April 27th elections," Houliston said.

The visiting European delegation expressed full satisfaction with the results of the visit. "We have achieved all the objectives that we have set out with," Houliston said.

The European team sounded upbeat and optimistic regarding the future cooperation and prospects. "Yemen has achieved much progress in terms of political transformation and economic reform," he concluded.

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**Dr. Mohammed Rajeh Nejad:**

**“We are going to issue new passports which do not lend themselves to forgery.”**

In the recent past, there have been some difficulties with Yemeni passports. Many (foreign) individuals who should not carry these passports got them. There were problems accounting for some more. The Yemeni Government decided to take action to rectify this matter. After lengthy studies, it was decided to issue new passports that are secure. The computerization will also enable the authorities to keep track of the passports.

Dr. Mohammed Rajeh Nejad, Chairman of the Immigration, Passports and Nationality Authority (IPNA), is the person in charge of this improvement. A native of Sanaa, Dr. Nejad holds a Ph.D. from Egypt.

He worked in several government bodies, including head of the National Security branch at the Presidential Office. For eight and a half years, he occupied the post of dean of the Police College. Later he became PR director for the Interpol in Yemen.

Ismail Al-Ghabyri of Yemen Times talked to him and filed the following report.

**Q: The IPNA intends to issue new passports. What are the main features of these passports, and when will they become available?**

**A:** A passport is an important means of identity for citizens, especially when travelling abroad. It must be restricted to Yemeni citizens only.

In the past, passports were forged or misplaced. This happened especially during the war with the secessionists. Thus, some passports fell in the wrong hands.

The state, represented by the Ministry of Interior and the IPNA, decided to replace the old passports with new ones that cannot be easily forged.

The old passports were designed, printed and issued within a short time in order to come into use soon after unification. The printing lacked some important technical features.

The new passports will have many new features that will defy counterfeiters. There will be many new security signs in addition to a computer printed data page. Also, the photograph will be printed onto the passport by computers, and not stuck by ordinary adhesive.

The data page will not be amenable to any type of ink or chemical. All these features will make the new passport similar in specifications to those used in advanced countries such as Canada, USA, Britain, etc. These passports will be very difficult to forge with existing technology or by today's counterfeiters.

Complete data about the passport holder will be interred into the passport by the computer so as to preclude any possibility of falsification or alteration. The computer lists will also prevent any possibility of issuing of two passports to one person at the same time or even a short while later. Names of applicants for passports will be reviewed by the computer to ascertain their eligibility.

**Q: There are many forged passports circulating around, especially in the hands of foreign nationals. What measures has the IPNA taken to prevent this illegal phenomenon?**

**A:** The old passports were relatively easy to forge due to the type of covering and lack of essential security signs. That is why they are being replaced. As a matter of fact, actual forging of a passport is quite rare. What usually happens is that some people illegally obtain Yemeni IDs, based on which a passport is issued. The main problem stems from that.

We appointed a special staff to interview suspect passport appli-

cants and closely examine their personal IDs and documents. We actually discovered many fraudulent applications which we referred to the IPNA prosecutor's office or to the general prosecutor.

**Q: Yemeni law of Nationality stipulates that after a period of 15 years of legal residence in Yemen, a foreigner has the right to obtain citizenship. There are many people who, despite the passage of this time, could not get Yemeni citizenship. What are the reasons?**

**A:** The law does not exactly say what you said. The minimum period of residence is one of many conditions that an applicant for a Yemeni citizenship must satisfy. Merely spending 15 years in Yemen does not justify the granting of a full citizenship. Even satisfying all the conditions does not automatically guarantee the acquisition of full citizen's rights. The state has the right to accept or refuse such applications according to many factors in addition to the conditions stipulated by law. There is a special committee to examine the viability of citizenship applications.

**Q: What systems have been introduced by the IPNA to improve procedures and performance at Yemen's air, sea and land gateways?**

**A:** We are very much committed to reflect a bright and honorable image at ports, airports and land border checkpoints. A passport officer is the first Yemeni citizen encountered by any foreigner coming to Yemen.

That is why we try our best to make sure that these officers give a good impression, starting with the external appearance and including good moral conduct and gentle treatment.

Technology-wise, we have introduced a new computerized system called the Border Observation System. This will greatly smoothen procedures at airports, and help limit entry procedures to few short minutes. This facility is far superior to what many other airports in the world have. Many citizens and foreigners thankfully attest to this fact.

**Q: What are the major difficulties you face in your work?**

**A:** As a government body, like many others, the IPNA is affected by the general economic conditions in the country. Due to the issuing of the new automated passports and the big financial resources needed, the IPNA tries to strike a balance between available resources and the plans and ambitions for further improvements.



We have achieved a lot so far. The new electronically-read passports and the border observation systems are good examples of that. Cooperation of honest people in the state, starting from the top of the pyramid to its base, is bound to remove many obstacles. We explain to government officials our problems, and they respond with sympathy, understanding and cooperation to help us overcome our difficulties.

**Q: Could you provide some statistics regarding the number of Arabs and foreigners currently residing in Yemen?**

**A:** We make monthly data bulletins and try to pin down the exact

number of foreigners residing in the country whether they are refugees, tourists or working here. This is not an easy job. It requires a lot of effort.

The Minister of Interior has recently issued a decision to establish registration centers in the country. Starting from next month, all aliens will have to register within ten days of entering the country giving accurate information about their purpose of their visits and their exact address in the Republic.

This will not present obstacles to foreigners coming to Yemen. It will merely help us to keep track of foreigners, their whereabouts and work in Yemen. We try our best to attract tourists and inves-

tors, and facilitate their stay in the country. For that purpose, we aim to staff police stations with persons capable of interacting with foreigners of different nationalities with high moral and cultural characteristics. Foreigners will not feel any harassment from, or any sensitivity toward immigration officers.

During 1996, the IPNA and its branches have granted 14,165 residence visas to teachers and other professionals who work in Yemen as well as to the wives and children wishing to join their spouses who work here.

**Q: What is the level of coordination between the IPNA and Yemeni consulates abroad?**

**A:** We have started to channel some of the consular income for the benefit of the IPNA.

There is also good coordination regarding the issuing of passports according to the documents possessed by the applicants. Those who lose their passports are usually provided by a travel document to allow them free passage back home. Those residing abroad can be issued with passports according to their needs and requirements.

If the consulate people are in any doubt as to the eligibility of applicants, they contact us by fax sending the documents submitted by the person concerned. Accordingly, we refer to the files at our office and send back a decision as to the validity, or otherwise, of the application. There will even be more coordination when the new passports come into existence.

**Q: How do the various international companies acquire residence for their employees?**

**A:** They have representatives

who bring over all the necessary documentation. Starting from January 1997, we have provided these representatives with special cards to further facilitate their dealings with the IPNA.

**Q: Some newspapers carried news articles about the deportation of 500 illegal aliens from Yemen. Do you have any comments about that?**

**A:** The Ministry of Interior has deported many people of different nationalities who have entered Yemen illegally. As you know, Yemen's coastlines extend for over 2500 kilometers and there are many neighboring countries who have no functioning government, such as Somalia.

There are also some people who came to Yemen taking advantage of the chaos that prevailed during the war with the secessionists. This has prompted the Ministry of Interior to identify these people and deport them back to their countries or to other countries they wish to go to, after gaining the agreement of those other countries. The actual number may exceed the one you mentioned. Deportation of illegal aliens is still being carried out.

**Q: Are you requiring AIDS tests from foreigners?**

**A:** AIDS is becoming a nightmare, worldwide. Compulsory blood tests are now being required of foreign nationals to gain residence in Yemen.

**Q: Any last comment?**

**A:** I would like to call upon all citizens to cooperate with us by informing on any illegal alien they know of. They must not give residence or shelter to any foreigner without valid papers. We are now in the process of publishing a journal or guide for rules and procedures in this field.

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# ICRC Sponsors Gathering on International Human Rights Law

By: Ahlam Al-Mutawakkil, Yemen Times.

On Monday, March 10th, a 3-day special seminar on international human rights law was concluded. Organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Yemeni Red Crescent, the gathering discussed various aspects of the law, to which Yemen had acceded.

Mr. Daniel Kavoli, Yemen Representative of the ICRC, and Dr. Amir Al-Zamali, Regional Representative of the ICRC, Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Ghanim, Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, and Dr. Abdullah Al-Khamisi, Secretary-General of the Yemeni Red Crescent Society, opened the seminar.

The presentations and discussions focussed on the importance of full application of the law and the human role in Red Cross/Crescent activities.

A paper on the importance of avoiding misuse of the Red Cross Badge was presented by Dr. Abdullah Al-Khamisi. The paper focused on the necessity of bringing legal charges against whoever abuses the privileges granted by the Red Cross.

The badge and the name of the Red Cross are of great importance as dictated by the Geneva accords. Therefore, each country should issue its internal legislation to organize the methods of using them properly.

In Yemen, the carrier of the Red-Cross badge protected based on international laws and conventions. Thus, no one has the right to carry the badge and use it for any purposes other than those for which it is intended. The Ministry of Legal Affairs intro-

duced a draft project concerning the establishment of a national committee on this matter.

Another issue discussed was to review Yemeni legislation as related to international law, to identify shortcomings, and to determine whether they are in harmony with international laws. "We welcome any note to the Ministry of Legal Affairs whenever there is an item which needs to be amended or better understood," the Minister said.

A third topic of discussion was the need to spreading and generalization of better understanding of the human rights law. "In this case, there are no complications. The concepts and tenets of the law need to be disseminated through the available media," a local human rights activist indicated. She also presented the idea of incorporating these concepts in the school curricula.

The purpose behind all of this is to make people aware of the law and what human rights mean.

The deputy minister for Legal Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Ali Al-Fusseyil, disclosed to Yemen Times that the seminar was the outcome of consultations between our ministry, the ICRC and the Yemeni Red Crescent. The aim of the seminar is to study the ways and means to promote the international human rights law. "The Geneva conference called for the formation of national committees whose task is to follow-up implementation"

Dr. Abdullah Al-Khamisi talked about the role of national Red Cross/Crescent societies. "We have a specific task, which is to give essential relief as needed in times of stress. The other task is to spread the better understanding of the laws."

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This the Yemeni Red Crescent Society has been trying to do over the past two years through its publication 'Alethar'. "The newspaper, which has now been transformed into a magazine, has been very successful," he added. Additional seminars are being planned on this subject in the future as a collaborative effort between local and international NGOs.

## President Saleh Orders Funding of Publishing Chinese Author's Book



President Ali Abdullah Saleh, upon learning that the Chinese medical doctor (eye specialist) Li Jun was stuck as he was unable to finance the publishing of a major book he had researched over the last two years.

"I have been working in Yemen for two and a half years. I have compiled a lot of information of the eye diseases that are prevalent in Yemen. I have documented their causes, and studied their treatment. All this information is now available in a documentary which is a sort of atlas for Yemeni eye diseases," he explained.

The thick book is full of pictures which offer tales of pain and enormous human loss. "A persons's eye sight is one of the most precious gifts. So attending to this need is of extreme priority," he added.

But publishing a huge book\*and in full colors is an expensive undertaking. This is especially the case when the immediate market is not large.

The people who would purchase the book would be the medical students at the Colleges of Medicine at Sanaa and Aden Universities, and possibly the few eye doctors in the country. "We are talking about a total of some 200-250 books a year," he said. This is not a viable enterprise, but the work is vital.

Enters the stage President Ali Abdullah Saleh, upon hearing about the project. He gets the manuscript to look at, and immediately orders a donation of US\$ 15,000 to Dr. Li Jun, who has put the whole amount towards the publication of the book.

"I am very grateful to the President for his generous gesture. I think the book will be ready within one month. Numerous copies will be donated to students and researchers in the Medical Colleges and hospitals in the country, as well as to my Yemeni colleagues," he said.

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 عن امراض العين بظلال الستر في جون

علي محمد  
 رئيس الجمهورية

الرقم (٢٠٧)  
 التاريخ: ١٧/٣/٩٧

Although no hard statistics are available, the number of eye patients in Yemen is very large. In addition, many of these patients actually travel abroad for treatment, which drains the hard currency earnings of the country. "Many of these problems can be addressed locally with some improvement in the facilities," he said.

Actually, Dr. Li Jun has already started training of local staff to perform various eye operations. "Only a little bit more technical training is required before these young men and women can do it on their own," said the Aden-based doctor.

By: Anwar Al-Sayyadi, Yemen Times.

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**Feverish Efforts to Raise the Ante on Women:**

# Focal Point: Women

By: Ms. Ibtisam Qudar, Local Editor, Aden Office,  
Ms. Ahlam Al-Mutawakkil, Social Editor, Sanaa Office,  
and Hassan Al-Haifi, Columnist, Yemen Times.

Last week witnessed a flurry of events, which together amounted to a visible campaign to raise public awareness on women. Three Yemen Times journalists reported from three different events.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: March 8th

The 8th of March, International Women's Day, was celebrated at the Center for Applied Research and Women's Studies. The ceremony was conducted in cooperation with the UN Information Center and the International Cultural Circle. A number of leading Yemeni figures of literature attended the occasion. Yemen's great poet, Abdullah Al-Baradooni gave a talk about Ghazala Al-Maqdisha who was renowned for her piety and lofty humanitarian sense. A speech on behalf of the UN Secretary-General was delivered by Ms. Amal Al-Basha the coordinator of UN Women's Programs in Yemen.

Yemen continue to lag behind. "Yemeni women are known for their resilience, strength and unlimited contribution. They are worthy of respect. I use this occasion to pay tribute to all women who go out to work in all fields of life. "Yemeni women should stand together in the upcoming parliamentary elections so as to enable more women to succeed in the elections. The principle of quota should be applied in the case of women so as to ensure a minimum number of female representatives in the house."

**2. Ms. Bilquis Alwan, a journalist and program editor at Sana'a Radio.**

**3. Ms. Huda Ablan, a poetess.**



"Yemeni women need to activate their roles in different aspects of life and society. This activation should be accompanied by true social belief in the ability of women. The steps already taken by Yemeni women so far are encouraging, but are in need of further substantive presence. "The International Women's Day serves as a reminder to people on the importance of the role of women in society."

**4. Ms. Arwa Muhsin Hajar, a social worker.**



"Women represent half of society, it is often said. When we ask for a more active role for women, we are not waging a war against men. Both men and women must participate together in extensive development. Both need to be mobilized. "Work helps women build their characters and personalities. Women represent a huge latent work force. By going to work, women can realize their independence and self worth. There are, of course, limits, given the stage of our current evolution."

## The British Council Momentum



The Yemeni woman is the focus of attention, these days. The British Council, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, the World Bank and Care International financed a series of workshops in various parts of the country, notably in Hodeida, Aden, Sanaa and Mukalla.

The Hodeida Workshop was held during 24-25 February. It was subsequently followed by the Sanaa gathering during 3-4 March, followed last week by the Aden meeting (6-8 March). "The aim of the workshops is to explore the effects of the present economic conditions in the country and the impact of the economic reforms on Yemeni women," according to Banilia Ajinah, of the British Council, who was instrumental in co-organizing the meetings.

The workshops will be topped off by two conferences to be held on the 23rd and 25 of March 1997 in Aden and Sanaa, respectively. "The conferences will evaluate the results of the workshops and explore follow up possibilities for the development of a bigger project or program, to be financed by the British Overseas Development Association (ODA)," Ms. Katherine Potter of the British Council, who also did a lot of the organization.

Care International Director in Yemen, Wendy Lee, Inltaq Al-Mutawakkil and Dr. Raoufah Hassan who hail from the Empirical Research and Womens Study Unit at Sanaa University chaired the gatherings. Among the key women actively participating include the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Ms Amatal-Aleem Assussuwa, in addition to other senior women officials of other ministries, NGOs and higher academic institutions. Speakers from the World Bank, the UK and Holland participated in the sessions. They brought to the forums the experiences of other countries, in addition to IMF/WB policies on the issue.

Among other relevant areas covered by the workshops include how women can influ-

ence policy makers in order to protect women who might become vulnerable to the negative impact which the Structural Adjustment Policies (the IMF/World Bank label for the Economic Reforms) could give rise to.

Ms. Potter, visibly jubilant with the response, told the Yemen Times that the turnout in the very first session was 15% above the list of anticipated attendance. She also pointed out that the workshops had their beginnings in March 1996, when the British Council sponsored preliminary workshops to prepare for the present multi-city events.

Upon hearing of the workshops, a few of the wise-guys from the other sex could not hold back saying: "Never mind the impact of the reforms on women. How about discussing the impact of the SAPs on the poor guys like us -- the breadwinners -- who are now struggling just to gather what ever crumbs can be found to feed their families?" Well, there is a thought!



A number poems were delivered by Yemeni poetesses exalting the role of women in society. Excerpts below from four outstanding female activists.

**1. Ms. Fathia Al-Haithami of the Ministry of Industry.**



"The 8th of March offers us a moment to stop and take stock of what was achieved for women in society. In this era which is an international female epic, we in

"The active mobilization and participation of women cannot be achieved without a strong governmental support. The following steps should be taken:  
\* A comprehensive approach to enable women play a more active part in society.  
\* Include women-specific issues in educational curricula.  
\* A more positive role must be played by the media.  
\* Granting women their full rights in education, health and employment.  
The major obstacles that face women are:  
\* The generally backward social culture and traditions that belittle the status of women. This attitude is promoted prevalent even in our popular folk stories.  
\* Lack of credibility in advancing women's role. In most cases, these are limited to political slogans and demagoguery which becomes intensive during election seasons."

## The Aden Connection



Under the auspices of the British Council and the World Bank, a seminar on the role of women in economic reform was held at the Aden Hospital during 6-8 March. The participants - 20 women representing various professions - discussed the differences in gender roles within society. Discussion also touched on poverty, labor division between the sexes, and the effects of economic reform on women. Scientific research has shown that the roles played by men and women vary from one society to another. In some societies, women have to work in fishing, while the husbands do the house chores. Traditional women's activities such as knitting and embroidery in one society are done by men in another. Women in Aden are more active and visible role in society. The trick is how to retain that role, and improve on it. "It would be a great contribution if Aden is used as a model to follow, rather than trying to tame in the Aden women to fit the more conservative national model."

## أجمل التهاني



نزف أجمل التهاني والتبريكات للشاب  
زيد عبدالله الديلمي  
بمناسبة الخطوبة وقرب الزفاف  
ومليون مباروك عليك يا زيد  
المهنؤون:  
علي احمد المنقذي ، مروان الحيمي ،  
المعتصم بن عباس الديلمي ، هاشم بن يحيى  
الديلمي ، شعيب يحيى الديلمي ، نبيل العيني  
زكريا عبدالله عباد ، فاد عبدالرحمن المروني  
وجميع الأهل والأصدقاء

# Common Sense

By: Hassan Al-Haifi

## Corruption and Embezzlement: The Antithesis of Progress and Development

If we look at the world today, as a whole, and try to pin down why certain countries are where they are, in terms of the level of development these countries have reached, we are bound to reach certain conclusions that could be significant in laying down the road that Yemen (and many other developing countries) should proceed on to arrive to the ultimate aspirations of every patriotic citizen in the country. One important conclusion that would be reached is that wherever corruption is prevalent, there would obviously chronic misappropriation of resources and a lack of adherence to the minimal values associated with the management of the country's affairs.

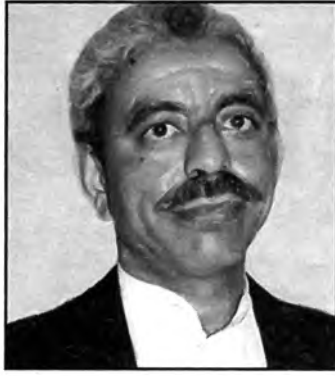
Not only that, but in such societies any efforts to instill the proper attitudes towards responsibility and the dispensation of authority are bound to meet stiff resistance of those who hold the reins of power in the country in question. In fact these rulers with lawlessness and disturbance of the peace and stability, which they have themselves guardians of! If the efforts persist, even after such association has been made, then treason is charged against the initiators of such efforts and any of their supporters.

If we look at the Republic of Yemen, we are convinced that for all their efforts and overall kindness, the Yemeni people really should deserve to be in more prosperous and more

advanced conditions. The resources are there; the cultural inclinations are there; the opportunities are there (and have come and gone on several occasions); and more important, the will and desire could be seen in the faces of people from every part of the country. What then, seems to be the obstacle that stands in the way of realizing real progress? Why are we chronically beset with poor economic performance?

There is no doubt that Yemen's self imposed isolation and unstable political situation, over many centuries, have contributed to the country's inability to set the proper systems in place that will assure the availability up-to-date political, social and economic standards that activate nations towards political stability, economic growth and productivity and widespread prosperity. But how long should misfortunes of our ancestors be an excuse for all the improprieties that we see happening in our times?

The 26th of September 1962/14 October 1963 Revolutions were launched so that the maladies of the past shall be alleviated and do away with all the obstacles that truly kept Yemen oblivious to human progress in so many fields. In retrospect, it is easy to see that there definitely have been many strides achieved towards infrastructure development and at least some token recognition of democratic values and ideas.



But, objectively speaking, is not there enough evidence to testify to the fact that, in fact, we should in far better conditions and more systematic adherence to real democratic practice gauged relatively with the performance of those who have achieved noticeable progress in government and the relationship between the ruling authorities and the public at large?

Two of the biggest maladies that are in urgent need of treatment--and the sooner the better--as far as government and the relationship between the authority in charge and the public are corruption and open embezzlement. For sure, these diseases of the times are not new.

They have their roots in earlier times and due to the adoption of a complex bureaucratic machinery (with strong influences from the Egyptian administrative system. On another note, while the corruption and embezzlement that the Yemeni people have been subjected to by those in the spheres of power and influence, that has evolved over the years since the mentioned revolutions, has taken on monstrous proportions that stand in the way of overcoming some of the economic and social ills we face. This would not predicate that these maladies are not also, in fact, major causes for these ills as well! Moreover, as we proceed towards establishing

democratic institutions and a pluralistic political system, can we allow these maladies to exist, without the slightest hint of any effort to deal with the principals behind such abominable social traits and to dislodge such from the minds of those who opt for responsible positions in government or social standing (tribal, Non-government-organizations, etc.). For centuries, the absence of a strong central government with a clear public mandate to run the country's affairs has encouraged the widespread presence of a large informal social structure based on tribal or territorial declinations. Many of those in position of authority in the social structure found means of enhancing their wealth and influence in these positions. In fact the positions, that were originally established to make up for the absence of an effective central authority, eventually themselves became obstacles against the establishment of any effective centralized authority, as the history of Yemen will clearly reveal to the researcher.

In fact, any effort to instill any effective central authority was used by these social dignitaries to further their own wealth and prestige by selling their loyalty to the aspiring central power wielders competing for full authority of the country's affairs. Quite a few of them saw this as a good opportunity to offer their loyalties to the highest bidder, from those competing for the top authority of the land.

As these social dignitaries grow in wealth and strength, not only did they embezzle from those at the top, but they also found ways to force those within their area of authority to pay for various 'services' that these informal leaders had presumably replaced the central authority in meting out.

Eventually they also started exacting levies as a sort of tribal or clan fund to fiancee wars or pay blood money or any other problem faced by the tribe, in total or with some of the elements of the tribe. In theory it was a sort of cooperative fund, but the 'managers' of this fund found no trouble to misappropriate the proceeds that were collected for this fund, nor did they face any accountability as to how the 'fund' was to be utilized.

In any case, the point to be raised is that this informal social structure became an inherited local throne, where particular families maintained the chieftom or sheikdom of the tribe from generation to generation. This informal structure is operating and the informal helmsmen continue to exert fairly effective authorities over their fellow tribesmen.

Moreover these social dignitaries have managed to get the government to allot them funds from the government budget, presumably in the form of military service

payments and other allocations that are not subject to any regulation or scrutiny as to how these allocations are paid or spent. The idea of these payments was to presumably maintain the loyalty of the tribes. This form of gratuity to the tribal leaders was considered a humane form of maintaining control over the tribes (prior to the revolution, the Imam's government used to hold children of the tribal chiefs as hostages). Many people actually do not object to this kind of method of getting the tribes under control, but there are some who would not hesitate in suggesting that the tribal chiefs should be made to help bring their areas under the authority of the law. Moreover, the authority of these chiefs should not be allowed to exceed or circumvent the authority of the law.

In fact, these same people would say that this informal structure of leadership should be really a compliment to the institution of law and order. But, for reasons that remain unclear, the government has been unable to exact this kind of return from these informal leaders. Not only that, but these unofficial 'officials' regard their positions, and the government's recognition of these positions as giving them the excessive authority which they wield, even if beyond the limitations of law.

This is one of the most sensitive issues facing the government today: how to bring a balance between long established informal structures and the authority of law and order into the mainstream of Yemeni life? For sure, sacrifices have to be made, especially by those who have unfairly taken advantage of positions their constituents are willing to give them in good faith, that seems to be flowing in one direction only.

In some remote areas of the country these informal leaders are, in fact, the law! Thus, when disputes arise in their areas they start to exact payments from the disputing constituents involved, promising to bring a settlement to the matter immediately. Of course this does not happen. On the contrary the informal leaders may drag the dispute as long as they can continue to obtain payments from the disputants. In some cases the government, may in fact be asked to step in to 'help' settle the dispute, this provides an opportunity for the informal leaders to embezzle from the government as compensation for the efforts they exerted in trying to solve the dispute or for not letting the dispute get out of hand.

One can go on and on in this highly complex issue, which the interest of the country would dictate that it be solved as soon as possible, especially as the problems that arise from this double exertion of authority on the Yemeni citizens certainly hinders any chances for progress.

While the above represents a major area of corruption and embezzlement that must be dealt with, one is bound to also suggest that, even before dealing with the above issue, it would be more appropriate for the government to clean up the corruption and embezzlement that comes from the official authorities, who have wantonly abused their positions and rendered government activity tied to the amount of funds that can be embezzled illicitly, but almost openly, in order for the activity to be successfully carried out. This is important in gaining credibility for the government among the population, and accordingly obtain strong support for any efforts to limit the scope of authority which informal leaders may have assumed.

There are other forms of embezzlement that also may need standing up to. These include journalists, some of whom have become notorious for obtaining illicit payments from business and even some government authorities by using newsprint as a form of blackmail to get merchants and government officials to pay up if they do not want to be smeared in the next issue of the newspaper for which these journalists work for. Sometimes, some of the social organizations have also become sources of extortion and embezzlement as the sponsors find ways to take advantage of their possessions in these societies to exact payment in order to deviate from the purpose for which these societies or organizations were originally set up for.

One can go on describing several forms of embezzlement, bribery and extortion that have become the rule rather than exceptions in our political social framework. But it is more important to take note of the fact that the Yemeni people really deserve a better break, if they can ever hope to continue living with the aspirations that have diminished as the system failed to take the proper actions that can remedy this most serious problem.

No one expects that the solutions can easily be carried out, but letting things just carry on without any remedial action will never lead to further progress for Yemen. There is no question that corruption and embezzlement are the antithesis of development and prosperity for the overwhelming majority of the population. One only has to look at the least developed countries in the world to reach the same conclusion.

They all have corruption and embezzlement as common traits in their societies, the latter of which seems helpless in alleviating. But there is still a strong belief that in Yemen, things could be much different, if those at the top start to realize that we are all in this boat together and the pie is enough for all to share in, if we start giving our conscience a stronger say in what we do.

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من الأهل والأصدقاء.

هذا وسنحتفل جميعا بزفافه الميمون بعد  
عيد الأضحى المبارك إن شاء الله تعالى.

فتهانينا لابن عجلان، والعقبى لدى العزاب

المهنؤون: د/ عبدالعزيز السقاف،  
حسين العواضي،  
وجميع العاملين في «يمن تايمز»

**Kalicki Urges Authorities to Integrate Yemeni Economy More with the World**

# The US Resumes OPIC Cover for Yemen

Dr. Jan Kalicki, Counselor to the US Department of Commerce, concluded a two-day visit to Sanaa last week. The purpose is threefold:

1. To continue support for Yemen's reform efforts (through the various international bodies).
2. To urge the authorities to accede to the various international agreements and conventions related to investment guarantees and trade relations.
3. To urge the authorities to take serious steps towards fair and speedy resolution measures of intellectual rights conflicts.

Kalicki met with several senior government officials, including the Prime Minister. He also talked to the high echelons of US companies working in Yemen, leading Yemeni businessmen, and the local media. In all those meetings, he repeated his three-thronged message.

The specific steps he urged the Yemeni authorities to take were:

1. Consider joining the World Trade Organization. Yemen remains the only country in the Arabian Peninsula which has not joined the WTO. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have already joined, while Oman and Saudi Arabia have applied for membership. By joining the WTO, Yemen will express commitment to the international trading system.
2. Consider accession to the Washington and New York Conventions on international arbitration. Business disputes in Yemen have not been resolved to the satisfaction of foreign partners.

Thus, investors worry about losing their rights in a local legal system that is neither clean nor efficient.

By acceding to the Washington and New York Conventions, Yemen would be protecting the rights of foreign investors in their disputes with local partners.

3. Consider ratification of the Paris and Bern Conventions on intellectual property rights. Yemeni manufacturers have, in the past freely replicated the trade marks of international companies. Recourse to the local law has not achieved much.

Two cases in point are the 'fine' napkins/tissues and the 'Tide' detergents - copied without impunity by local manufacturers with small changes.

While those are the steps Dr. Kalicki urged the Yemeni side to take, he failed to say what the American side is doing to help improve business relations. Last year, Yemen's imports from the US were over US\$ 239 million, while the US imported a meager US\$ 11 million from Yemen. He didn't say what is being done to help this lopsided trade relationship.

American investment is visible, but almost all of it is limited to the oil and gas sector. Even here, American investment is not as forthcoming as it could be. Asked by the Yemen Times, when the American Government will resume the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) cover to encourage American investments in Yemen, the US official announced that it has been done. "We have resumed the OPIC cover," he said.



That is a major step that will entice more American investments in Yemen.

Asked how and when the Export/Import (EXIM) Bank facility can be extended to encourage more US-Yemeni trade, Dr. Kalicki said that such decisions are made by the board of directors of the EXIM Bank. He did indicate, however, that the recent improvements in the performance of the Yemeni economy will help make such a decision easier. He then added that the Trade and Development Agency of the US government is active in Yemen. "The TDA has been financing feasibility studies, one of which has recently resulted in a contract

for the Sanaa Emergency Electricity project in Dhahban," he pointed out.

The London-born Kalicki, has a PhD from the London School of Economics and had lectured in various universities. He had also served in executive capacity in a number of financial institutions (Lehman Brothers) and think-tank institutions (Center for Foreign Policy Development). He described his short visit to Sanaa, coming almost a year after his last one, as very successful. His main impression is that the country has come a long way in addressing its economic ills. "I must say that Yemen has made in the year since my last visit."

**Your Guide to Doing Business in Yemen**

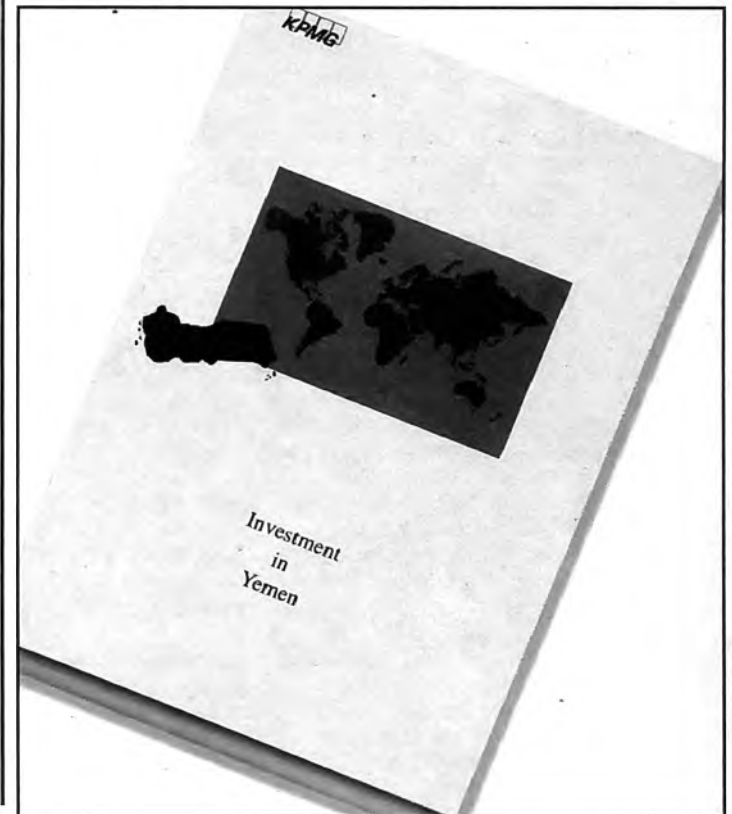
## KPMG YEMEN PUBLISHES 'INVESTMENT IN YEMEN'

KPMG Yemen, an international firm which is a member of the world's largest auditing and consulting firm, Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler, recently published "Investment in Yemen" - a practical guide to doing business in Yemen. The small book, 83 pages, is an extremely helpful and user-friendly publication for prospective local and foreign investors.

The booklet gives comprehensive and up-to-date (as of September 30, 1996) information that gives interested parties a quick data base to understand local conditions and appreciate Yemen. A short historic summary and a cultural overview is given in the beginning of the book. Then the business climate - starting with business ventures, labor and social security laws and taxation laws - is detailed. Browsing the publication, the reader, or prospective investor, will have a working knowledge.

Yemen Times would like to commend KPMG Yemen, locally known as Mejanni, Hazem Hassan & Co., for their laudable effort in coming up with such an informative, concise and practical guide.

Moreover, the Government should encourage the preparation and issuance of similar guides or brochures to assist prospective investors, especially the foreign ones, in looking at, knowing and appreciating the Yemen business market. Perhaps it is also an opportune time to revisit and revise, if necessary, our existing economic laws and fine-tune them to match the present realities in order to attract as many investors to the country as possible.



## New Tax Codes in Yemen

As part of the fiscal reforms, the Republic of Yemen is introducing new tax codes. These are intended to achieve better collection, according to informed sources.

In collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Yemen will introduce numbers to replace the various company names for tax evaluation and collection purposes. These computerized numbers or codes will be known to only a few people, thus reducing enticement to corruption or intimidation.

"In the past, as the tax clerk works on a file, he would often link up with the tax payer. Arrangements are then made according to which a hefty tax waiver/reduction is introduced in return for direct remuneration to the pocket of the tax clerk," explained one of the senior officials. "There is also another side to this. Sometimes when clerks work

on the file of an imposing person (such as a tribal sheikh turned businessman or military officer turned investor), the clerk is intimidated into "seeing light" when assessing the tax dues," he added.

At other times, the mid-level and senior officials disagree with the assessments of the junior clerks, depending on the name of the tax payer. "Friends get to pay less. Foes pay more."

In the new system, the tax clerk will only deal with a number. Once the data is plugged in, the process proceeds in an uninterrupted fashion, until the official notification is made. At that stage, little change can take place.

An IMF expert has just concluded a one-month briefing and training to the tax authorities on the new system. Additional briefings and training courses are envisaged in the near future.

## TAJ SHEBA HOTEL: Reading Market Indicators

Taj Sheba Hotel in Sana'a, in its persistent drive to read the demand requirements and work to satisfy them, carried out an extensive survey with executives in the market. According to Sales Manager Shankar, the response exceeded all expectations and the analysis of the feedback is already in the pipeline. "What the customers told us is now being transformed into services and facilities for our guests," he said.

The client survey has provided the hotel with invaluable information on which it is now basing its constant search for better ways of service enhancement, for which the hotel is ever popular. "Only through client feedback and development of better services will we ensure that the Taj Sheba continues its leadership of the Best Address in the city of Sana'a," he added. The survey included 27 of the most recurrent customers of the hotel.



The hotel management, under the able and dynamic leadership of Vijay Albuquerque, continues to mount plans and efforts in a drive to keep the hotel at the top of customer choice in lodging in Sanaa.

"I want to use this opportunity to thank all those executives who spared time for the 'Sales Blitz' survey. I want to assure all that we will spare no efforts to meet their needs and full satisfaction," he said.

**تعزية**

نعزي الأخ امير المعلمي لوفاة المغفور لها جدته. تغمدها الله بواسع رحمته والهم أهلها الصبر والسلوان.

لاحول ولا قوة إلا بالله، وإنا إليه راجعون  
الأسيفون

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فضل فخره، عبدالناصر البرطي، يحيى  
البابلي، محمد الغفاري، يوسف الشريف،  
وكافة الأصدقاء



**تهنئة**

بباقات الورد والياسمين نهنئ  
الأخ الخلق  
محمد الراعي بمناسبة الخطوبة  
وعقبال الفرحة الكبرى

**المهنؤون:**

مطهر اسماعيل عبدالرحمن  
مسعد الجنيدي، ماهر بركات،  
وكافة الأصدقاء والزلاء

## Halqa Calls on Government to Start Museum of Modern Art:

# Yemeni Artlife Blossoms

### Halaqa Leads the Way in Nurturing Arts:

The Halaqa, Arabic word meaning "the circle", is a successful effort at nurturing artlife and artists in Yemen. It is an example of what a very small number of people can do, with so little money, but with so much dedication. It is the result of a positive interaction between Yemen and International Resident artists, supported by Claire Goethals and Jacques Veerman.

The objectives of the Halaqa include:

- To promote culture in its broadest sense.
- To promote interaction of different cultures.
- To support and encourage talented persons and to create a suitable environment for developing their skills and abilities.
- To integrate the different arts and to develop handicraft and design.
- To encourage a critical look on culture and to strengthen cultural freedom.
- To create connections with international cultural organizations, clubs and artists.

Thus, the Halaqa has quickly become the breeding and nurturing ground for new talent, especially among aspiring Yemenis. That is why it offers many workshops and training/teaching sessions.

Yet, there are also additional objectives. "We hope to preserve folk art and traditional Yemeni crafts and skills. There is a rich culture and artwork out there. That is why we try to document it, integrate it, modernize it, and make it economically viable," added Claire.

During its first year of existence, the Halaqa has organized many activities encompassing various forms of arts - drawings, paintings, graphics, designs, ceramics, pottery, poetry, music, dancing, etc. It has taken its work to distant parts of the country ranging from Hadramaut to Aden, and of course to Sanaa.

There is one paramount objective that the Halaqa has now set for itself - to seek the establishment of a museum for modern art. "I think there is a lot of material out there. This has to be brought together under one roof and made available to visitors. I think it is high time the Yemeni authorities considered the establishment of a museum that will house all these products," Veerman said.

How does the Halaqa finance itself?

It is done mainly through contributions and donations. And for those who can spare some money, this Non-Governmental, Non-Profit, Voluntary organization is worth considering. It also earns some money from the training classes, exhibitions, etc.

Who runs the show?

There is a growing circle of art-lovers who are giving their time and effort to enable the smooth functioning of the activities. Many local and international persons are involved, although the Halaqa has assigned contact persons. It is open for everybody who is interested or active in culture and wants to subscribe to the goals of the organization. Jacques Veerman serves as its Secretary-General, donating his time free of charge.

Where is it?

The head office of the Halaqa is located at 26 Baghdad Street. That is where most of the activities take place, although some activities also take place in other parts of the country.

How to get in touch?

Write to P. O. Box No. 481, Sanaa, Yemen, or call (01) 207-516.



### Belgian Sculptor Brings New Meaning to Stone Chiselling:

## Engravings on Stone

Stone shapes are taboo in Arabo-Islamic culture. This prohibition dates back to the early Islamic years. Prophet Mohammed (P), worried that his people - not being able to see the symbolism - worshipped the stone idols. So he shunned them.

The last few days saw the coming of a new form of stone-cutting in Yemen. A Belgian sculptor, Patrick Crombe, invited by the Yemeni International Cultural Circle, The Halaqa, is showing Yemeni artists and sculpture lovers how to handle stones.

"There are two important advantages that you have in Yemen. First, your country has beautiful stones of various strength and in many colors. Second, stone-chiselling is visibly a highly-developed art in this country, as the various stone shapes and finish prove, although these are mostly used in construction," he said.

Yes, he went out to rub shoulder with the stone chislers - the famous muwagisen. He inspected their tools, looked over their stones, and checked out their work.

Patrick is, by now, a world name in this art. He has exhibited his work in galleries in Belgium, France, Italy, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands and other places.

Mr. Crombe represents a modern school. He 'refuses' to fit in all the past classifications of schools. His approach depends on the principle of full freedom. It is the "Taille Directe", which means working without "maquette" -

direct from his brain to the chisel.

All his works tilt to employing of stones with new formation, shape and finish. He seeks to create new symbols, signs, abstracts. That is why he fell in love with Yemen. "The stones in Yemen and possibilities are enormous."

He launches boldly with a new vision and geometric measures to engrave 'pictures' and 'meanings' on his stones. Since he uses different kinds of chisels, he obtains different textures on the surface of the same stone, which offer beautiful contrasts. Thus, the same stone would have a highly refined finish on one side, a rough surface on another, and an unworked part on a third side. His works reflect the internal building of the world that surrounds us.



"When you see him busy at work, you can already realize how much involved with his stones he is," explained Ms. Claire Goethals, his host in Yemen. Claire, and her

husband, Jacques Veerman, are the brain and force behind the Halaqa.

Already, the workshop of Crombe has attracted several Yemeni artists, who have shown they have a knack for the art. Hakim Al-Akil, Amin Nashir, Kamal Al-Maqramy, Yassin Ghaleb, Khaled Al-Dush, Rashad Salem and others have already made a go at it. Their works is already the first crop in Yemeni sculpture. Anna Al-Nusairi, herself an artist, explains the approach and effort in this way:

"The point of focus is the geometric form and style of expression in relation to a philosophic vision and concept being conveyed. Such a geometric form is in itself a dialogue - with oneself, one's ideas, and with others. The dialogue is presented in symbols and signs contained in the art.

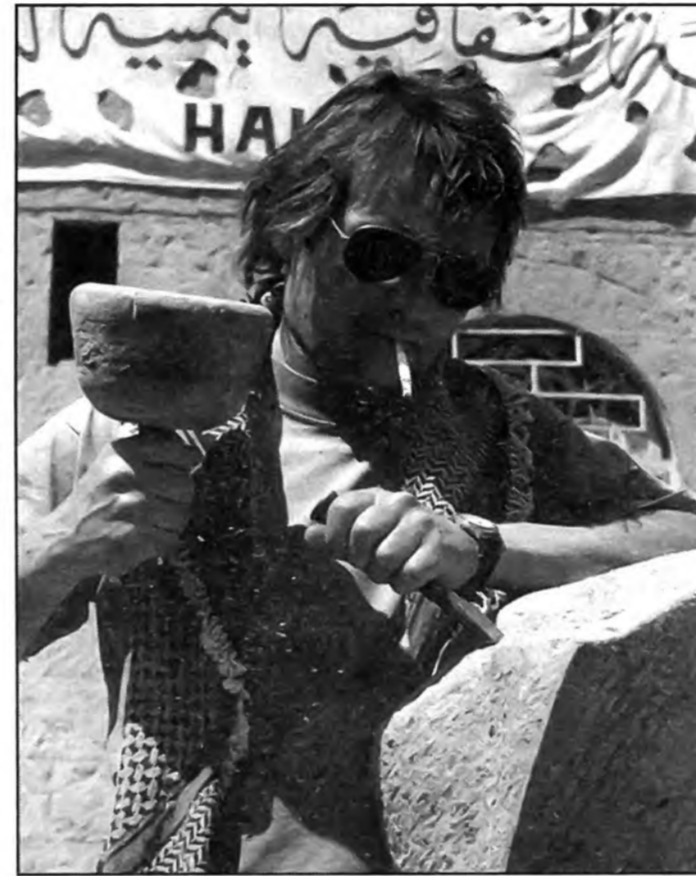
"This is an attempt to find a harmony between the internal feelings of the artist and the tangible material he/she produces."

In other words, there is a combination of reality and appearance. Thus, what we see must explain what we feel.

In this light, most of Patrick's works is formed of geometric blocks which are inter-related yet apart. Some of them occupy a horizontal vacuum while others extend towards the open space. His stony form represents an experience, a creation and a harmony.

All in all, it represents the energy of the artist to create a creature with all the physiological aspects of a living creature.

You feel there is a dialogue between the artistic work and



the spectators. The stone engravings, with all their differences in size, shape and surface finish, offer a symphony. Some of the parts move, some rotate and some tend to be still, just like a living thing.

The function of art has changed a lot. Today, there is more interaction with the environment. Therefore, the artist must create a space, or rather a vacuum, in order to make room. The form he/she creates takes up that vacuum. At the end of the work, the sculpture, painting, drawing - or whatever art-form - has its own space in your garden, on your wall, or exhibition hall. Patrick has liberated himself from all the traditional restric-

tions. There is a free interaction with the language of today asking the artist to indulge in the real life with all its details. In his work, he first contemplates the stone. Then, he changes its shape, form and appearance to harmonize it with the vision in his mind. Then both the stone and vision must fit well with the surrounding reality. Fitting does not mean agreeing, but it means positive interaction. It is in this respect that some critics say, 'He re-builds the stone into new form and with new vision.'

Based on: Conversation with: Anna Al-Nusairi.

### Aden Hosts Art Exhibition

The Tools of Fishermen



Aden witnessed the inauguration of the first artistic/cultural and creative activities which was organized by the International-Yemeni Cultural Circle - the Halaqa. The activities of the Exhibition will extend up to 4 days.

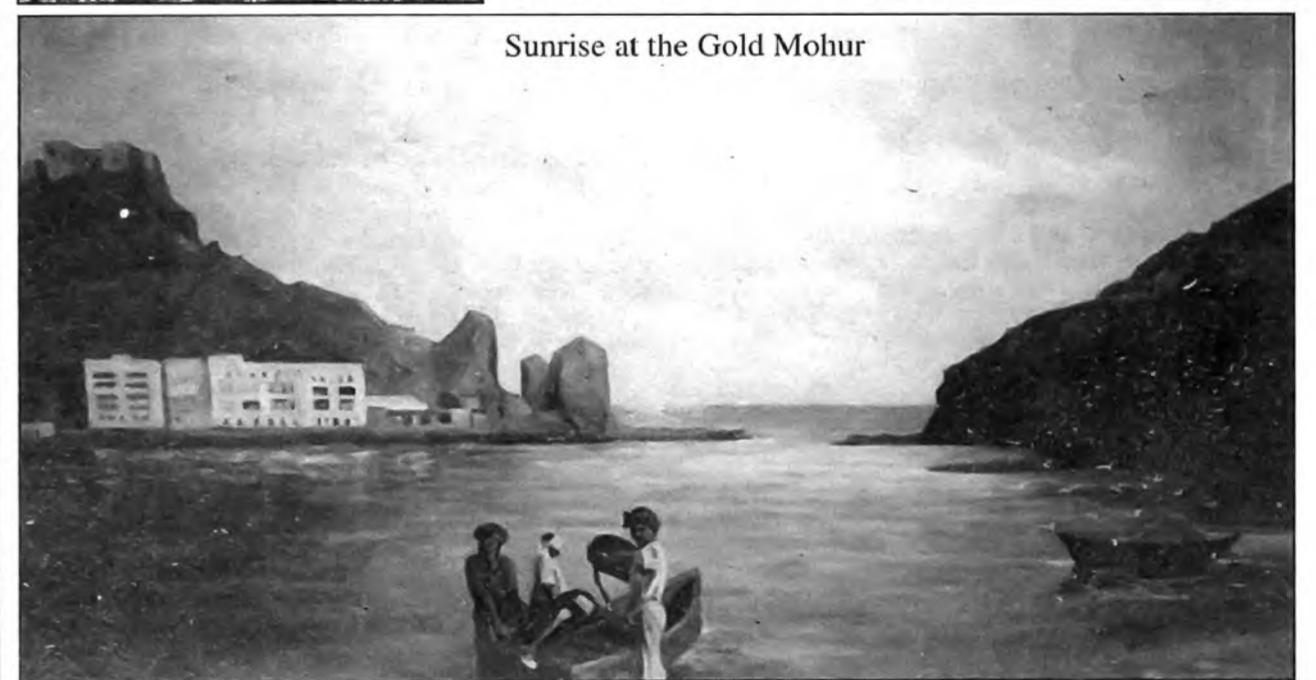
The inauguration ceremony was attended by the assistant deputy minister in Aden, Mr. Faisal Al-Soufi, the General Manager of Culture in Aden, a number of diplomats and people interested in artistic work.

35 Yemeni artists participated in the exhibition displaying 200 products of artwork, graphics, sculptures, ceramics, gypsum and colorful paintings.

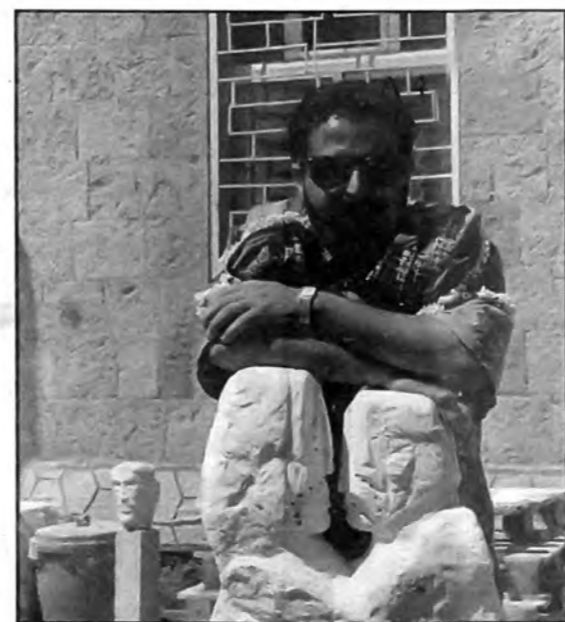
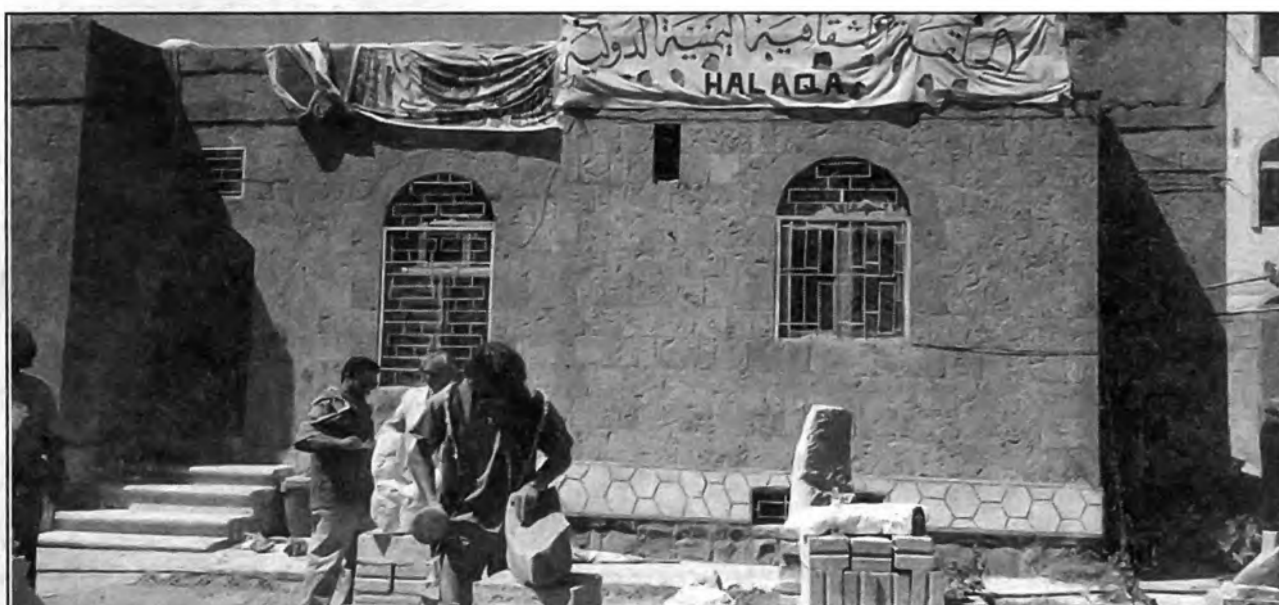
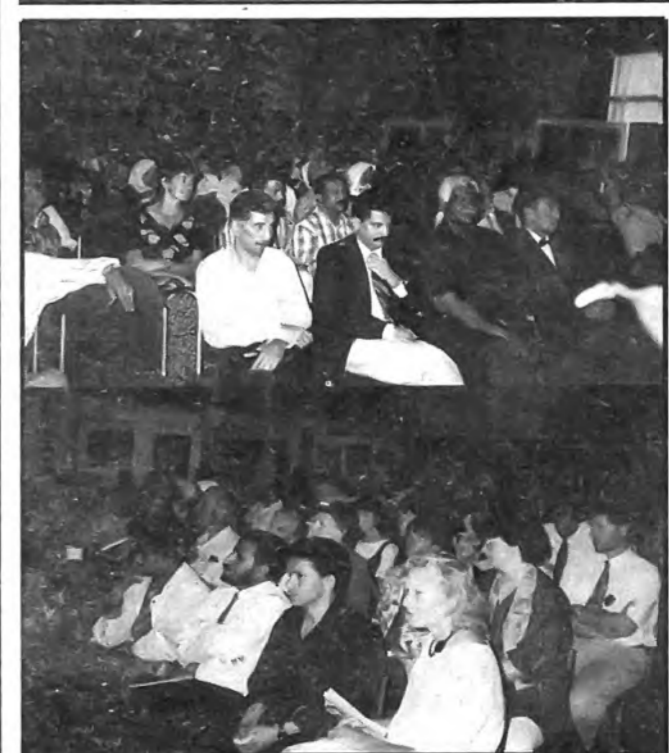
The artists draw upon various schools of realism, impressionism, abstract, natural and paintings from the ancient Yemeni culture.



Sunrise at the Gold Mohur



A beauty from Aden





## Maintaining Good Health in Early Islamic Days

# THE PROPHET'S MEDICINE

Daniel Martin Varisco \*

Over the centuries, Muslims have focused on the words and actions of Mohammed (P) as a guide for almost every situation. In fact, the prophet often offered practical advice for the here and now, supplementing his preaching about ethics and the afterlife. In the genre of the prophet's medicine (in Arabic, *al-tibb al-nabawi*), Islamic scholars took the recorded knowledge of Mohammed (P), including his own words, and placed it in the scientific context of their day. There was no idea of a separation of sacred and secular, for the most astute scientists began with reverence for God as revealed through Mohammed (P) the messenger. Physicians and students of medicine were not restricted or confined by their faith, because on of the guiding principles in Islamic science was and remains the search for knowledge. The texts of the prophet's medicine synthesize a variety of statements made by Mohammed (P) to form a few basic ideas about health care. The most fundamental principle stems from the sentiment that all health problems can be solved. In a widely quoted tradition, Mohammed (P) said that God does not send any disease without also providing a cure. The only exceptions to this, as noted by the prophet, are old age and death. This principles stimulated the search for cures and an avid interest in pharmaceuticals.

Another tradition states that almost every plant has some sort of medicinal value, if properly applied. Legend has it that many cures were discovered by wise King Solomon, whom God was believed to have provided with an esoteric knowledge surpassing all other humans.

Another central tenet of the genre is a strong interest in maintaining good health. Here there was no fatalistic acceptance of poor health and no giving in to despair over specific diseases. There was also no chauvinistic rejection of "foreign" medicine simply because it was new or different. Even when quoting from earlier biblical, Greek, Syriac, or India sources, Muslim scholars saw their evolving science of medicine as an important and practical part of religion. Muslim scholars actively studied and translated Greek and Indian medical texts, always looking for cures that they believed must come from God.

### The Six Necessities:

For the Muslim, all cures are due to the power of God, who created the universe and ordered everything in it. Thus, a believer must always be thankful to God for health of body and soul. In this sense the act of healing demonstrated the presence of God rather than the cleverness of the physician. Once a man named Abu Darda came to Mohammed (P) and asked if it was better to be cured of a disease and thankful for it or to patiently endure illness without complaint. The prophet responded, "The Messenger of God loves good health as much as you do." Mohammed (P) even said that a request for health from God was among the best things anyone could ask from the creator. Although medieval concepts of health were not based on the scientific method practiced today, they could be quite sophisticated. Muslim physicians recognized that a variety of factors, internal and external, were involved in keeping the body free from disease, these were summarized as the "six necessities" and constituted a balanced program of health care with obvious practical value.

The first necessity affecting health was air. Even before the problem of industrial pollution, pure air was seen as a prerequisite for good health. Cold air was especially valued because it was believed to improve digestion. Foul air or a change in the weather could lead to disease. The use of scents, especially from flowers such as rose or jasmine, could freshen the air, according to the writers. This focus on air is not arbitrary, as Islamic theology teaches that the human soul was created by the literal breath of God.

Another necessity, food and drink, was a major factor in health. In the humoral system inherited from classical science, all foods and plants were classified according to whether they heated, cooled, dried, or moistened the body. Certain foods, by their very nature, were said to heat the body and could lead to illness if taken in excess or at the wrong time. Thus, in the summer heat it was advisable to avoid "hot" foods and eat cold foods, such as cucumbers, to counteract bodily heat. The problem was not so much the properties of a specific food but the impact eating or drinking would have on the body's humoral balance. As a

result, the most basic medical principle for the Muslim was to eat and drink in moderation and to keep an essentially balanced body.

Physical exercise, the third necessity, also affected this balance. Movement was said to generate heat, and rest helped cool the body. Sleep cooled the body on the outside, an observation based on experience, though the soul could dream and thus excite the inner nature of man. Islamic physicians also recognized the emotions, another necessity, as a form of movement or excitement. Thus, anger, apprehension, grief, and joy heated the body. Through natural excretions as well as vomiting and bleeding, the final two necessities, the body regulated itself and maintained its own balance.

### How to Ensure Good Health

If being healthy meant being balanced, it was important to know what caused an imbalance in a particular quality. This interest provided a preventive focus to Islamic medicine with practical advice gleaned from earlier folklore. Knowledge of Mohammed's own life-style, and the medical knowledge absorbed from other cultures. Based on the six necessities, the compilers of the genre proceeded to recommend the appropriate regimen for a long and healthy life. There were cures to be had, as God had promised, but for most people it was far better to avoid getting sick than to test the medical knowledge of the day. For the vast majority, there were no hospitals and no guarantee that the proper medicine, even if it did work, could be found in time or used appropriately.

Most people had little choice about the air they breathed, except for avoiding the vapors around the sick or the stench of human waste. But they recognized that breath could carry disease, although nothing was known about germs. It is reported that Mohammed (P) never blew on his food or drink, nor did he breathe into a vessel. Sensing the possibility of contamination, the prophet even suggested one should avoid drinking water or eating food that a fly had landed on.

The effect food and drink had on the body was thought to play a most important role in determining health and disease. Fasting, one of the Muslim's mandatory duties, was seen to have beneficial consequences for the body and soul. Mohammed (P) was especially hard on gluttony which he associated with pagan tyrants. In the Koran (Arabic, Quran), Muslims are told to eat and drink but not to excess. One tradition records the prophet as saying the believer had only one stomach, while the unbeliever tried to fill seven stomachs. An excess of food was believed to poison the body and heart, making people lethargic and lazy.

Mohammed (P) said that wisdom would not come to a man whose stomach was full, and it was recommended that an individual eat without completely satisfying the appetite. Following the advice of Hippocrates, a Muslim was counseled to wait until one meal had been digested before eating again. In choosing food, it was recommended to balance hot foods with cool and sour with sweet. To eat and drink slowly was healthier than gulping food in a hurry. Mohammed (P) was said to take three breaths with every sip of water.

Moderate exercise was considered one of the best ways to preserve a healthy constitution. It was best to be physically active before rather than after a meal, and walking was recommended to help food digest and assist the bowels in getting rid of waste products. Prayer, which involves physical exercise in Islam, was said to be beneficial after a meal. Sexual activity, which heated the body, was advised only after food had been properly digested. Sleep should never come right after a meal but when food had time to be digested, although Mohammed (P) looked down on sleeping in the daytime in general, he often took a short nap in the heat of the day and praised this as an aid in staying awake for evening prayers.

The normal excretion of bodily fluids was considered an important part of maintaining healthy balance. The principle of balance was also extended to blood, with the widely known practice of bleeding individuals by use of leeches or cupping.

*Islam, unlike Christianity, never developed a celibate tradition, perhaps in part because of the important placed on maintaining bodily balance. Although the goal of the sexual act was first and foremost to create children, it was also recognized that the release of the sexual urge was part of a*

*normal, healthy life. The idea that the sexual act was dirty or unspiritual was far removed from the teachings of Islam. Indeed, human sexual pleasure was used as a metaphor for the pleasures of the life to come in heaven. Mohammed (P) himself had thirteen wives, although many of these were obviously married for political purposes.*

*Because Muslim males were forbidden by religious law and for supposed medical reasons to masturbate, the legitimate act of sex between a man and his wife was the only recourse for a believer.*

Abstinence, from a medieval medical perspective, led to an excess of semen in the body. This buildup could result in depression and unhappiness, affecting the appetite and ultimately leading the blindness and disease. Some physicians believed that failure to have a normal sex life would quite literally drive an individual mad. A number of the aphrodisiacal prescriptions in the medical literature seem erotic by present-day standards, and there was genuine interest in ensuring the sexual appetite of both the male and female. Certain foods were recommended for increasing virility, including chickpeas, cowpeas, carrots, turnips, asparagus, onions, grapes, most nuts, eggs, roosters, and small birds. It is recorded that the prophet once asked the angel Gabriel how to increase his potency. Gabriel told him that if he ate *harisa*, a type of bread pudding, he would have the power of forty men.

### Herbal Knowledge:

The medieval physician, no less than the average housewife, had at his disposal an arsenal of herbal remedies and compounds reputed to be useful for health maintenance and specific health problems. This herbal knowledge stemmed from earlier scientific traditions, sayings attribute to Mohammed (P), and a wide range of folklore from the lands Islam extended to. In the major herbals, such as that of the thirteenth-century Iraqi Ibn al-Baytar, literally thousands of herbs and simples are cited. There was quite an art to classifying drugs, which were grouped according to one of four degrees. The first degree included those with no obvious effect on the body. The second degree covered drugs that had an impact but not a harmful one. The third degree had a negative effect but not enough to kill. A drug of the fourth degree was a fatal poison.

The texts of the prophet's medicine list over two hundred herbs, minerals, and animal parts or products that are linked in some way to statements made by Mohammed (P) or derive from his time. These could be as common as salt, which was used to treat a scorpion bite on the prophet, or as exotic as rubies, which were said to prevent thirst if held in the mouth. There are a number of common sense suggestions that have value no matter that they are centuries old. For example, Mohammed (P) said it was very important to employ a toothpick to clean the teeth but recommended against using a piece of sugar cane, which would lead to tooth decay. Rue takes away the smell of garlic. Endive reduces the tendency to belch.

One of the most important medicates mentioned by Mohammed (P) was honey, which is prized for its health value in cultures around the world. Mohammed (P) once said that for the Muslim, treatment was twofold: honey and the Quran. It is reported that he drank a cup of honey an water every day. Muslim physicians considered honey to be the best medicine available for all sorts of problems. One of these is diarrhea, for which honey in hot water was prescribed. It is reported that a man once came to Mohammed (P) and asked what to do about his brother's diarrhea. The prophet said to take honey. After a while the man came back and said there was not change, but the prophet insisted the brother keep taking honey. The man came back again and even a fourth time, at which point Mohammed (P) said, "God is truth; the belly of your brother has lied." Honey was tried once again, and this time it worked.

Herbs were not just for cures, important as these might be. In the prophet's medicine, much attention is paid to oils, scents, and dyes that help maintain proper hygiene. One of the more important plants is henna, a reddish dye that is used throughout the Middle East even today. Henna (*Lawsonia inermis*) is a shrub that apparently originated in Iran but spread throughout the region before the advent of Islam. The ancient Egyptians used henna, perhaps as a dye. Women still use henna as a cosmetic, especially during weddings, and religious men

often dye their beards with henna. A range of information about the use of henna is recorded in the prophet's medicine.

There are also statements that must be taken with a grain of salt, some with a whole saltshaker. Such folklore or old wives' tales often drive scientists to reject this genre as nothing more than fiction. If you eat onions for forty days, supposedly, you will get freckles. If you eat fish and eggs together, you will become paralyzed. If you eat three pomegranates a year, you will not suffer from ophthalmia in that time. As for fad diets, it was thought that people who ate oranges at night would lose weight. It is easy to laugh at these statements, but even with today's medical knowledge such kinds of unfounded ideas remain quite common.

There was a science to pharmacopeia among medieval Muslims. The herbals provide information on proper dosage, especially for mixed-compound drugs. Because drugstores were not to be found on every corner, substitutions are frequently given. If you are making a laxative and there is no yellow myrobalan available, substitute some apricot pulp. As the knowledge of herbal cures increased, there was a need for trained physicians to apply them. Mohammed (P) greatly valued the role of the physician, and according to several traditions physicians were called to treat the prophet. His wife Aisha said that even non-Arab doctors attended to the needs of Mohammed (P). It is also reported that Aisha picked up so much knowledge from the doctors who treated Mohammed (P) that she was often sought after for medical advice. Physicians were to be paid for their services, provided they really had a knowledge of medicine. In the case of illness, it was legitimate for a male doctor to treat a female patient and for a female doctor to treat a male patient. Women used to look after those wounded in battle during the time of the prophet.

Although Islamic medicine defined science in the medieval period, it has had little impact in the last few centuries. One of the accidents of history that handicapped the progress of Islamic medicine was the prohibition against human dissection. Although Muslim physicians were able to correct several anatomical errors made in classical sources, there was no systematic exploration of the human body as happened in Europe in the last several centuries.

When Western colonial powers battled Middle Eastern rulers after the sixteenth century, Islamic medicine was already in eclipse. Baghdad, where the first hospital in Islam had been established under Harun ar-Rashid in the eighth century, was destroyed in A.D. 1258 by the Mongols. The Muslim and Jewish scholars of Spain were driven out in the fifteenth century by the intolerant Ferdinand and Isabel.

With no active support from royal patrons and no research focus, knowledge of medicine became increasingly less sophisticated and more reliant on local folklore and magic. The prophet's medicine remained a valuable source of practical information, but only recently has there been an attempt by Muslim students with modern medical training to return to their roots and find continuing value in the old traditions.

\* Prof. Daniel Varisco is the Director of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. This is a group of specialized universities, departments and scholars working on Yemen.

## تهانينا الحرة

نتقدم بأحر التهاني والتبريكات للشباب

محبوب محمد سلام العامري

بمناسبة زفافه الميمون .

نتمنى لها ولشريكته السعادة

وأدام الله السرور

المهنؤون :

د/عبدالعزیز السقاف ، العزیز الصلوی

علی ومحمد ومنصور سلام

وجميع الأهل والأصدقاء

## OAU Bid to Lift Libya Sanctions

African foreign ministers urged the UN Security Council to accept a compromise with Libya in the Lockerbie affair and said the African Summit to be held next June would look at ways to bypass sanctions imposed on Tripoli in 1992.

"The Council (of African ministers) strongly recommend that the Security Council consider ways and means for a rapid resolution of the crisis," they said in a declaration adopted at the end of the three-day annual conference in Tripoli.

"The Council wishes to reiterate its position expressed at its 64th ordinary session in Yaounde from 1-6 July 1996 to the effect that continued imposition of sanctions might lead African countries to devise other means of sparing the Libyan people future suffering," they said.

Sanctions on Libya, including a ban on international flights that forced representatives of 52 African countries to travel by road to the OAU conference, have been in effect since Tripoli failed in 1992 to hand over two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of an airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

Washington and London want the two men tried in the US or Britain and rejected a proposal accepted by Libya that the two be tried in a neutral country by Scottish law.

The African Council said it "strongly deplors the fact that the three concerned Western countries (USA, France and Britain) have so far shown indifference to the initiatives presented to them with a view to a just and equitable solution to the crisis."

It proposed three options for a solution:

- 1) hold the trial in a neutral country determined by the Security Council;
- 2) have the two suspects tried by Scottish judges at the International Court of Justice at the Hague under Scottish law;
- 3) establish a special criminal tribunal at the ICJ to try the two suspects.

## Manama Puts 81 Plotters on Trial

Some 81 members of an Iranian-backed Islamic group known as Hizbollah-Bahrain accused of plotting to overthrow the Bahrain government went on trial in Manama, it was announced last week. The announcement said that 54 of the accused will appear before the state security court while another 27 who are still at large will be tried in their absence.

The defendants face charges of conspiring against the government, conniving with a foreign state and attempting to overthrow the regime by force. If they are found guilty, they could face the death penalty and there is no appeal from the state security court.

Tehran denies any involvement in the problem.

The ruling family in Bahrain is Sunni, while the majority of the population is of Shia Islam. Although this in itself was not an issue, the relative economic poverty of the Shia and their minimal participation in public life have made it an issue.

## Jordan Not to Censor Foreign Papers

Aman has stopped reviewing and censoring foreign press items before they reach news-stands in Jordan. The press and publication department will not interfere from now on and newspapers/magazines will not undergo any reviewing or censorship but rather be delivered from planes to shops immediately. According to the spokesman, the decision was made in implementation of a memo to the press and publications department issued by prime minister Abdul Kareem Kabariti. The new provision does not apply to foreign books entering Jordan as they will continue to be reviewed.

## Iraqi Dialogue Offer Described as "Comical"

Al-Thawra, the mouthpiece of the ruling Baath party, said Iraq realized that the United States had vital interests in the Gulf. "Iraq has no interest in fighting the United States or being hostile to it. It has more than one advantage in dealing with it," it said.

"This is really an almost comical offer," said State Department Spokesman Nicolas Burns. "He said if the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein wanted a dialogue, he first had to fulfil UN resolutions stemming from Iraq Gulf's war defeat in 1991. He hasn't done that in any way, shape or form. So there is no reason for us to have a dialogue with him when he continues to try to cheat on the UN sanctions."

## Pakistan Reserves Rise to over \$ 1 Billion

Pakistan's reserves rose to US \$ 1 billion, thanks to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's appeal for funds to pay off the national debt. The State Bank of Pakistan said foreign exchange reserves had risen to 1.068 billion from \$ 850 on February 20. The SBP statement urged all Pakistanis at home and abroad to respond to Sharif's plea for them to give or deposit money in special government accounts to help pay off Pakistan's US \$30 billion foreign debt.

Bankers said this month's US\$150 million five-year convertible bond issue by state-run Pakistan Telecommunication Co. Ltd. and a US\$115.5 million short-term financing facility arranged by foreign banks for the same company may have contributed to the rise in reserves, which stood at US\$1.546 billion a year ago.

Donations to Sharif's slogan, "Pay off debt, set country right" have ranged from US\$15 million to a few rupees. Others are shifting foreign currency into special government bank accounts for a minimum of two years, with or without interests at the depositor's discretion.

The government expects more from an estimated two million Pakistanis working abroad. They have been asked to contribute deposits of at least US\$1,000 each in return for a personal letter of thanks from Sharif. Those who send US\$1 million or more will be invited to receive a medal from him.

Nawaz Sharif, whose Muslim League Party won a landslide victory in Pakistan's recent parliamentary elections, has inherited a country that is financially and politically troubled. The state budgetary deficit has complicated a politically fractured country in which violence has been on the rise.

The Nawaz government has injected a new dose of enthusiasm and hope. But it will depend on its performance, and its ability to steer the country towards harmony, peace and development.

## Saudi Airline Pays for Crash Over Delhi

Families of 132 victims in the world's deadliest mid-air collision have received US\$2.74 million compensation, Saudi Arabian Airlines officials said last week.

A total of 349 people were killed when a Saudi jumbo jet and a Kazakh cargo plane collided over New Delhi last November.

Each of the families of the 130 Indians and two Pakistanis were awarded compensation. Each received US\$20,000 as well as money for lost personal luggage. The money was paid out by the airline's insurers, Lloyds of London.

A Saudi Arabian Airlines official said applications for compensation from the families of 60 other victims were being processed "and we hope payment will start soon."

Most of the passengers on board the Saudi airliner were Indian laborers returning to work in Saudi Arabia. A New Delhi High Court judge probing the crash has not yet made his findings public as to where the fault for the crash lies.

## UNDP Representatives Hail UAE Drug Combat Policy

Resident representative of the UNDP Adel Mahfouz Khalifa hailed the wise policy being pursued by the United Arab Emirates in combating drugs in line with the prudent directives of president His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the UAE.

In a statement on the occasion of the conference on curbing drugs in Abu Dhabi with the participation of over 20 Arab and foreign countries in addition to competent regional and international organizations. Khalifa said, "By hosting such an important conference, the UAE proves its interest and readiness to cooperate and coordinate with the world nations in matters that serve the well-being and interests of world's peoples."

He pointed out that holding the conference in the UAE demonstrates the great attention given by the country in fighting the evils of drugs as it also proves the extent of its readiness to cooperate with the international community in combating drugs. The UNDP representative said that the program will present a paper on the problems of drugs at the world level and the role of the UNDP body in stamping out evil drugs.

Concluding his statement, the UN official expressed hope that the forthcoming Abu Dhabi conference on drug combating would come out with positive results that would effectively contribute to world campaigns against drugs.

The UAE and other Gulf states had been used as a transit point for drugs smuggled from Central and South Asia to Europe.

## The Economic Environment in the Arab World

The second annual conference organized by the Arab Centre for Strategic Studies, headed by Mr. Ali Nasser Mohammed, was held in the UAE from 22nd to 24th February. One of the papers presented at the conference is summarized here.

Arab countries will have to urgently prepare for the challenges of the future. There are many challenging developments to be faced, such as the rapid move toward globalization, liberalizing world trade and the gigantic leaps in science and technology.

There are two major obstacles to be overcome by Arab countries: 1- reaching international markets, and 2- obtaining modern technology to be able to increase productivity.

Thus, the necessity for an economic Arab bloc presents itself. Conducive circumstances will have to be provided so as to achieve success for this bloc as well as preserving the interests of individual countries within it.

Arab countries do not have the technical means to compete with larger and more powerful economic entities. For the Arab production sectors to be able to operate flexibly, they will have to consider implementing the following measures:

- 1- gradually and meticulously follow economic reform programs,
- 2- opening the way for the participation of various economic bodies in formulating the political life within a framework of political plurality and respect of the law and human rights,
- 3- developing education systems

and human resources, 4- establishing legal and organizational environments favourable for investment, and 5- creating and consolidating powerful, responsible and active establishments in society.

The East Asian countries have been able to keep their cultural identity and national character, simultaneously with overcoming high production costs, the interference of pressure groups and the appearance of new competitors. Their experiences are also exceptionally important because they took place within a competent and efficient role

played by the state. In addition to the aforementioned policies, the Arab countries will have to take assertive measures to break the triangle of slow death -- bureaucracy, corruption and absence of coordination between various economic bodies. This deadly triangle obstructs many investment endeavours and stops economic reform in its tracks.

\* Dr. Ali Abdulkareem is a deputy secretary-general at the Arab League.



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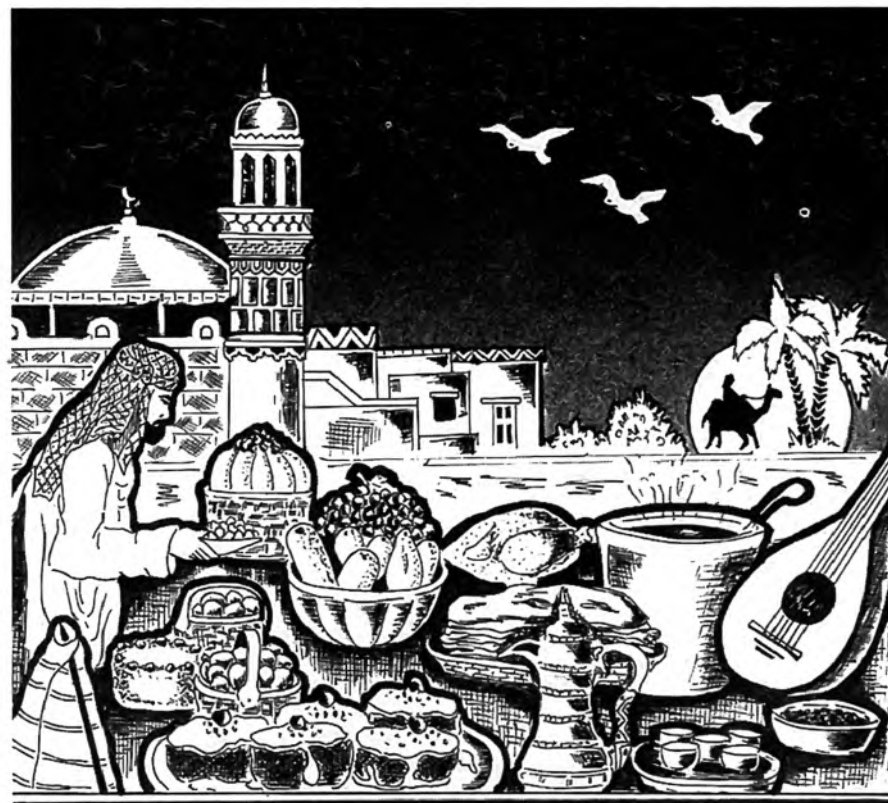


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# EMC Training of Observers Concludes Successfully

M. Bin Sallam & Yusuf Sharif, Yemen Times.

The Elections Monitoring Committee (EMC) successfully launched its first grass-roots level training of observers. Today, Monday March 10th, a three-day workshop was concluded in the first of seven training workshops which involve intensive legal and procedural training.

Some 800 observer volunteers (including 280 female volunteers) working in some 40 constituencies in Sanaa and Marib Governorates participated in the workshop.

Giving the inaugural speech, Salwa Dammaj, Assistant Secretary-General for Administrative Affairs, indicated that democratization is a worldwide trend. "We have to work together to make our country's experience in this field a meaningful and fruitful one," she said.



structure. Such elections become mere formalities. At the same time, those groups that fail to win in elections can create problems in order to bring down the whole experiment. So we have to watch

of the program," explained Ms. Shada Mohammed Nasser, Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Affairs, and the person charged with the program of the workshop.

The program has two major components. The first part is general and educational in nature. The trainees received a strong dose on the constitution and laws of Yemen as they are related to elections. The second part dealt with what to do on election day, how to do it, how to report and how document, etc.

"We have high-level specialists like Dr. Mohammed Al-Mikhlafi, Dr. Ahmed Sharafuddeen, Dr. Salah Haddash, Mr. Hafedh Fadhle, Mr. Mohammed Naji Allaw, and others who gave lectures and hands-on training. I expect the observers to be well-qualified on legal issues as well as on actual procedural matters," she said.

The reaction among the trainees was superb. Many of them felt that the information they got would help in better inform the public. "We will diffuse most of this legal information among the people in our constituencies," said Hameed Assem, Coordinator for Sanaa Governorate. It is very useful."

Ms. Rahmah Hujairah, Coordinator for the Sanaa City Female Volunteers, stated that the step-by-step plan of action in filling up the forms was extremely easy, although previously unknown to them. "If you don't know it, you don't know it. But it is easy to understand and apply," she said.



Ms. Dammaj also indicated that the facade can sometimes be more important than the essence of the transformation. "For example, you can have elections without making any change in the power

out on both counts," Ms. Dammaj said. The training program was well thought-out. "Over the last several weeks, we have been planning the time and substance



## EU Delegation Visits EMC and Discusses Project Status

An EU delegation headed by Robert Houliston and comprising of Dr. Michael Kohler, Ramon Mestres and Rainer Freund, visited the EMC last week. The purpose of the visit was to touch base on issues of common concern and to discuss status of the EMC efforts. They met with the Secretary-General and the two Assistant Secretary-Generals - who

together make up the top management of the EMC. The EU delegation was briefed on the progress of work and the preparations underway for the elections monitoring. The Europeans were also given details on the inner workings of the EMC and the internal difficulties it has been facing - as a result of the different political views of its members.

The EU group understood the issues, and expressed support for continuation of the EMC work. The EU provides financial support to the EMC to complete its work. It also provides funds to other organizations working on the elections, notably the Supreme Elections Committee and the Arab Democratic Institute.



## EMC's Field Visits to Branch Offices

The EMC General Secretariat paid field visits to several of its branch offices over the last week. Mr. Nuruddeen Al-Azazi, Rapporteur of the Committee paid visits to the Redaa and Marib Offices. "The purpose of the visit is to see how the branch is functioning, evaluate its needs, and complete the final list of observers," he said. Another delegation is presently visiting the EMC branch offices in Dhamar, Yarim, Ibb, Qaidah and Taiz, while a third is heading towards Lahej, Aden and Abyan. One more delega-



tion is going to visit Al-Mahweet and Hodeidah. The EMC has 34 branches scattered all over the country. These branches form the springboard from which the organization leaps to perform its monitoring job. Hassan Al-Zayidi, Coordinator for the Marib Branch, told Yemen Times that the visit gave the volunteers a moral boost in their work. "The people felt that their work is appreciated. In addition, they were guided to better performance." Ahmed Al-Nuaimi, Coordinator for Redaa, said his volunteers were waiting for the training work-shop to come to their area.



**ATTARIQ: Aden (Fortnightly) 4-3-97**  
(Independent)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) Leadership of Yemeni Socialist Party Call For Reforming Unity, Evaluating the South's Experience and Rehabilitating its Relationship with the North.
- 2) Public Banking and Financial Institutions in Aden to be Privatized.

**Article Summary:**

**Postpone the Elections**  
by Abdul-Hakeem Mahmoud.

In order for the homeland's unity to be embodied through mass awareness, not a political decision, elections will have to be postponed. The results of the '93 elections, which must be reviewed and evaluated, showed that unity was not yet fully accomplished. This was vividly demonstrated by the Socialist party winning in the southern and eastern governorates and Islah and the PGC winning in the north and west.

The elections should be postponed until all the cracks in the souls of the citizens in the south are mended.

An honest and courageous stance toward corruption and economic decline is needed. Postpone the elections because the citizens are still in need of food and most basic standards of social justice. People know that their fate is sealed with or without elections. So it is better to spare them the gigantic bill of these elections.

**AL-MITHAQ: Sana'a (Weekly) 3-3-97**  
(The People's General Congress)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) The President: "We shall women candidates to become members of the next parliament."
- 2) Agreement of Cooperation and Coordination Between Ruling Coalition and National Opposition Council is Endorsed.
- 3) PGC Deputy Secretary-General: "Our election's program relies on commitment to the constitution, the law and the principle of democracy."

**Article Summary:**

**Yemen's Stance Toward Normalization is Fixed**  
Establishing ties with Israel can only come after achieving a just and comprehensive peace settle-



## Yemeni Press in a Week

by: Adel J. Moqbil

ment in the region. The return of Arab lands occupied during the 1967 war is an essential condition for any dealings between Yemen and Israel, and only within a general Arab framework. President Ali Abdullah Saleh stressed that Yemen will never hold links with Israel outside an Arab context. Israel aims to deal with each Arab country alone so as to be able to divide the Arab front. Links between Yemen and Israel will only be established through a unanimous agreement in an Arab summit.

**AL-AYYAM: Aden (Bi-Weekly) 5-3-97**

(Independent)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) The President Officially Calls Upon Citizens to Vote in Upcoming Parliamentary Elections.
- 2) British Embassy Assists Yemen in Administration and Elections.
- 3) College-of-Education Students in Lahaj Go on Strike.

**Article Summary:**

**Home of PGC Head in Shabwa Attacked**

An RPG missile was fired on the house of the head of the People's General Congress branch in Shabwa, Mr. Aref Al-Zoka, on 3rd February. Mr. Al-Zoka and his family were not at home when the attack took place, but his personal guards and secretary were inside. Little damage was caused by the missile. The security forces are still looking for the assailants who were seen heading due north-west toward Wadi Ataq. According to a communique issued by the PGC in Shabwa, the attack happened at 10 PM, and the perpetrators in an unmarked car without number plates.

**AL-WAHDAWI: Sana'a (Weekly) 4-3-97**

(The Nasserite Unionist Party)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) A Campaign to Discredit Opposition Parties and Freeze their Bank Accounts.
- 2) Visiting American Diplomat: "We shall be annoyed if the opposition decides to boycott the elections."
- 3) Dominated by Issues of Poverty and Elections, Women's Conference in Sana'a Concludes its Sessions.

**Article Summary:**

**A Hospital Plagued by Security and Mosquitoes**  
by Fahmi Al-Saqqaf

Conditions at Al-Sadaqa [friendship] Hospital in Aden reflect the generally abnormal situation in that city. A central-security officer has his office next to that of the hospital director. It has become quite normal to see large numbers of security personnel roaming the wards and rooms in the hospital. In addition to that, the hospital houses offices for a PSO and a criminal-investigations officers.

Al-Sadaqa Hospital is one of the largest hospitals in Aden. It is one of the fruits of Yemeni-Soviet cooperation. It now lacks essential laboratories and services.

Hygiene is not great either. Multitudes of mosquitoes, rats and cockroaches swarm the hospitals room and corridors at night.

**AL-THAWRY: Sana'a (Weekly) 6-3-97**

(The Yemeni Socialist Party)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) Socialist Party will Boycott April's Parliamentary Elections.
- 2) National and International Efforts to Release Prisoner of Conscience, Mansour Rajeh.
- 3) EC Supports Elections Monitoring Committee to Train Poll watchers.
- 4) Captors of German Tourists Demand a Ransom of DM. 12 Million.

**Article Summary:**

**The Choice and the Test**  
editorial.

The Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party has taken an historical decision to boycott the next parliamentary elections, due to be held on 27th April. This decision represents the popular position of the silent majority. The ruling authority has, for the last two and a half years, played various types of political game. Some opposition parties were neutralized, and others were used to strike against other parties. A special "opposition" was made at the authority's "kitchens" to discredit the real opposition. Despite the many compromises made by several opposition parties, the authority continued to act in an unrivaled effrontery.

A legitimate question should now be addressed to the opposition: what will you do now, in view of the YSP stance, towards this dark historical circumstance?

**AL-WAHDA: Sana'a (Weekly) 5-3-97**

(Official)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) The President Inaugurates 30th Term of Arab Universities Council.
- 2) The Prime Minister: "Arbitration agreement is reached between our country and Eritrea."
- 3) Donor Countries Agree to Fund Women's Projects in Yemen.
- 4) Rector of Sana'a University Chosen to Preside over Arab Universities Council.

**Article Summary:**

**Attention !! - editorial**

Every licensed political party has a distinct character drawn from its program and goals. A high patriotic profile of any such party and organization demands complete loyalty to the country and its people.

Despite Yemen's solid commitments to reject any activity emanating from Yemen that opposes other countries and regimes, the criminals abroad try to exert pressure reflecting deeply buried hatred. Hence the importance of a true national character being possessed by every political party.

The democratic process demands unwavering commitments to national identity on part of all political movements.

**AL-SAHWA: Sana'a (Weekly) 6-3-97**

[Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah)]

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) Agreement Signed Between Ruling Coalition and National Opposition Council.
- 2) Speaker of Parliament Receives Russian Parliamentary Delegation.
- 3) Parliamentary Immunity to be Lifted from MP Accused of Assaulting General Manager at Ministry of Education.
- 4) More Electricity Blackouts Expected in Hodeida with Onset of Summer.

**Article Summary:**

**Two Gangs Arrested in Hadhramaut**

During the last two weeks, police in Hadhramaut has successfully arrested two very dangerous theft rings. The two groups of villains were behind 68 acts of robbery in various governorates. According to police sources, the thieves employed very uncommon methods in their criminal activities. They usually resorted to disturbing the peace, and confusing the citizens. The other strange thing is that they all have criminal records, but were imprisoned only without true Sharia punishments.

**26 SEPTEMBER: Sana'a (Weekly) 6-9-97**

(Yemen Armed Forces)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) The President: "The elections will be held in a safe, democratic and free atmosphere."
- 2) Parliament Will Discuss Gas Agreement Next Week.
- 3) Council of Ministers Ratifies Yemeni-Egyptian Technical Agreement.

**Article Summary:**

**The Dilemma of the Yemeni Socialist Party**  
by Ubaid Al-Mausimiy

The YSP finds itself a prisoner of its own rigid dogma. There are clearly some fault in the internal structure of this party. This is manifested through the leaderships incomprehension of the lessons of the of past despite the disasters and the bloody conflicts.

What right has the YSP to claim sole representation of people in the southern governorates? It is very strange that, at the same time, the party prides itself that 80% of its cadres come from the north. Still it engulfed by secessionist notions.

The unity established in 1990 is not a political decision - as some opportunistic theorizers would like to claim. It is a collective patriotic union. Fragmentation was imposed by authoritarian political regimes.

Some of the YSP leaders are blinded their selfishness to these bright facts. The still persist in isolating themselves from the people by the hateful divisions of the past.

**AL-THAWRAH: Sana'a (Daily) 9-3-1997**

(Official)

**Main Headlines:**

- 1) President Saleh Calls on All Supervisory Committees in Elections to Work as a National Team
- 2) House of Representatives Discusses Many Proposals of Laws.
- 3) Prime Minister Inspects the Airport and Harbor Projects in Socotra.
- 4) Arafat: "The American veto is a mistake, and the world community is asked to stop the Israeli actions."

**Article Summary:**

**Aden and the Promising Future**

By Ali Al-Ashmoory.

You can see the vast expanse of the sea. You can feel the coolness of the sea. As the breeze was blowing, I felt the hand of Mr. Dirhem Noman. Chairman of the Aden Free Zone Authority, as it was extended to shake mine. The occasion was the reception organized by the German Ambassador on the visit to Aden of the German mine-sweepers.

But the main impression I got was from the visits around the city of Aden. Since my last visit in 1994. I could see the enormous growth in the urban housing and construction.

But there is one problem in Aden, these days. The hotel bill is awfully expensive. I do not know who is responsible. Is it the Ministry of Culture and Tourism? Is it the Aden Governorate?

I do not doubt the abilities of Aden Governor Taha Ghanim in addressing the problems.

There is another thing I witnessed. I saw the traffic policemen taking bribes openly.

After having said all that, I come back to Aden. Aden and the promise of a great future. Sooner or later it will happen, in spite of the shortages of many things at the present time.

We all long for that future. It will come!



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## Penultimate Week of Rothmans' Excellent Football Tournament: Al-Tilal and Al-Wahda: Challenge and Counter-Challenge

Although one week is left to the end of the tournament, it still has no specific identity. The struggle to ward off dropping from the excellent to the first class league. Al-Wahda of Aden was the first to make such a nose-dive. This represents a major negative phenomenon in this tournament. On the other end of the scale, Al-Tilal and Al-Wahda are now vying with each other to reach the top. They have equal number of points, but Al-Tilal is ahead in goals.

Al-Tilal has vented its anger on its guest team Al-Shaab of Sana'a by beating it 7-2 in an incautious match. This resounding victory has quieted Al-Tilal by giving it enough goals to race ahead of Al-Wahda. Al-Shaab, on the other hand, has become closer to joining Al-Wahda of Aden in its downfall. Al-Wahda of Sana'a did benefit from its solitary goal against Al-Shaab of Mukalla.

Hassan of Abyan lost two points by equalizing with Al-Shu'la, but remaining in third position leaving the latter in fourth position.

The match between Al-Ahly of Hodieda and Al-Wahda of Aden was postponed due to the latter's management resignation, thereby leaving Al-Ahly in an uncertain position.

Al-Ittihad of Ibb has proven its adequacy by defeating Al-Zuhra 3-1. Thus, Al-Zuhra remains a middle-of-the-road team.

Al-Ahly of Sana'a has been experiencing its worst seasons ever. It was defeated, for the seventh time, by Shamsan 2-1.

Jameel Al-Maktary of Shamsan is still the leading goal scorer billed for winning the title of the "Scorer of the Tournament."

The results of this 21st week show that the contest is now hot between Al-Wahda and Al-Tilal. Football fans await for, and prefer any victory with points, however slight, to that with goals. Who will be the champion? Is a question for which an answer is impatiently sought by all football enthusiasts in Yemen.



### RESULTS OF THE 21st WEEK

Club	No. of Matches	Goals			Results		Points
		Won	Tie	Lost	For	Against	
Tilal	21	11	6	4	42	23	39
Wahdah Sana'a	21	11	6	4	32	16	39
Hassan	21	8	9	4	31	22	33
Shulah	21	10	2	9	40	24	32
Ahli Hodeiah	20	9	4	7	24	28	31
Zohrah	21	9	2	10	27	28	29
Ittihad Ibb	21	8	4	9	37	35	28
Ahli Sana'a	21	7	7	7	23	25	28
Sha'ab Al-Mukallah	21	6	5	10	17	24	23
Shamsan	21	5	8	8	28	50	23
Sha'ab Sana'a	21	5	6	10	20	37	21
Wahdah Adan	20	4	5	11	30	39	17

### Poetry Evening

Hosted by Al-Afif Cultural Foundation on Tuesday 4 March, the Iraqi poet Abdulrazaq Al-Rubai' recited few of his new and popular poems. Born in Baghdad in 1961, Al-Rubai' has a BA degree in Arabic Literature. He has been residing in Yemen for the last three years, working in teaching and journalism. A number of collection of his poems were published in Iraq and in Yemen. "O Storm" is a play written by Al-Rubai' and directed by Kareem Khabeer, and was shown in the Al-Afif Cultural Foundation.

#### Cultural Foundation:

The Iraqi poet's published collections of poems include "supplementary to a previous Death, Mourning for what is left, beautiful Homeland, and Nights' Star" "Suspended Funerals" is to be published soon.



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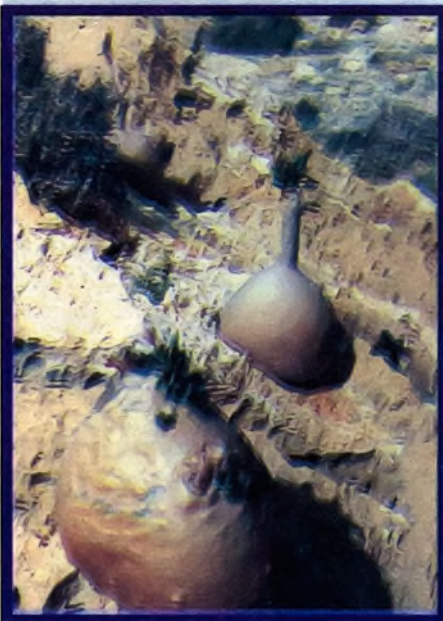
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# SOCOTRA: Land of Mystery & Enchantment

In recent years, much attention has been focused on Socotra, Yemen's mysterious African island. Ancient and isolated, Socotra is the subject of many myths and legends. Sindbad, for example, is supposed to have been grounded there, and suffered great humiliations at the hands of the 'Roc,' a legendary bird which laid house-sized eggs. Though such stories may be entertaining, they fail to impress us as much as modern tales about the island. Socotra remains enigmatic primarily due to its remoteness. Closer to Cape Guardafui in Somalia than it is to Mukalla, Socotra has always been outside

of the Yemen mainstream. Monsoon winds render Socotran ports useless from May to October, and interrupt scheduled flights to the island, keeping Socotra and its people isolated for much of the year. These winds, which may reach a steady 80 knots, can make it difficult, if not impossible, to stand up. To cope with these extreme gales, Socotran houses rarely have outside windows as the people spend much of their summer sheltering at home. Many Socotran insects have reduced wings, an adaptation which prevents them from being blown out to sea.



The people of Socotra are also somewhat remote and mysterious. Although typically generous and hospitable, they speak a language which is unrelated to Arabic. Their customs are unique and among the many things on the island worth preserving. According to some sources there are even communities of blue-eyed Christians on the island. These people are said to be descended from Portuguese and Greek sailors who were cast ashore eons ago. Touted as the "Galapagos of the Indian Ocean," Socotra is one of the last fragments of virgin territory on the planet. For this reason,



there is a virtual army, waiting like the vultures which populate the island, to move in for their share of the carcass. Everyone from the oil people to resort developers has tested Socotran waters. Virtually every travel agent in Yemen is jockeying for the privilege of imposing groups of 'adventurers' on Socotra's unsuspecting inhabitants. Meanwhile, development agencies are drawing up development plans, and politicizing for the 'right' to be the 'first ones in.' Certainly, Socotra deserves the attention of a benevolent world. In addition to its unique culture, it is a treasure trove of endemic wildlife (plants and animals

which are found only on Socotra). Six of the 115 birds which have been recorded on the island are found nowhere else. Experts believe that further investigation will increase this number to 10 or more. No less than 30% of its more than 800 known plant species are endemic. More than 80% of the reptiles which have been cataloged on Socotra are also endemic. The perennial streams which drain the Haggier mountains are filled with unusual life forms including freshwater crabs, fish, and untold numbers of creatures which have yet to be described. The world has a responsibility to ensure that these endemic creatures are preserved, for their own sake, and for the benefits to mankind that they may provide in the future. Who knows what medicines and materials might eventually be derived from Socotra's wildlife? Already, the endemic Dragon's Blood Tree is the source of many traditional cures. The world also has a responsibility to ensure that Socotra's people are given access to the exper-

tion which can help them develop their economy without destroying their environment or the culture which depends on it. They need a decent infrastructure including a hospital, clinics, and a safe harbour. Perhaps tourism can help provide some of these needs, but it has to be developed and managed sensibly. There is a tendency for tourists to flock to unusual places and alter them forever. When charming places cease to be charming, they are discarded for other obscure locations. Socotra is too precious to be allowed to fall victim to this disposable approach. While the atten-

tion which is focused on Socotra will inevitably lead to 1100many changes on the island one can only hope that Socotra doesn't become yet another victim of senseless development. Let the many players who are planning Socotra's future do so wisely, and with the best interests of the island, and all of its inhabitants, in mind.

David B. Stanton  
YOS Chairman



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